

MY OPINION FROM BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Some perspectives on 2011 and beyond

BY CHRIS BRATT



Chris Bratt

Opportunities to support local agriculture

Last year Joan and I decided to become members of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program that began this past December. The CSA winter program we joined is run by Barking Moon Farm. It's a small-scale organic home farm a half mile beyond us on Thompson Creek Road. They also use two other leased parcels close by on Highway 238 and North Applegate Road. The farm family consists of two adults, their two small children, and one farmhand. (During the main season the crew expands to about seven people.) The Barking Moon folks are happy and excited to have our support, but they can't be more excited or happier than we are by receiving their local fresh vegetables through these colder and darker months.

By joining the Barking Moon CSA, we are receiving fresh organic vegetables—broccoli, beets, cabbage, carrots, chard, various lesser-known greens, kale, spinach, turnips, onions, shallots, leeks, rutabagas, parsnips, potatoes, winter squash, radishes, salad mix, cauliflower and a couple of other surprises—every two weeks into February. The boxes of produce we have received so far are remarkable in size (we could feed a family of four), freshness and taste. They even provide recipes to cook common and uncommon vegetables. This is such a great way to get our fresh food and support our local farmers at the same time. They are also our neighbors, who are committed to growing wholesome organic food. Community Supported Agriculture is such a good idea to patronize wherever you live.

Whether urban or rural, all CSAs are helping to make a healthier food system and more sustainable communities and agriculture. You might think about signing up for a CSA program in your area this coming year. You'll be supporting your local farmer, eating well, and saving money. For more information about the above CSA, call 541-973-6914 or email

barkingmoonfarm@gmail.com.

BLM indulges in collaboration (again)

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), also our neighbor, manages most of the public forestland near residents in the entire 500,000-acre Applegate drainage. Once again, they are experimenting with collaborative efforts between various interest groups when planning timber sales and other projects in our community. They are also inviting community members and yours truly to participate. So, you may receive a letter asking for your comments when they begin planning projects in your area. Hopefully these efforts will continue to improve relations.

Community folks should be aware

that Thompson, Slagle, Humbug, Forest and Bishop Creeks are all currently designated for timber sale activity as part of a

larger Middle Applegate Planning Area. BLM is calling each of these subdrainage timber sales, "Pilot" projects. Pilot Joe Timber Sale (thinning and fuels reduction) in the Chapman/Keeler drainage area was planned and sold without any protests to the Boise Forest Products last year. The participation and cooperation between all the interested parties paid off. Pilot Thompson, now being planned for sale in 2012, will be more of a cooperative telltale since it is three times larger than Pilot Joe.

These Pilot projects were proposed by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, who is BLM's appointed boss. The idea is to demonstrate the forest restoration principles of well-known forest scientists Jerry Franklin and Norm Johnson. Their Pilot restoration principles are designed and being put forward as a model for all future BLM forest management in this and other areas. Monitoring and evaluating the "on the ground" results of instituting these principles will be key to see if they work

for the forest and the community.

Given that the Pilot Thompson area contains important salmon habitat, several pairs of northern spotted owls, old-growth trees and me, BLM must put forest restoration activities first and timber sale volume as the secondary consideration. All concerned Thompson Creek and other interested folks should be taking BLM up on their offer of inviting participation in these Pilot projects that are testing these latest theories of restoration forest management.

BLM's Medford District is also showing additional good faith and cooperation with these Pilot projects by allowing a community person to participate on their

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Pilot Thompson Interdisciplinary Team (ID Team). This ID Team includes agency staff and biologists who take the

lead in planning projects and making recommendations to the eventual decision makers.

The Applegate community is lucky to have someone as competent and knowledgeable as Applegate's volunteer citizen forester, Luke Ruediger, working with BLM on these ID Teams. Luke has already attended an ID Team meeting and has raised issues within the group that are of concern to many residents. Luke will be making email reports (one is already available from the first meeting) as the ID Team meetings progress. If anyone has any ideas, comments or suggestions for Luke to bring forward, or if you would like to see his reports, he can be contacted at elliottcreek@yahoo.com.

The recovery of a species

I'm not reporting here on the dramatic comeback of some rare, vulnerable or endangered wildlife or fish species. Rather, evidence is showing that the real endangered species is our own human

race and we are in dire need of rehabilitation. I believe we, the human species with our perceived dominance over the earth, have put ourselves and all other species on the planet at risk. We can no longer ignore the unpleasant realities we have created in every area of our human activities.

Like the BLM and local farmers above, we have to try some new theories of living in harmony with the earth and each other. We must overcome our predisposition of self-interest, over-consumption and greed, and make new, enlightened choices of how we can live together. There are many small local opportunities and actions we all could take as first steps to a more certain and safe future for all creatures.

Let me know if you are willing to try.

Chris Bratt
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