

A view worthy of a trail: East ART progress

BY DAVID CALAHAN

Since March 23, the Applegate Trails Association (ATA) has watched our locally hired crew lean into the task of creating a new hiking trail high on the slopes above Bishop Creek. Whack, whack, whack, foot by laborious foot, grubbers and Pulaskis bit into the earth, leaving a narrow brown path that crept slowly across the incredibly beautiful and diverse landscape of our valley. On the ground, progress was measured in hundreds of feet per day. On the map, progress was measured in tiny quarter-inch segments.

By now the actual construction of the 5.6-mile East Applegate Ridge Trail (ART) is nearly completed. Although improvements at the primary trailhead off Sterling Creek Road are done, a number of tasks still need to be accomplished before the trail is officially opened to the public, hopefully this summer. The trail's proximity to Jacksonville, jaw-dropping views, and an easy grade for the first three miles are bound to make the East ART very popular. Shortly after we started, the trail was discovered by mushroom pickers, hikers, mountain bikers, and critters, all pleased to be using a trail across those steep slopes.

For me, reality set in during the first days of trail building. After so many years, thousands of volunteer hours, and thousands of dollars, this community dream was coming true. But as the thin brown line grew, I had to ask myself, what have we done? "If you build it, they will come." It is true, they will come. I know in a short time the disturbed earth will blend again and from a distance the trail will disappear. Mother Nature is an excellent healer. But I had to wonder, will all the benefits of the trail outweigh the impacts of so many humans coming to what once was a difficult place to visit? Analyzing this question from many angles, I felt my internal scales tipping heavily to "yes," and every thoroughly delighted and astonished hiker reinforces that conclusion. The trail is a good thing.

This undertaking has elicited so much support it is impossible to thank all those who deserve it. But some special praise should be given to the ATA board (past and present); Siskiyou Upland Trails Association; Annette Parsons; Duane and Katy Mallams; Zach Million, recreation planner with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); the late Ed

Reilly; Rogue WorkSource; Northwest Youth Corps; and all those volunteers who showed up for the three East ART work parties. Few can appreciate how much these people have put into this project.

For those wielding a tool, the work caused some sweat and maybe a blister or two. Funding for the trailhead improvements, trail planning, and construction came from REI, the Schwemm Family Foundation, Title II grants, fundraising, and your donations.

What's next for the East ART and ATA? First we seek funding to establish an improved trailhead on the west end off Highway 238 near Forest Creek Road. Then we start planning for the Center ART, from Highway 238 to Humbug Creek. This section of trail will access the 7,000-acre Wellington Wildlands, which is comprised of all the public lands between Highway 238, China Gulch, Humbug Creek, and the Forest Creek ridgeline. Even though these public lands look and feel like wilderness, they do not have official



Aerial photo of East ART view by Scott Harding.

wilderness status or protection. ATA is convinced that the public can sway BLM away from logging the few isolated patches of timber in this incredible backyard gem. It is our

hope that BLM will recognize the true value of recreation in southern Oregon, especially nonmotorized recreation in wild places, and give it the attention it deserves.

ATA has two more scheduled events. On Sunday, June 18, Alex Weinbrecht (alex@applegatetrails.org) will host a horseback ride on the Enchanted Forest Trail. Bring your own horse. On Sunday, July 9, Diana Coogle (diana@applegatetrails.org) will host a hike on Mount Elijah. For more information, go to applegatetrails.org.

When it is ready, you must go up on the East ART. The grade is gentle, and the views, starting in a few hundred yards, get better and better around every corner. It is a whole new way to see the Applegate. See you on the trail.

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Chair, Applegate Trails Association

Williams says farewell to beloved teacher Joanne Wardle

Joanne Wardle has been teaching school for more than 30 years (since 1985), the past seven of which have been at Williams Elementary School. Now retiring, she will spend her last day with students on June 15.

While Joanne may be looking forward to retirement for sleeping in on school days, gardening, traveling, and spending precious time with her grandchildren, there are those at Williams Elementary who say she will be sorely missed.

"I have had the pleasure of working with Joanne for the past three years," said Darrell Erb, principal. "She's an amazing teacher—so committed to students and this community, so caring and positive—we will miss her big-time. She picked us all up every day!"

The search has begun to fill Joanne's position. There is always a new chapter, but Joanne's service has left a legacy at Williams Elementary.



"Joanne's story is one of unselfish service to us all, and her impact will live on," said Mindi Gallegos, office manager at the school. "We will miss her infectious smile, her upbeat disposition, and, best of all, her home-baked goodies!"

We wish her the best in her retirement!

Annual Williams scholarships awarded

Each year scholarships toward ever-increasing college expenses are given to deserving students who live in the Williams School District. This year a total of \$3,250 was awarded to three exceptional students. Congratulations to:

Autumn Hewitt • Autumn Wilkins-Kahn • Calder Wilson

The Williams Community Scholarship Fund was established in 1982 by Ray and Peg Prag, Wendell and Irene Shampine, and Burt Eikleberry. In the last 35 years, well over \$50,000 has been awarded in the form of 115 well-earned and much-needed scholarships of varying amounts.

Originally, money for these scholarships was earned by selling soft drinks at Pioneer Round-Up. Later, funds were raised by selling plants, mainly donated by Forestfarm. Each year most of the earnings were awarded as scholarships, while a small portion was saved and invested so that the Williams Community Scholarship Fund could award scholarships based on annual interest earnings. This year, however, with such outstanding students, more money was given out than earned, making your donations all the more important.

In the face of rising tuition costs and the increasing importance of continuing education, the scholarship fund was created to "promote post-secondary education for members of the Williams community." Scholarships are awarded on the basis of scholastic achievements, extracurricular activities, financial need, and long-range goals.

Please consider donating to the Williams Community Scholarship Fund. Donations enable us to provide more and/or larger scholarships. One hundred percent of donated funds goes towards scholarships. There are no administrative costs—the five Board members volunteer their time. Donations from community members stay in the community. For more information, contact Peg Prag at 541-846-1100 or peg@pacificgarden.org.



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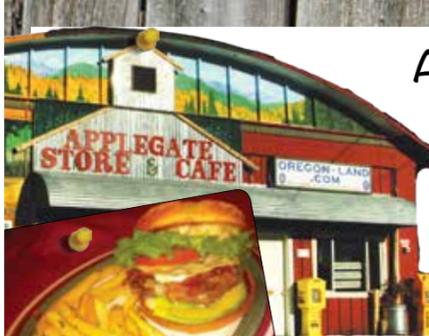
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