

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opinion Pieces and Letters to the Editor represent the opinion of the author, not that of the Applegater or the Applegate Valley Community Newspaper. We are a community-based newspaper that receives diverse opinions on different topics. Letters should be no longer than 450 words, and may be edited for grammar and length. Opinion Pieces should be no longer than 600 words. All Letters and Opinion Pieces must be signed, with a full street address or P.O. Box and phone number. Individual Letters may or may not be published in consecutive issues.

Address Opinion Pieces and Letters to the Editor to:  
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Jacksonville, OR 97530  
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## Introduction to the Siskiyou Upland Trails Association

Dear Editor:

The Siskiyou Upland Trails Association was formed in 2009. SUTA's mission is to create a community trail network along the Siskiyou upland ridges to link the existing trail systems of Ashland and Jacksonville. The Jack-Ash trail will provide opportunities for those enjoying non-motorized activities such as hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, and long-distance running. Those wanting a quiet stroll through the woods with their families and dogs will enjoy the vistas. We are working to formalize this trail system with the local community, the US Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, and private land owners to ensure the trail is carefully sited and maintained to protect these diverse ecosystems along the ridgelines.

The trail system includes the historic Sterling Mine Ditch Trail as part of a loop around Anderson Butte. This 26.5 mile trail drops no more than 200 feet in elevation, contouring along the hills of the Applegate valley, and is a favorite of hikers, runners, equestrians, bird-watchers, and wildflower enthusiasts. Thanks to hard work from SUTA volunteers and BLM trail crews, most of the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail has been cleared and trimmed. Using grant monies that SUTA requested, BLM will continue to improve the trail tread, access, and post signs in the coming months.

This fall we will be exploring new trails to link the Jacksonville and Ashland trail systems. Come work with us, and enjoy the trails!

Please call Hope Robertson at 541-899-5665 or Neal Anderson at 541-899-5555 for more information or log onto: [www.sutaoregon.org](http://www.sutaoregon.org)

Neal Anderson, Applegate Valley

artist's rendering of the cat and dog cottages  
we're building for abused, neglected, and at-risk pets



### Our pledge to our four-legged friends: safety, comfort, and love.

We need your help to make Sanctuary One, the Applegate's first non-profit care farm, a place where cats and dogs can enjoy the same tender, loving care we already provide to over 50 formerly abused, neglected, or at-risk farm animals, including horses, llamas, goats, sheep, pigs, cows, burros, geese, ducks, chickens, and more.

We serve the neediest of the needy. We specialize in rescuing animals we get from animal shelters, humane societies, rescue groups, and law-enforcement agencies that are overcrowded or have run out of other options to preserve an animal's life. We can give lifelong care to disabled, elderly, and chronically ill animals that are unlikely to be adopted.

Our dog and cat village will house up to a combined population of 100 animals at a time in two modest, home-style cottages surrounded by big, fenced-in parks so animals can relax outside and play anytime they like.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation. An anonymous Applegater will match, dollar for dollar up to \$50,000, all donations with "cat & dog village" written on the check's memo line. Credit card users, please visit our website. If you wish to make a gift of \$1,000 or more, or are considering an Estate Planning gift, please contact us for details.

 **sanctuaryone**  
at Double Oak Farm

13195 Upper Applegate Road • Jacksonville, Oregon 97530  
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**People, animals, and the earth: better together.**

*Always borrow money from a pessimist.  
He won't expect it back.*

## OPINION

## Monument doesn't fit our checkerboard landscape

BY SANDY SHAFFER

I first heard about the proposed 600,000 acre Siskiyou Crest National Monument in April, when the Jackson County Commissioners were opining that they had not been a part of any discussions on the proposal. A local conservation organization, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands, had apparently proposed this new Monument to the Obama Administration without collaborating or discussing their ideas with local or state political, wildfire, or forestry folks.

About half of the proposed monument lies within the Applegate watershed, and most of that is wildland-urban interface or WUI, where you and I live. As the Applegate Fire Plan's coordinator, I've learned that usually things are done in a collaborative way in southwestern Oregon when it comes to land use planning, especially given our "checkerboard" land ownership pattern.

Personally, I do feel that much of the area within KS Wild's proposal is deserving of some sort of protection. But I'm not excited about moving so much land in our Applegate watershed into the "no treatment" category (especially WUI lands), and that's what seems to happen when land becomes a Monument.

During a presentation to the Siskiyou County Commissioners on April 6, the Medford District's BLM staff presented some observations of what they've experienced while attempting (my word) to manage the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) over the past few years. They have met a lot of resistance. The following points are all "public knowledge" from that meeting.

Some of the plusses or benefits that the BLM has observed in managing the CSNM are that "primitive recreation" has improved, the road density is being reduced (good for hydrology and wildlife), and that the Monument land and its 'objects of biological interest' are being protected. However, the list of what I consider to be negatives was a little longer and presented more significant issues.

BLM staff noted in April's meeting that they are experiencing resistance to road maintenance and improvements, as well as to *any* (BLM's word) vegetation management, including fuels treatments,

thinning and forest health treatments in the CSNM. The BLM also noted that due to the checkerboard land ownership patterns in the Monument, there has been an increase in incidental trespassing onto private lands. And, the BLM says that all management and project work is more complex, because "managing for intangible, ecological sustainability objectives" has greatly increased the level of environmental analysis. I could interpret this to mean more staff time and money to manage a Monument, thereby taking away from projects on regular BLM lands in the WUI. So, I wonder what *two* Monuments in one Resource Area would do to said budget?

Of course, *my* main concern was that the BLM was finding that fighting wildfires is "more complex" in the Monument, with constraints regarding which firefighting tools may be used. Having been too close for comfort during the Quartz and Squires Peak fires, I don't think I'm a fan of complex and constrained firefighting. Nor am I a fan of not doing any vegetation thinning on public lands; I have walked enough forestland and lived in the woods long enough to know that if we don't manage our forests, Mother Nature will, using lightning. Could we afford a Biscuit-sized fire here in the Applegate?

In my wildfire education work over the past nine years, I've learned that safe and effective firefighting requires strong structure, rules, consistency, and communication. WUI fires are especially complex to fight; I can only imagine the chaos of having to change equipment or tactics when a wildfire moves from federal monument land to private land, and back again.

The BLM and the Forest Service are currently rewriting a national wildfire management strategy to change how things are done on *all* land ownerships. It's my opinion that *any* new Monument designations (anywhere) should be put on hold until this new strategy is completed and interpreted for all federal land designations. And, in the meantime, maybe KS Wild can organize and host some inclusive public meetings for interested Oregonians and Californians?

Sandy Shaffer • 541-899-9541

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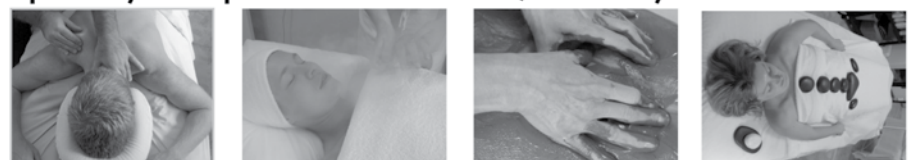
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