

Trolling for new talent: Applegate Partnership still practicing trust 20 years later

BY BARBARA SUMMERHAWK

This last fall, the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC) celebrated 20 continuous years of activity on behalf of the Applegate Valley's biocracy and is now trolling for new talent to work alongside old hands on its board of directors.

The partnership got its start in October, 1992, when representatives of environmental groups, the timber industry, the federal land management agencies [Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service], local farmers and other residents sat down at the table on Applegate Valley activist Jack Shipley's deck and crafted the following vision statement: "The Applegate Partnership is a

community-based project involving industry, conservation groups, natural resources agencies, and residents cooperating to encourage and facilitate the use of resource principles that promote ecosystem health and diversity." The partnership later became the APWC and was instrumental in creating the *Applegater* newspaper (a vital communication vehicle that goes out to all Applegate residents), and also the community management of Cantrall-Buckley Park.

After the divisive decade preceding the partnership that pitted "us vs them" around the issue of northern spotted owl preservation and logging, the partnership set out with the slogan "Practice Trust—

Them is Us," stressing collaboration rather than confrontation. One early success was the Ramsey Thin, an early timber sale negotiated by the partnership. Instead of clear-cutting patches, the timber company involved used helicopter logging. Although some old growth was taken, the amount was far less than had originally been planned. This sale helped set the stage for future negotiations on the public forests of the Applegate. While other areas of the country during this time suffered horrendous timber sales resulting in environmental degradation, every timber sale in the Applegate Valley had a full environmental review. Nevertheless, the Ramsey Thin was controversial with environmental groups here, who opposed the cutting of any old growth. Over the years, however, environmentalists have stayed on the board of the APWC, bringing necessary balance to the process of harvest and restoration.

A contemporary approach to land management being used by BLM stresses "integration of ecosystem restoration, conservation of northern spotted owl habitat and commodity production." In an article for the *Society of American Foresters* (SAF) journal, Ed Reilly analyzes results of the recently concluded Pilot Joe Project of the Middle Applegate Watershed, noting that "Public participation was...critical to its success..." specifically commending the APWC as a strong participant, and that the APWC, along with the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative, aka the "Knitting Circle," was "instrumental to the success of the project development and public review process..." Reilly also mentions the importance of the ongoing post-harvest monitoring. Pilot Joe wrapped up not without controversy over several trees that were marked for cutting that

should not have been. Protocols are being developed to safeguard similar occurrences on subsequent projects. Learning from the mistakes and the successes, and understanding the importance of public involvement and monitoring, BLM is moving forward on the second phase, Pilot Thompson, scheduled for later this year.

According to Jerry Franklin and Norman Johnson in another article in the SAF journal, the number one obstacle to implementing new policies is "public distrust of the agencies." This is where the APWC and Knitting Circle play a crucial role—through agency monitoring, community outreach and continuing discussions with stakeholders on the future of the Applegate Valley ecosystem. If you are interested in supporting and joining in the APWC's mission "to promote ecosystem health across the Applegate watershed through stewardship, education and restoration carried out in partnership with landowners, agencies and other interested parties while contributing to local economic and community well-being," please contact Janelle Dunlevy, Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council coordinator at 541-899-9982 or by e-mail at coordinator@arwc.org. Please visit our website at www.applegatepartnership.org.

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Note: Articles quoted in this story are by Jerry F. Franklin, PhD, and Norman K. Johnson, PhD ("A Restoration Framework for Federal Forests in the Pacific Northwest," *Journal of Forestry*, December 2012), and Ed Reilly, an Applegate resident recently retired from BLM ("The Pilot Joe Project: Dry Forest Restoration in Southwestern Oregon," *Journal of Forestry*, December 2012).

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