

OPINIONS

An Applegater responds to the query: Who benefits?

BY ALAN JOURNET

Applegate Valley residents following global warming and local climate change consequences might be intrigued by the suggestion of Robert Bennett (Spring 2019 *Applegater*) to ask *qui bono?* Though translated as “who benefits,” it remains an unanswered question. Readers might also want to *cui bono* (follow the money).

While Applegate residents are experiencing rising temperatures, decreasing snowpack and river flow, increased risk of wildfire, and summer skies clogged with smoke, we might well wonder who benefits. As the climate shifts far from the historic pattern, those most compromised are farmers, wine growers, and forest owners/managers. To these we can add anyone who spends time enjoying the beauty of the region and the recreational opportunities it provides. The Douglas firs dying all over the valley are a harbinger of our future if our heads remain in the sand.

We know the financial benefits aren't going to suffering Applegaters. While farmers and ranchers try to adapt, firefighters and agency staff combat fires, our natural systems are deteriorating, kids and older residents suffer most, and unpaid climate organization volunteer activists gain nothing.

However, the salaries of fossil fuel corporate executives scoring multimillions of dollars a year and the huge dividends corporate shareholders reap annually reveal who benefits. And then there are the billionaire corporate pillagers and plunderers of our natural world who use our air and water as a dumping ground for the waste they refuse to control.

We read the usual right-wing examples of government malfeasance promoting wars without quite learning which are thought to be Fox/Trump frauds and which are real. Then, we read the fraudulent claim about dire scientific warnings in the 1970s of a forthcoming ice age.

Research publications in the 1970s were slightly more complicated. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, we saw growing acceptance of a decades-old proposal that patterns in the orbit and angle of the Earth as it rotates the sun (the so-called “wobble”) drove the Ice

Ages. While researchers realized that these patterns were collectively acting to induce cooling at that time, climate scientists published data demonstrating that Earth was warming. These competing trends continue today. While the Milankovitch cycle (as the orbital Earth behavior is called) should still be cooling our planet, data indicate we are warming. In addition, science tells us clearly that the culprit for warming is the increasing concentration of gases in our atmosphere resulting from our behavior.

This means our greenhouse gas emissions have countered the cooling and replaced it by substantial warming. Since Milankovitch is driving us towards cooling, we are responsible for over 100 percent of the warming that has happened.

Folks can promote all the claims of government malfeasance and all the fraudulent claims about science they wish, but reality bites. The science is as clear as science ever gets—the planet is warming, climate change is happening, Applegaters are experiencing it, and human behavior is the primary cause.

We can reject the science and continue the path to environmental destruction, or we can understand the science and respond accordingly so our children and grandchildren inherit a livable Applegate and a livable planet. Whether we cling to science denial or accept reality is our choice. And, yes, indeed, we should follow the money—when we do so, we discover it's flowing from the pockets of Applegaters to the pockets of uncaring but already wealthy fossil fuel corporate executives and shareholders.

Reducing emissions in Oregon may not solve the world's climate problems, or even the Applegate Valley's climate problems, but unless we do our part to reduce emissions, we will lack the credibility or moral authority to urge other states and nations to protect our valley by reducing theirs. If we simply deny reality and cling to the world of illusions promoted by Trump and friends in DC and Salem, our children and grandchildren will suffer more than we ever will.

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Nontoxic roadsides for southern Oregon

BY H. NÍ AÓDAGAÍN

Much of the 1,500 miles of county roads that crisscross Josephine and Jackson counties is routinely sprayed with synthetic pesticides to eradicate weeds. This is done to maintain visibility, reduce fire risk, and ensure stable roadside shoulders. A new initiative, Non Toxic Roadsides for Southern Oregon, suggests there are more environmentally sound ways to reach these goals.

Non Toxic Roadsides is joining a decades-long effort by community members throughout Josephine County to reduce and eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides. Two organizations have been leading this fight; (1) Beyond Toxics aims to protect all communities from toxic pesticides on parks, sporting fields, and schools. (2) Williams Waterway is an all-volunteer, donation-based community organization and is part of the 28-year struggle to keep the Williams Watershed nontoxic.

Bianca Ballara, campaign coordinator for Non Toxic Roadsides, describes this new effort as “a community-led campaign supported by Beyond Toxics, Pollinator Project Rogue Valley, and the people of Josephine and Jackson counties. Non Toxic Roadsides is inviting our county officials to make our roadsides toxin-free.” Ballara acknowledges the obligation of the county to keep roadsides safe, but insists that the greater obligation of the county is the overall health of its citizens.

Scientific research has shown that glyphosate, the primary ingredient in Roundup, poses significant health risks to the general public (washington.edu/news/2019/02/13/uw-study-exposure-to-chemical-in-roundup-increases-risk-for-cancer).

In April, a poll taken by the Grants Pass *Daily Courier* found that 71 percent of its participants want Josephine County to end the use of pesticides to control roadside vegetation. Community members are concerned about the health risks associated with these pesticides for themselves and their children; the detrimental effects they have on crops, livestock, and wildlife due to drift; the adverse effects on our waterways; and the enormous damage being done to our pollinators.

Kristina Lefever of Pollinator Project Rogue Valley explained that glyphosate is just one of the pesticides that is having an enormous impact on pollinators. A study published in 2018 showed that glyphosate perturbs the digestive system of honeybees, creating holes in their gut, which increase their susceptibility to infection (pnas.org/content/115/41/10305).

Pesticide application impacts beetles, wasps, moths, and butterflies living in the vegetation along our roadsides, all of

which play crucial roles in our ecosystem and pollinate our food sources.

A 2019 article published in the *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* concluded that glyphosate residues were found one year post-application (nrcresearchpress.com/doi/abs/10.1139/cjfr-2018-0331#.XTjQs5NKii5). This finding demonstrates that plants can store glyphosate for more than a year. Therefore, wildlife that forages along roadsides could be adversely impacted as well as humans ingesting fruits and vegetables grown near roadside edges.

Non Toxic Roadsides recently invited county officials from Josephine and Jackson counties to study sessions to explore alternative options to spraying. Advocates hope these two counties will join the growing list of counties who are significantly reducing pesticide applications on roadsides. To the north, Lane County has been successful in implementing this change. Closer to home, the City of Talent has created a pest-management plan that does not use pesticides and has made multiple parks in their city pesticide-free.

Daryl Jackson of Williams Waterway suggests that maintaining our roadsides sustainably can be done by planting xeriscapes (landscapes that need little irrigation) with plants such as native, drought-resistant California poppy, tarweed, and Queen Anne's lace; by employing mechanical mowing; and by using other techniques that are not harmful to the environment.

Williams Waterway has an ongoing agreement with Josephine County to not spray along 40 miles of roadside in Williams. But this agreement and other future agreements with the county depend on local citizens speaking up and letting the county know they support alternatives to synthetic pesticide spraying.

Show your support of Non Toxic Roadsides for Southern Oregon.

- Call or write your county commissioners. Urge them to attend future study sessions put on by Non Toxic Roadsides. Ask them to stop the use of glyphosate and other synthetic pesticides on our roadways and public spaces and to adopt safer practices. Visit beyondtoxics.org for information on how to contact your local commissioners (beyondtoxics.org/work/non-toxic-oregon/non-toxic-southern-oregon).
 - Follow Non Toxic Roadsides on Facebook (search Non Toxic Southern Oregon).
 - Send an email to show your support or to get involved to bballara@beyondtoxics.org and pollinatorprojectroguvalley@gmail.com.
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Next deadline: November 1

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.” —attributed to Albert Einstein

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