

Dave Foreman coming to Oregon and the Applegate

BY DIANA COOGLE

Bring wolves to the Siskiyou? Increase the population of mountain beaver? Why?

"Because," says Dave Foreman, one of the country's foremost environmental activists, "without rewilding we can expect to see a steady collapse of many species. Ecosystems will become more and more unhealthy." His example is the decimation of wolves in Yellowstone and the resulting out-of-control elk population.

On Wednesday, October 23, Foreman will be speaking at Pacifica in Williams. Activities begin at 7 pm with music by the Swing State band, and dinner and wine will be available for purchase. The atmosphere sounds festive, and rightly so. The speaker is a man who celebrates the Earth.

Dave Foreman is an Earth First! cofounder, intrepid protester of the 1988 extension of the Bald Mountain Road in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness (only a backward run kept him from being hit by a charging truck), author of *Rewilding North America* and *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, cofounder of the Wildlands Project, and founder of the Rewilding Institute (etc., etc.). His topic will be "Rewilding North America" with particular attention to our part of the world.

Rewilding, a term coined by Foreman, means to return missing parts—the "highly effective members of the ecosystem," whether wolves or large woody debris in streams—to relatively wild lands. It also means to undo land fragmentation by making connections between wild areas.

"We need to connect the Kalmiopsis Wilderness with the Siskiyou Wilderness with the Russian Wilderness with the Marble Mountains with the Trinity Alps..." Foreman says, and if nobody stops him he will make a connective corridor for wildlife all the way down the coast to the end of California and beyond.

It's a big vision. But Dave Foreman is a big visionary.

When Foreman talks about barriers, he doesn't mean political barriers but those parts of the landscape that prevent the movement of wildlife: highways, dense human populations, dams. "For instance," Foreman says, charging unstopably ahead, "we need to figure out how to go under, over, or around highways. A bear will go through a culvert, but a deer won't enter a dark space because a cougar might be there. So maybe we put skylights in the culvert."

The southern Oregon - northern California area has a great potential for rewilding, Foreman says, because it is a large landscape with lots of wilderness and relatively few barriers.

Foreman's goal as a speaker is not so much to educate audiences (though he is both educative and entertaining) as to be a catalyst for people to work together for a specific project. He also wants to assure any antagonistic people that rewilding is not a United Nations plot. It has been given scientific and academic footing by conservation biologists Michael Soulé and Reed Noss as well as forest service researchers.

Foreman considers the greatest challenge facing us as human beings is "to learn how to live as good neighbors with all the other earthlings." All religions, he points out, talk about treating your neighbor as you would like to be treated. We need to see our neighborhood as larger and more complex than houses, and to



Environmental activist and Earth First! cofounder Dave Foreman will speak on Wednesday, October 23, at Pacifica in Williams, Oregon.

recognize wild things as our neighbors. "Get to know them," he urges. "Flower identification, bird-watching, mushroom hunting—those things make us less likely to be bad neighbors."

The talk in Williams is a neighborly affair—music, food, wine, a gathering of good folks, an inspiring speaker. Admission is a friendly \$20 - \$10 sliding scale and free for students with ID.

Foreman will also speak at the Stevenson Union at Southern Oregon University in Ashland on October 22 (7:30 pm) and will sign books at the Ashland Library on October 24 (1 - 3 pm). Contact Paul Torrence at 541-708-0153 for more information.

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Thinking for ourselves: Taking back wildlife conservation

BY JAKOB SHOCKEY

Conservationist Aldo Leopold once wrote, "All the regulations in the world will not save our game unless the farmer sees fit to leave his land in a habitable condition for game." He was writing in 1930, but today this statement still stands. Replace the words *game* with *wildlife*, and *farmer* with *landowner*, and this could have been written about the Applegate.

In the State of the Birds 2013 report, produced by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, conservation efforts on private lands were highlighted as some of the most significant reasons behind species recoveries. Of the approximately 1.9 billion acres in the lower 48 states, some 1.4 billion acres (over 70 percent) is controlled by private landowners, organizations and corporations. As the report pointed out, some bird habitat can be disproportionately located on private land. Between 70 to 95 percent of the population of Yellow-billed Magpie, Nuttall's Woodpecker and Oak Titmouse is on private land due these species' dependence on our Pacific Coast oak woodland ecosystem.

We live surrounded by public Bureau of Land Management and U.S. National Forest lands; however, private landowners control the vast majority of low-gradient waterways and fertile land needed by our wildlife. Our private parcels line the



Juvenile Western Pond Turtles in the Shockey pond.

tributaries of the Applegate River. For the beaver and salmon, this means that we own their only habitat. Birds that rely on riparian areas are also highly dependent on private land, as are black-tailed deer that come to water, and wild turkeys that take cover with their spring chicks.

I grew up six and a half miles up Thompson Creek, on a 40-acre parcel of land cut from the forest at the turn of the century. As a kid, I saw Chinook, coho and steelhead spawn and die along our little stretch of the stream. I poked at their dead

wet muscles, white and ripped open by their trip upstream from the ocean. Once I found where a black bear had pulled a salmon carcass into the forest to eat it. Later, one of our dogs tried the same trick and almost died from salmon poisoning. According to a 2007 assessment, Chinook don't make it up to our part of Thompson Creek. But I saw them there ten years ago.

"Wildlife conservation" has become a flashy, overused term that makes me think of the same five animals, environmental fundraising and land management agency

brochures. My goal is to cut past these PR sound bites and get to the real fish muscling their way up our valley's streams, and what they need in order to be here for our children. Over the next few issues of the *Applegater*, I intend to lay out a tool kit for how you can strengthen the natural resources of your property and our valley. For we, as private landowners, can have far more impact on the future of this landscape and its wildlife than anyone else out there.

Let me offer the first tool: your neighbors with the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC). Since the early 1990s, the APWC has worked for ecosystem health in our valley "from ridge to ridge." Right now, the riparian program is working with landowners to restore habitat along nearly two contiguous miles of Thompson Creek. We are cutting out invasive blackberries, replanting native trees and shrubs, and placing large wood habitat structures. If you live along Thompson Creek—or any other creek in our valley—and are interested in learning more about how to improve your riparian area for wildlife, let me know.

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