

## A stand-up guy

Rather than retire, Applegater Randy Bogardus started a business. Clearwood Paddleboards keeps him inspired, fit, and flush in “fun money.”

BY CHRISTINA AMMON

When Randy Bogardus hit retirement age, he realized he’d need more income. He could have easily become an Applegate handyman, but the idea of unclogging drains and mending fences didn’t inspire him. If he was going to have to work into his old age, he wanted it to be something fun.

So, at age 64, he took a leap and started Clearwood Paddleboards (clearwoodpaddleboards.com). The Applegate-based business sells build-your-own kits for stand-up paddleboards (SUP) and surfboards. The kits include assembly manuals, tech support, and all the parts needed to assemble a hollow paddleboard or surfboard.

I toured Randy’s shop on Bishop Creek Road on a late spring day. He greeted me in cool, beachy flip-flops and a surf shirt. At 76 years old, he moves with the *pura vida* spirit and ease that comes with a life spent in proximity to water.

His shop was full of planers, drill presses, and stacks of paulownia lumber—the lightweight wood he prefers for board construction. Although most boards are made of foam these days, wood boards go back hundreds of years when Hawaiians and Polynesians—“the original surfers”—carved native woods to make their boards.

For Randy, using the material represents a coming together of his passions: carpentry, woodworking, art, and surfing.

“When I started this business in 2010, I launched into a two-year program to set it up,” Randy explained, gesturing toward all the equipment. “I told myself: ‘This will work!’”

By all measures, it has. Clearwood Paddleboards now ships products internationally. During COVID, his business surged; people had spare money and time to build paddleboards. Recent economic uncertainty has slowed the business some. Still, he makes enough to have “walking-around money.”

### A lifetime near water

Randy’s passion for the water started early, when he used to sit with his grandmother at a family beach house in Lincoln City, Oregon. Gazing at the sea, he would watch tugboats pulling loads of lumber in the distance. He writes on his website, “There was always something about those images of the far-off ships and tugboats that seemed adventurous, wild, and engaging.”

As a teenager, he built a wooden sailboat with his dad and enjoyed using it for years. With his love of watercraft now fully ignited, his course was set. He’d continue to lead an adventurous lifestyle, building houses and boats, traveling, crewing, and surfing.

Eventually, decades of surfing took a toll on his shoulders. That’s when stand-up paddleboarding piqued Randy’s interest. While surfing requires overhead arm motions, with SUP, he could lock his shoulders in the down position and use his core to power the body and board forward.

Soon he was a regular at Applegate Lake, paddling the length of it every day. He even started to enter races—and win. Randy laughs: “People would say ‘Oh, here comes grandpa on his wood board!’”



Randy Bogardus at his Applegate Valley shop. Photo: Christina Ammon.



Stand-up paddleboarding is “the single best fitness activity I’ve ever done,” says Randy Bogardus. He can often be found paddling the length of Applegate Lake in the mornings. Photo: Tim Daw.

### Life in the Applegate

Given his love of the sea, one wonders why Randy doesn’t live full time at the coast. But he’s content in the Applegate Valley. “There is just an ambiance to the Applegate that not too many parts of Jackson County have,” he explains.

We finished our tour by looking at some of the completed boards that he has around the property, each of which takes hundreds of hours to complete. One was made partially out of redwood salvaged from “Tunnel 13”—an old tunnel at the top of the Siskiyou where the last train robbery in North America occurred. The tunnels back then were shored with old-growth redwood from Humboldt County. By the mid-1980s, the government abandoned those railways and took all the old shoring out. Randy got his hands on some.

Looking back on the last decade, Randy credits the internet for some of his success. “Any place FedEx and USPS goes, I can go.”

Of course, his persistence counts for something too. And passion. “It really does change the nature of work when you just can’t wait to get up and get started,” he says.

And, last but not least, a pinch of financial strain. “People say, ‘Necessity is the mother of invention,’” he laughs. “I say ‘Desperation is the mother of invention!’ I just kept telling myself: This *has* to work!”

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Paddling down the Applegate River.

## Join the Applegate Paddling Club for a fun-filled day on the water at Hart-Tish Park!

BY ANGIE FUHRMANN

The scenic shores of Applegate Lake will be bustling with excitement on September 17 at the Applegate Paddling Club’s family-friendly event that promises to be a nice blend of outdoor adventure and community camaraderie.

The Applegate Paddling Club, known for its passion for all things paddling, invites both seasoned enthusiasts and newcomers alike to their upcoming meeting and public paddle. The event, from 1 pm-sundown at Hart-Tish Park, will offer a fun experience for water sports enthusiasts of all ages.

### What’s on the agenda?

Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a meeting from 1-2 pm followed by a flat-water group paddle, ensuring a delightful day on the tranquil waters of Applegate Lake. The meeting will allow members to set priorities for the upcoming year, shaping the direction of the club’s activities and initiatives.

### Paddle craft for all

For those eager to take their skills to the water, a collection of paddle craft will be available for people to try out. If you’re a seasoned pro, we encourage you to bring your own gear, and if you’re a newcomer looking to borrow equipment, we will have

some to share. The event caters to all levels of experience!

### Building community and awareness

Beyond the thrill of paddling, the event aims to foster a strong sense of community among paddling enthusiasts in the Applegate Valley. It also seeks to raise awareness about the joys and benefits of paddling in this picturesque region.

### Join the fun

No registration is required! Simply show up at Hart-Tish Park with your favorite food to share at the post-paddle potluck starting at 2 pm. Be sure to bring your own beverages. If you need them, adult and child personal flotation devices (life jackets) will be available.

### Embrace the outdoors

Don’t miss this exceptional opportunity to be part of a community paddling event that promises fun and community building. Mark your calendars for September 17 and get ready for an unforgettable day at Applegate Lake.

Want to know more about the club? Visit [applegatepaddlingclub.org](http://applegatepaddlingclub.org) or email us at [applegatepaddlingclub@gmail.com](mailto:applegatepaddlingclub@gmail.com).

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