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Nature at Home lecture series covers a range of environmental subjects at interest to the community

BY KARL HOLAPPA staff writer
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An upcoming installment in the Nature at Home lecture series will host Deb Essman focusing on birds of prey in Kittita
Contributed

It's not the same as enjoying an outdoor education lecture over a cup of coffee in the Roslyn Yard, but The Nature Conservancy is forging ahead to continue providing engaging events that focus on issues important to our local environment in a virtual format.

The Nature at Home lecture series is in full swing, with the next installment on fire resiliency for local property owners happening Tuesday. Topics in the lecture series span a variety of topics designed to pique the interest of any outdoor enthusiast living in the area.

Recent Central Washington University graduate and AmeriCorps member Tonya Morrey is spearheading the development and curation of the lecture series. Morrey said the current series continues in the spirit of a previous set of lectures that was held in-person at Basecamp Books and Bites in Roslyn, developed by her AmeriCorps predecessor at TNC.

"It provides an opportunity for individuals to volunteer, as well as education and entertainment opportunities for the community," she said.

Before she took the reins, Morrey said her predecessor had shifted the concept from physical lectures to online events due to the pandemic. She said the events typically last around an hour and are held via Facebook Live and Zoom. Half of the hour is spent on the lecture, with the second half being reserved for a question and answer session. Those interested in attending must RSVP prior to each event, and can do so through the organization's Facebook page or at [washingtonnature.org/events](https://www.washingtonnature.org/events)

"You can do this at any time, even if the event has already started," Morrey said.

Morrey has worked to curate a varied range of presenters for the series, with the first three lectures touching on the regional Checkerboard Partnership, wildlife tracking and avalanche awareness and safety. Morrey said she has been pleased with the initial rollout of the series.

"They've gone really well," she said. "More people have been logging on than I anticipated. Lots of questions are being asked and people are engaging in the lectures. I've had a lot of fun working with the presenters."

WHAT'S ON TAP

Morrey currently has two upcoming lectures planned, with more in the works to be put on the schedule as they take shape. The next lecture is on Feb. 9 and will involve forest health and fire resiliency practices. She said this lecture is specifically designed for Kittitas County property owners, with a consulting forester and TNC's Forest Health and Fire Director Reese Lolley presenting on the issue.

"I'm really excited about this one, because we get to collaborate and hear both a partner and TNC's perspective," Morrey said. "I believe property owners will get a lot of valuable information out of this event."

A lecture involving birds of prey will take place on Feb. 17, with Deb Essman of the Kittitas County Field & Stream Club presenting on the subject. Morrey said this lecture is designed to be kid friendly, talking about lives of eagles, hawks, and falcons within Kittitas County.

"Deb is always an amazing presenter," Morrey said. "She's super fun and engaging, and kids always love her events."

Although she hasn't set a date for it yet, Morrey said the next lecture after birds of prey will most likely focus on conservation and restoration efforts in the Teanaway Community Forest. As she continues to develop that lecture, she said she is particularly excited about the collaborative efforts to provide information to the public through the event. She is planning on having presenters from the Washington Department of Natural Resources, CWU, Yakama Nation Fisheries and other local nonprofits.

"I'm excited to have a group of people for that lecture that all have their minds and hearts in conservation and restoration in the Teanaway," she said.

Morrey said she will continue to develop lectures throughout her term that ends in August, but the frequency will most likely vary depending on her other commitments.

"I imagine they might drop down to every other week or once a month for the summer," she said.

As the pandemic forced the shift of education events such as these from a physical to a virtual format, Morrey said she is pleased that outdoor enthusiasts continue to engage in the virtual events.

"It's a little challenging to stay interacted with the audience through a virtual platform, but I think our presenters have been both adaptive and innovative in finding ways to participate with the audience and keep them engaged," she said. "It's really convenient, as you can hop on from wherever you are. You can stay at home. You don't have to get out of your pjs or anything."

Upcoming events

Nature at Home, **Forest Health & Fire Resiliency Best Practices** (For Kittitas County property owners)

2/9/21 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Speakers: Phil Hess and Reese Lolley

Join consulting forester Phil Hess and The Nature Conservancy's Director of Forest Health and Fire Reese Lolley for an introduction to forest health designed for Kittitas County property owners. If you are a forest owner, you are a forest manager, and it is important to ensure your land is properly cared after. Be sure to tune in to learn what to look out for and what you can do on your property to ensure a healthy forest.

Zoom registration link: <https://tnc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tj0kdO-tqzMpHdAJVDzHGGe1i7yhNvkhB805>

Nature at Home, **Birds of Prey**

2/17/21 12:00 pm - 12:45 pm

Speaker: Deb Essman

Join Deb Essman for this kid-friendly event to learn everything you want to know about eagles, hawks, and falcons. Learn how to identify raptors you are likely to see in the Pacific Northwest as well as what about them makes them a bird of prey. Don't miss out on gaining these birding skills you are likely to utilize on your next outdoor adventure.

Zoom registration

link: <https://tnc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tjErdu2tqjMqEtHlz8awfdDoq99WVw0dFjXo>