

Community Calendar

AA Meeting There is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous every Wednesday at 7 am at the Williams Community Church Fellowship Hall on East Fork Road in Williams. This meeting is open to those who have a drinking problem and have a desire to stop drinking, and also to anyone interested in the Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from drinking.

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Grants Pass Branch meets monthly from September through June. Days, times, and locations vary. All those who hold an associate of arts, a baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited college or university are welcome to join. Contact Connie Johnson at budcon@charter.net or 541-476-2567, or Angie Bifano-Sokol at angiebifano@hotmail.com or 541-862-8228. Visit our website at <http://aauwgrantspass.org>, and see us on Facebook.

Applegate Christian Fellowship. For service times, call 541-899-8732, 24 hours/day.

Applegate Fire District Board of Directors meets on the third Wednesday of each month at Station 1, 18489 N. Applegate Rd. at 7:30 pm. Except for the months of March, April and May, which are held at Headquarters, 1095 Upper Applegate Road. For more information, call 541-899-1050.

Applegate 4-H Swine Club meets on Tuesday following the third Wednesday of every month at 7 pm. For more information contact Charles Elmore at 541-846-6528 or Barbara Niedermeyer at 541-846-7635.

Applegate Friends of Fire District #9 meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the Fire Station—1095 Upper Applegate Road—at 6 pm. New members are welcome. For more information, call Bob Fischer 541-846-6218.

Applegate Library Hours
 Sunday.....closed
 Monday.....closed
 Tuesday.....2 pm - 6 pm
 Wednesday.....closed
 Thursday.....closed
 Friday.....2 pm - 6 pm
 Saturday.....10 am - 2 pm
 (Storytime will be held Tuesdays at 2:30 pm.)

Applegate Neighborhood Network (ANN) meets on the last Wednesday of every month at the Ruch Library. All interested persons are welcome to attend. ANN is a community organization dedicated to protecting, preserving, and restoring the Applegate watershed. For more information about ANN, call Duane Bowman, 541-899-7264.

Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council meets the 4th Thursday of the month at the Applegate Library. For more information call 541-899-9982.

Applegate Valley Garden Club meets at 1:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month from September through May. For meeting locations and programs, call Sandra King at 541-899-9027 or Betty Lou Smith at 541-846-6817.

Food & Friends Senior Nutrition Program invites local 60+ seniors to enjoy a nutritious, hot meal served at 11:30 am Monday through Friday at the Jacksonville IOOF Hall located at the corner of Main and Oregon Streets. A donation is suggested and appreciated. Volunteers help serve meals or deliver meals to homebound seniors. For information about volunteering (it takes 40 volunteers to keep the Jacksonville program going) or receiving meals, call Food & Friends at 541-664-6674, x246 or x208.

Friends of Ruch Library Board of Directors meets on the first Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm at Ruch Library. All are welcome. 541-899-7438.

Grants Pass Nordic Ski Club meets on the first Thursday of the month, November through April, at the Newman Methodist Church at 7th and B Streets in Grants Pass at 7 pm. Ski outings are on Saturdays. Listings are on the snow phone at 541-592-4977.

Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation meets the second Wednesday of January, April, July and October at 6 pm at Applegate Fire District Station 1, 18489 North Applegate Road. For more information, go to www.gacdc.org.

Josephine County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) meets Thursdays at 6 pm. For meeting information, call 541-474-6840.

Ruch Library Hours
 Sunday.....closed
 Monday.....closed
 Tuesday.....11 am - 5 pm
 Wednesday.....closed
 Thursday.....1 pm - 7 pm
 Friday.....closed
 Saturday.....12 pm - 4 pm
 (Storytime will be held Tuesdays at 11 am.)

Sanctuary One is open to the public for farm tours every Wednesday and Saturday at 10 am. Recommended donation is \$5. Please check out our website for details: www.SanctuaryOne.org and call to reserve a spot. 541-899-8627.

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association meets the first Monday of each month, 7:30 pm, at the OSU extension. For more information, please contact sobeekeepers@gmail.com.

T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) meets every Monday morning at Applegate Church, 18960 North Applegate Road (at the corner of Hwy. 238 and N. Applegate Road). Weigh-in starts at 8:30 am; the meeting starts at 9:00 am. Come join us!

Williams Creek Watershed Council Meetings: fourth Wednesday of the month at 7 pm at the Williams Creek Fire Station. The Public is welcome. For more information, call 541-846-9175.

Williams Grange Pancake Breakfast, second Sunday of each month, 8:30 to 11 am, followed by the Bluegrass Jam, 11 am to 1 pm. Closed July and August. 20100 Williams Hwy. near Tetherow Rd. Information 541-846-6844.

Williams Grange #399 Business Meeting, second Tuesday of each month, 7 pm. 20100 Williams Hwy. near Tetherow Rd. Information 541-846-6844.

Williams Library Hours
 Sunday.....closed
 Monday.....closed
 Tuesday.....1:30 pm - 4 pm
 Wednesday.....1:30 pm - 4 pm
 Thursday.....closed
 Friday.....closed
 Saturday.....12 pm - 4 pm

Williams Rural Fire Protection District Meetings: fourth Wednesday of the month at 7 pm at the Williams Fire Department.

Women Helping Other Women (WHOW) meets the second Tuesday of the month at 10036 Hwy 238 (Gyda Lane) at 6:30 pm for a potluck meeting to plan work parties at each other's homes. New members are welcome. For more information, call Thalia Truesdell at 541-899-8741 or Sioux Rogers at 541-846-7736.

Wonder Neighborhood Watch Meetings: second Tuesday of each month, 6:30 pm, Wonder Bible Chapel.

Send your calendar information to gater@applegater.org. Be sure to keep the Gater updated with any changes to these Community Calendar listings.

Firing away at media distraction

BY TOM ATZET

There were loads of media coverage of the tenth anniversary of the Biscuit Fire. My comments emphasize fire's behavior as ecosystem process and a tad about how the anniversary was covered.

Let me start with an anecdote. It happened over 20 years ago. As I vaguely recall, the climax of this science and values seminar at the Southern Oregon University Union bottom floor was billed as a shoot-out between the timber industry and environmentalists, represented by Greg Miller and Jack Shipley, respectively. Like circling vultures, reporters and cameras lined up at the back of the room to cover the impending contentious debate. Unbeknown to everyone, Greg and Jack had been talking and listening to one another, backstage, about their visions for our valley. They walked out together and jointly announced that their commonalities greatly outweighed their disparities, and they would emphasize collaboration.

That caused a bit of commotion in the back of the room as many of the reporters and all of the camera crews immediately packed up and left.

I can't say that this anecdote characterizes the behavior of the media—after all it's only one observation and I have not objectively studied coverage as an issue. It's just a feeling that controversy and the sensational get more attention than unbiased,

solid information. I have, however, studied and analyzed ecosystems and the role of fire (including the Biscuit) in southwestern Oregon since the late 1960s. and I think our community could have been better served by a focus on basic fire concepts rather than dredging up old controversies.

Closure in science is frowned upon. Since "we can't learn what we think we know" (don't know who first said this, maybe Yogi, but I am willing to learn), it's imperative to keep an open mind. However, we are surer of some concepts than others. For example, we are almost certain that each of us will die, sometime. But the proposition that everyone will be taxed is less certain. Similarly, in ecology, some concepts carry more power than others.

Let's review some of what we think we know. Ecosystem fire is temporally and spatially universal. Records document that fires have occurred throughout the Applegate Valley for at least the last 12,000 years (Native American information), and probably as long as lightning has been around. Although the second half of the previous sentence is supposition, it is widely regarded as virtually certain.

Fire is essential for maintaining ecosystem functionality across the landscape. Fire assures some level of mortality, stimulates reproduction, and helps to redistribute resources (carbon is a biggie) for growth and survival. Severe fire often produces open space, allowing new combinations of genes (reproduction) to be tested under changing environmental

and biological stresses. We assume that the best adapted survive, but there are always individuals that are just flat-out lucky. Regardless, all add to species diversity.

Fire produces a range of severity effects across the landscape, which varies by elevation aspect, slope, live and dead fuel loads, weather and random chance, to name a few. Until the Biscuit Fire, southwestern Oregon national forest records indicate that high severity fire, sometimes called "stand replacement fire," typically occurred on less than 20% of the area burned. Low severity fire, where a scattering of vegetation is lightly burned skipping about half of the area, usually occurred on over half the burned area. In other words, fires create a mosaic of landscape effects and diversity that tend to increase ecosystem resilience. One of our communities' main goals is to eliminate "house replacement" fire.

In the last few decades, local burns have included an increasing proportion of high severity fire (Quartz about 40% and Biscuit about 50%). Speculation about this increase includes global warming, intense fire suppression, management practices, salvage, backfires and lack of management. Causal relationships in ecology typically comprise a nonlinear combination of all of the above. Complexities are often lost on those who prefer straightforward single-factor explanations. While it may be exciting and controversial to speculate and assign blame, the focus should be recognizing valid behavior and trends.

Have you ever noticed that when greeting a friend the intensity of the greeting is related to the amount of time you've been apart; the greater the length of the absence, the more intense the greeting. Similarly, the intensity of a fire is inversely related to the frequency of occurrence. The greater the amount of time between fires, the more severe the effects. I'm not sure what builds up during absences between friends, but in the ecosystem, live and dead fuels accumulate faster on more productive sites.

Most, if not all, of how the Biscuit Fire behaved was expected, except maybe for the size and the proportion of high-severity fire. But that also seems to be in keeping with the current national trends—larger and more severe fires.

Most of us understand the principles for sustaining our own health. Fire is a bit like exercising the human body—it both breaks down and builds up structure (and there are many beneficial ancillary effects). Both exercise and fire may sometimes be unpleasant and cause pain, but nonetheless contribute to long-term health and sustainability. We do understand how fire serves the basic long-term needs of ecosystem health; dredging up old controversies is an unneeded distraction.

It's just a feeling that controversy and the sensational get more attention than unbiased, solid information.

Tom Atzet
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BORED?

Check out our online calendar
 jam-packed with events all over southwest Oregon.

www.applegater.org

Happy Holidays!