

50+Living our best lives now and in the future!

Doing What He Loves and Living Life to the Fullest

Ken Carloni recalls when he was a young child “with a pail and shovel on the beach or with a jar full of lightning bugs” in his backyard. “I have always been fascinated by the living world. I knew at an early age that I wanted to be a biologist and never really wavered from that goal.”



Following his dream, Ken earned a master’s degree in Evolutionary Ecology from the University of Connecticut. After earning his degree, he headed west and landed in Southwest Oregon, where he “fell in love with the landscapes, people, and pace.”

Ken started teaching microbiology part-time at Umpqua Community College near Roseburg and supplemented his adjunct pay with his own small nursery specializing in native plants. Four years later, he was offered a full-time position teaching “a variety of biology and natural resources courses.”

A Fascination that Fueled a 13-Year Pursuit

The same year Ken accepted his full-time teaching position, he was also accepted into a Ph.D. program at Oregon State University. For the next 13 years, he drove to Corvallis, Oregon twice a week for classes while also continuing to teach and build a house. In 2005, he defended his dissertation and received a Ph.D. in Forest Ecology. “My research focused on the use of landscape fire as an ecosystem management tool by the Indians of Southwest Oregon. The subject fascinated me so much that I was able to sustain that brutal schedule for all those years.”

Undoubtedly, Dr. Carloni’s passion for learning inspired his students and also kept him motivated.



“The look on a student’s face when the light comes on and they ‘get it’—that’s catnip for someone born with the teacher

gene.” And then there were the students from years earlier who would drop by his office to thank him for “inspiring them.”

The Green Tortoise Adventures

Ken had heard about a company out of San Francisco called the Green Tortoise Adventure Travel. The company rebuilt old tour buses and created seats that could be converted into bunk beds



for night travel. “As a teacher dedicated to creating authentic field experiences for my students, I

immediately recognized what a unique and effective platform the Tortoise would be for field tours.” And so, the adventures began.

In 2012, a hybrid course with a five-night tour was launched that included travel through the Siskiyou, the Redwoods, Mt. Shasta, the Lava Beds, and Crater Lake, among other sites. Ken also created another field course focusing on the Baja Peninsula.

On the final tour before he retired, riders included “a mix of students and community members who filled up the open seats. The age of our riders ranged from 19 to 75—older folks were inspired by the energy and enthusiasm of the youngsters. In turn, the younger participants got to see “What life-long learning looks like.”



Participant feedback from the final Green Tortoise learning adventure was overwhelmingly positive. One participant summed up their adventure this way: “Sharing this experience and being able to

learn with such wonderful people and a passionate professor made this course and trip exceed my wildest dreams.”

An end and a New Beginning

In 2018, Ken officially retired but planned to continue offering his field courses as an adjunct faculty member. “But the Universe had other plans—those turned out to be much better than what I had in mind.”

Currently, Ken is the board president of the Umpqua Watersheds. He is also the Education Director for the Yew Creek Land Alliance. The mission of the Alliance is “To conserve and restore historic habitats and native biodiversity while generating high-quality goods and ecological services from Alliance lands.”

One of the projects Ken is working on with the Alliance involves converting hazardous wood slash into biochar— “a valuable soil amendment that holds water and nutrients and increases soil productivity.”

Forever Teaching, Learning and Living Life to the Fullest

“I remain committed to teaching in whatever form that may take. And because the learning curve in the field is so steep, I am still scheming to build an ‘edutourism’ program as another nonprofit venture—possibly again partnering with the Green Tortoise folks.”

In his ‘spare’ time, Ken enjoys music (guitar, banjo, bass, and songwriting). He also enjoys hiking, backcountry skilling, exploring, paddling, snorkeling, gardening/landscaping, and photography.

Ken appreciates traveling and was able to take a trip with his wife, [Jenny Carloni](#), to visit friends in Ukraine. While in Europe, Ken also visited Le Marche, Italy, and the village where his grandfather

had grown up. “That was a major bucket list check-off, but round two will have to wait for a post-pandemic world.” In addition to travel and all of his other activities, Ken says he also enjoys discussing current events with Jenny and solving “the worlds’ problems!”

Advice to Others

Ken is doing what he loves, and “that strategy has worked out pretty well.” Quoting Joseph Campbell, Ken advises, “Follow your bliss and don’t be afraid; doors will open where you didn’t know they were going to be.”

Following Your Bliss

As reported by [Best Life](#), research suggests a majority (76%) of people tend to regret not taking action “that would have helped them realize their ideal self.” Following what you really want to can lead to greater life satisfaction.

Register for a Playbook Webinar: Estate Plans and More



[Ben James](#), CFA, CFP is the founder of Elevate Wealth Management and the author of [The Playbook: 7 Fundamentals of Financial Planning](#). Ben is offering

free, quarterly webinars on the Playbook process. The next webinar will be held on October 28, 2020, and will include an interview with estate planning attorney, Mark John Holady.

Topic 1: Do you need an estate plan – what do you really need, and where do you keep it?

Topic 2: Everything else my family needs to know—100 things you need to keep but never thought of.

To register for the free October webinar, click [here](#).

Biochar: What is It and Why Should You Care?

The following information was taken directly from an April 2020 report by Ken Carloni, Ph.D., Education Director, Yew Creek Land Alliance, Inc.

Background: An enormous amount of small diameter, non-merchantable woody biomass is produced during forest thinning and restoration activities every year in the Pacific Northwest. This highly flammable slash increases fire risk and restricts management options.

The current practice in our region for disposing of this unmarketable woody material in areas where under-burning is not feasible is to build burn piles by hand and/or by machine, wait for them to dry, light them and walk away. While this may be the cheapest way to dispose of slash, ***open burn piles damage soils, produce significant amounts of smoke and greenhouse gases, and increase the risk of igniting wildfires downwind.***

An alternative practice is being developed to turn this liability into an asset by converting slash into biochar in the field. Fine fuels are used as feedstock for low-cost, mobile flame cap kilns to heat the wood to high temperatures with little oxygen. This converts that slash to a form of carbonized biomass that when added to forest soils will remain sequestered there for centuries to millennia.

Biochar also increases soil water and nutrient storage capacity, and promotes resilient soil ecosystems. Increased soil productivity promotes faster plant growth and the conversion of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere into long-lasting biomass. Increased forest productivity also maintains and enhances biodiversity by accelerating the formation of old growth forest structure in appropriately configured stands.

8 Quick Strategies for Subduing Stress

A little stress can energize us, but too much stress

can take a toll on us. With the pandemic, politics, the uncertainty of the economy, and now major fires burning on the West Coast and flooding on the East Coast—it is understandable that many of us are feeling added stress.

1. Smile: Even when forced, [reported](#) research suggests that this practice can help decrease anxiety and help us with a more positive outlook.

2. Breath Control: An article from [Harvard Medical School](#) recommends deep, slow breathing to reduce stress and to relax.

3. Connections: Connecting to others can reduce stress. Many of us seek social support when feeling anxious. [Research](#) also indicates that helping others is also a way to reduce our own stress.

4. Pet Interactions: A [2018 newsletter](#) from the National Institutes of Health report that interactions with pets may reduce stress levels. “Interacting with animals has been shown to decrease levels of cortisol (a stress-related hormone) and lower blood pressure.”



5. Laughter: According to the [Mayo Clinic](#), a good laugh is also good for stress reduction. It can help soothe tensions and improve our mood.

6. Exercise: An article from [Harvard Medical School](#) notes that aerobic and other forms of exercise can reduce stress hormones.

7. Attitude: A WebMD [article](#) suggests cultivating an attitude of gratitude to reduce stress levels.

8. Music: Listening to [calming music](#) may also help lower our stress levels and help us feel more relaxed.

Knowing what to do is a good start. Now we need to take action.

Exploring Life and Work Transitions Seminar



[Reed Dewey](#), founder of [What's Next Coaching, LLC](#) will be offering a five-session virtual seminar, [Exploring Life and Work Transitions - Create the Life You Want](#), beginning in mid-October.

Participants will have an opportunity to discover their retirement readiness in 22 key life areas.

Reed will be co-facilitating this seminar with Dee Cascio. Dee is the author of *Ready to Retire*.

For more information on the seminar and to register, click [here](#).

Sage Advice from a 105-Year-Old Doctor

Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara authored *Living Long, Living Good*. He was still caring for patients up until a few months before he passed at age 105. Here are some of his recommendations (paraphrased) for living long and living well:

1. Don't retire early – keep working, keep involved, keep active.
2. Keep physically active – take the stairs, walk, keep your weight in check.
3. Eat light, eat right
4. Find a purpose.
5. Have fun and relax rather than allowing stress to overwhelm you.
6. Find inspiration and joy from art.

Sounds like sage advice to me! 

[Subscribe/ Unsubscribe](#)