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APPLEGATE OUTBACK: MY OPINION

**The old age hunter—
Let your brains do the work**



BY BOB FISCHER

To a man who has passed the double nickel in age, elk hunting is one tough business. It means blowing snow, endless miles of rock-filled lonesome trails, cold thin air and mountain passes. It means long days in the saddle or trying to cover ground on foot. In no way should you let your age get in the way of bringing home a good bull elk. Try doing what I do: two days before the elk season opens, I drop everything and start preparing.

During this time rest is important, so I don't get any. To safeguard against dozing I munch on a handful of instant coffee crystals every half hour or so.

My eyes look like veined cocktail onions staring out of little tunnels. I exercise with 40 pound sacks of steer manure on each shoulder, staggering back and forth between the barn and the house. After that I trot up and down on Thompson Creek Road pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with wet chicken poop, two cases of Red Dog beer and ten stones from my wife Linda's garden.

This guarantees that for a couple of days after I get to elk camp, I'll look awful.

I showed him my lucky rifle sling as a pitiful display of my last hope. I'll be ashen and stiff and appear too frail to bench press a cleaning rod. In a few days, I will be fine again, but my 20-year-old guide won't know this. He'll be convinced my time on earth is just about over, and spend the entire hunt in fear of killing me through overexertion.

My pathetic wheeze, along with the way I look, will not only make the poor youngster do his absolute best to get me an elk, he will make the entire hunt as work-free as possible. To those of you who are able to hump and pump to get your elk, this might sound a bit drastic. But look pal, I'm not a kid anymore.

So I have learned to use my brains, and my guide's brawn!

Bob Fischer • 541-846.6218

Cantrall-Buckley Park Update

BY LAIRD FUNK

Looking back, Cantrall-Buckley Park had a great camping season last year and is looking forward to another one next summer. The new restroom/shower building was busy all season and was appreciated by all who camped with us. Just having the luxury of the facility made camping at Cantrall-Buckley a newly pleasant experience for our campers. Families with small children were especially thankful for the convenience.

In this article we would like to announce the completion of the first section of the new potable water system, but we can't. It seems that last June Cantrall-Buckley applied for a \$30,000 grant from the BLM to install the first section of the new line and was expecting to start work on this last October after the grant was approved over summer. But the government, in its own manner, decided to "improve and modernize" the BLM grant process by transferring all such decisions to the Portland office and giving all of the responsibility to one person with a new computer system. Well, October came and went, followed by the rest of 2009, before we even heard from the BLM.

Then the message was that they were suffering from "technical difficulties" with the new system and had not yet even begun the decision-making process. The positive side of all this is that our water line is the preferred project for our BLM district and will most likely be funded, but no one knows when, most certainly not the BLM. The best guess now is that the process will be concluded sometime this spring with work to begin in the fall after camping season ends.

The line is a 4" water main from the well in the day-use area to the campground parking area with a tie-in with a previously installed section of water line going to the new restroom. Currently the campground is served by an ancient 2" poly pipe system which repeatedly fails under the higher pressure from the larger pump put on line last fall. That system had been repaired several times a year before the new pump and is now mostly useless except for hole digging practice.

The 4" water line is intended to eventually be the source for water hookups at each campsite to go



New bathrooms

along with sewer and power service to each campsite. There are several thousand feet of water and sewer line and electrical cables which will be part of that work and the expense is estimated to exceed the total of the two grants used to build the sewer system, the wetland treatment area and the new restroom. Our crystal ball is unclear where the money will come from, but we are as dedicated as possible to progress and are happy just to have a chance for BLM funding of the first section.

Rain or shine, spring is on the way and we all know spring brings out the coupling urge in our fellow humans and happy couples left and right will be getting married. Since its start, Cantrall-Buckley Park has been the site of many wonderful weddings. With the verdant expanses of lawn, the scenic Applegate River flowing by and the majestic conifers, Cantrall-Buckley Park makes an exceptional wedding venue. There are several available rental areas, each with their own attractions, but each being more than suitable for a grand occasion.

So if a wedding is in your plans this year, we invite you to visit the park, discuss the various areas with our Park Manager, Rick Barclay, and then contact the Jackson County Parks office to reserve a site for the date of your dream wedding. For what its worth, no wedding celebration I have ever attended at the park has ever ended in divorce. It must be the magic of the place that makes that so. And if all of that is not enough to entice you to marry there, consider that the prices are the most reasonable around for such a great spot. Oh, and remember, if you are serving barbeque, make sure I get an invite.

Lastly, one of the features of living in the Applegate is that out of state visitors start arriving right after the swallows. I sincerely appreciate seeing old friends and catching up on old times, but you know, sometimes it gets just a bit crowded around the old homestead when we all get together. This year I am informing all my Applegate-bound friends about the joy of camping at Cantrall-Buckley Park.

See ya next time!

Laird Funk
541-846-6759

Wedding staging area

