

# Conifers are focus of the upcoming Siskiyou Crest Field Trip Series

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

Conifers make up a large part of the local ecology and provide a lens for understanding the complex habitat mosaics and biodiversity that define the region. Applegate Siskiyou Alliance (ASA) is in the process of securing special use permits from the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management for a series of field trips to visit all 25 different conifer species that grow in the Siskiyou Crest region. The plan is for eight different field trips between May and August this year. Participants will be able to register for a single trip, all eight trips, or any variation in between.

The Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains, well-known for their incredible biodiversity, contain more conifer species—35 species—than any other temperate forest in North America. As a result of the region's unique geology, steep topographical complexity, pronounced microclimates, dramatic elevation gradients, and millions of years of undisturbed evolution, the Siskiyou Crest region alone supports an astounding 25 conifer species. It also supports many rare, endemic, paleoendemic, and newly evolved species of all kinds, but it is the world-class conifer diversity that is so renowned and will be the focus of this field trip series.

When registration opens, more information about the field trip series will be found on the Applegate Siskiyou Alliance website at [applegatesiskiyoualliance.org](http://applegatesiskiyoualliance.org)



Suzie Savoie visits the Baker's cypress near Miller Lake.

and Facebook page. Sign up for ASA's email listserve for email notification.

The field trip series will be led by Luke Ruediger and Suzie Savoie. Other botanists, naturalists, and specialists will be invited along on different trips to help participants learn more about the biodiversity of the region.

This field trip series is for you if you:

- are interested in exploring some of the wildest and most botanically diverse locations in our region.
- are interested in developing a stronger sense of place in the Siskiyou Mountains.
- want to learn more about the region's forests, conifer species, and biodiversity.
- want to get out and enjoy the wildflowers, vistas, and local scenery while learning about conifers.
- have local native conifer species in mind that you've never seen before and that you've been wanting to see—here's your chance!

We're still firming up details but wanted to get a notice about this exciting field trip series in the *Applegater* before the field trip season starts. Below is the initial itinerary; final dates will be firmed up when ASA completes the permitting process.

Come meet some of the conifer species that define our region.

## May

- Little Grayback Trail: gray pine, incense-cedar, knobcone pine
- Sucker Creek Trail: Port Orford-cedar, Pacific yew, Douglas fir

## June

- Anderson Butte/Jack Ash Trail: western juniper, common juniper, ponderosa pine

- Sundew Lake near Bloomfield Pass: Pacific silver fir, noble fir, sugar pine, grand fir
- Whisky Peak: Alaska yellow-cedar, Brewer's spruce

## July

- Big Red Mountain and Tamarack Meadows: Jeffrey pine, lodgepole pine, white fir
- Miller Lake: Baker's cypress, western white pine, mountain hemlock

## August

- Mt. Ashland: whitebark pine, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, Shasta red fir

Suzie Savoie  
[klamathsiskiyou@gmail.com](mailto:klamathsiskiyou@gmail.com)

## Variegated wild incense-cedar tree catches the eye

In February 2023 I was hiking with my husband, Luke, in the snowy upper reaches of Elliott Creek, in the Upper Applegate, at about 3,600-foot elevation, when I caught sight of a strangely pale conifer. I moved closer to it and realized it was an incense-cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) with naturally variegated foliage in a tapestry of creamy white and pale yellow,



Incense-cedar tree with variegated foliage found by Suzie Savoie.

streaked with green. I thought it was unusual and kind of cool, so I took a bunch of photos and created an observation on the app iNaturalist.

Ten months later I got an email from Jake Shreckhise, PhD, a US Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service horticulturist at the US National Arboretum, Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit, in McMinnville, Tennessee. He had seen the iNaturalist observation online and was interested in coming here to get some cuttings. "One of my research goals is to evaluate and introduce underused native trees and shrubs for the ornamental landscape and nursery industries. *Calocedrus decurrens* is one of my species of interest, and the variegated seedling you came across and posted in iNaturalist caught my eye," Jake said.

To save him the time and effort of coming here, I made the couple-hour hike to the tree myself this past February, thankfully with no snow this time,

and took a bunch of cuttings for Jake. [The tree is on US Forest Service (USFS) land, and I have been in communication with the folks at Star Ranger Station, so they were aware of the effort.] The variegated cuttings were overnighed to Tennessee, where they were grafted onto rootstock, much like fruit-tree grafting. The hope is that the trees will keep the

variegation, grow it out, and become a new, named cultivar for nurseries to provide to the public.

"The tree is unlike anything in the trade, in my opinion. Sure, there are plenty of variegated conifers, but nothing with that pattern," Jake said.

After completing this fun project, I reached out to several botanists, including retired USFS botanists Wayne Rolle and Barb Mumblo, who have decades of botanizing experience throughout the region. Neither knew of anyone who had ever come across a naturally variegated conifer locally either, so it's definitely an exciting find. Jake offered to pay for my time, but I told him I didn't need any money to help him with this. I just requested that, if they do succeed in making a named cultivar out of the cedar I had found, they would name it after the Siskiyou Mountains in some way. I suggested "Siskiyou Snow."

Suzie Savoie  
[klamathsiskiyou@gmail.com](mailto:klamathsiskiyou@gmail.com)



Do you know

WHAT YOUR HOME IS WORTH?

IT MAY BE WORTH MORE THAN YOU THINK!

I'M SIMONA FINO. YOUR DYNAMIC REAL ESTATE EXPERT IN SOUTHERN OREGON

Scan the QR code To Get Your

---

FREE HOME VALUATION

---

Call or Text Simona Fino  
at 541-326-2552

SCAN



Did you know that having a strong negotiating agent on your side can make a huge difference in maximizing the value of your home? Even if you aren't thinking about selling anytime soon, it's important to know how much equity you may have in your home. Getting your FREE Home Valuation, you can stay informed and make better decisions about your financial future. Don't miss out on the opportunity to know the true worth of your home!



Living Southern Oregon

Discover local and real estate updates on my YouTube channel! Scan this code to find and subscribe for the latest insights and information.

NEW 3D XRAY TECHNOLOGY





Now offering Clear Correct!

ClearCorrect is the simple, effective way to straighten your teeth. Yes, we do **Root Canals!**

\$99.00 New patient exam, standard prophylaxis (cleaning), and xrays.

Ask us about conscious sedation for your dental anxiety. We can help!

Offer good with coupon only. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Offer excludes treatment for Periodontal Disease. Expires May 31, 2023. Excluding insurance reimbursement. No cash value.

Rex F. Miller DMD PC

Comprehensive & Cosmetic Dentistry

Clip this ad!  
Open Mon. - Thurs.

570 Blackstone Alley • Jacksonville

541-899-1924