

Public Narrative, March 2018, WALTERS Participant II

I grew up in the hills around Hartville, Missouri in the Southwestern part of the state. Population 574 tells you small town, small school. Every Summer, life was Pretty much ideal, going from church camp to 4-H camp, to Basketball and Girl Scouts. In between camps, I enjoyed hiking and canoeing. We lived an hour away from a pristine lake on the Arkansas border, Bull Shoals. I was 7 when I learned To water ski, and I was fearless on the basketball court. Being active and in nature was my medicine. The place I would go to be alone, and ponder life. To this day, the sight of a dogwood tree or the sound of a whippoorwill makes me think of home.

I knew that SW MO was not my final destination. I had other sights in mind, and Adventure was in my blood. I came to Oregon for the first time in 1987, and the Mountains, rivers, and the forest blew me away. Then I visited the Coast, and I was In love. I made a vow that I would return one day, and Oregon would be my home.

I spent a few years in college, feeling lost as to what career path to choose. I Ended up in Detroit, Michigan, and started EMT training. It was a job that both Scared the hell out of me, and taught me so many lessons. It was the height of the AIDS epidemic, the work was really tough, and after a year I burned out. Working 24 hour shifts was both exhausting and transforming, and when they suggested we wear bullet proof vests, I knew my time was done. Soon after, I put everything in my car and drove myself to SW Oregon to fulfill a vow and to find out what the West was all about!

I spent my time exploring and learning. I was blessed to have a teacher who Taught me all about plants and how to feel their energy, their vibration. She took

Me for walks at night, no flashlight. With bats flying just over our heads it was exhilarating to be able to see in the dark! I lived and worked on a vegetable farm and we started the very first CSA in the Rogue Valley! Life was good, until I got off the tractor one day and couldn't stand up. I herniated a disc, and the setback kept me down for several years. I settled into a still life, not knowing if I had a future.

On Christmas Day in 2007 my house burned to the ground. My life was never to be the same. Losing my home and lots of my possessions was gut wrenching, I was lost in the ashes. 5 Months later my 11 year relationship was over. There is something to ponder in the moment you realize that you have new opportunities. That settling for mediocrity is no longer an option.

I spent the next Summer in Alaska, the land of drastic beauty and unrelenting Nature. I spent 7 days on a ferry down the inside passage. Pitched my tent on the aft deck and counted a hundred whales and watched mama grizzly and her two cubs wrestle for a salmon. I was just about healed, by Mother Nature no less!

I started living in 'community', 10 years ago. We are a small group anywhere between 4-6 women. I learned all about house meetings and consensus. I attended a facilitation workshop and have been learning communication skills and group dynamics. We have built a cob house of our own and have carved out a grand life on our 46 acre homestead.

I first heard of GOB thru an ad from High Country News. The bright smiles and bold, purple drew my curiosity. Last July, I attended my first Broadwalk Event in the Redwoods. I loved it! The combination of education, stewardship,

Recreation, and entertainment was so inspiring! Nature is a never ending canvas of creativity and balance, art in motion, ever changing with the tides.

today, we find ourselves in a political climate very unfriendly to our purpose. More than ever, Mother Nature needs an army of GOB's and I'm here to get to work!

I'll leave you with a quote from one of my favorite authors, Cheryl Strayed.

“Inhabit the beauty that lives in your beastly body and strive to see the beauty in all the other beasts”.