



Applegater

Photo by Teya Jacobi

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Celebrating
~24~
Years

Applegate trails are one step richer—the East ART is finished!

BY DIANA COOGLE

The Applegate Trails Association (ATA) is tickled pink these days. Patting ourselves on the back. Gushing with excitement. The East ART is finished!

The East ART is the 5.6-mile eastern end of the 50 miles of the proposed Applegate Ridge Trail. You can now drive to the roomy trailhead on a gravel road off Sterling Creek Road (coming from Jacksonville, take the first right after mile marker 4—there are signs), hike a few hours on a gorgeous trail of easy-to-moderate difficulty, and descend through the woods to a smaller, as yet undeveloped, trailhead on Highway 238, not far from Longanecker Road. You will have had a fabulous day. The East ART is easily accessed, close to urban centers, and easily hiked. It's a winner all around.

It will be a winner for horseback riders, too, but not yet! It is dangerous for horses at this time. The trail is narrow in places and crosses steep slopes, so there is no place for horses and hikers (or face-to-face horses!) to pass. The narrowness of the trail in some places would be difficult for a horse to navigate. There are also places with stones or roots that a hiker can easily see and step over but that could trip a horse. ATA has vowed to have the trail horse-friendly by the end of winter.



On the East ART trail a half mile in from the Sterling Creek Trailhead, Lily Kaplan trains her lens on the spectacular view while her dog, Shayna, focuses on wildlife. Photo: Lily Myers Kaplan.

ATA thanks all the volunteers who helped build the trail, the WorkSource trail crew, and the BLM workers, including supervisor Zach Million, who didn't have to swing the pick but did and who was BLM's main person seeing the trail into existence. Special recognition goes to ATA board members Luke Ruediger and Josh Weber for their work on the trail and their skillful supervision of trail workers.

We also thank, again and again, all the people who have supported the dream of

a trail from Grants Pass to Jacksonville with their money; their presence at fundraisers, hikes, and other events; and their signatures on postcards for ATA to present to BLM to prove the widespread support for this trail.

Signatures haven't been hard to come by. Patrons of outdoor stores, tourists on the streets, hikers, rafters, picnickers—everyone said, "What a great idea. Of course I'll sign." A tourist from Paris, Pacific Crest Trail hikers from Australia—

these people's signatures proved that out-of-towners support the idea of the trail, too. After all, people who come here to hike, or who come here and hike, also boost the economy. According to an Oregon Parks and Recreation Department report, nonmotorized trail activities generated an estimated \$2.1 billion in expenditure across the state in 2014 and contributed 24,340 jobs, \$1.2 billion in value added, and \$753 million in labor income. No wonder so many people support the Applegate Ridge Trail!

Hike the East ART this fall and see what we're so excited about. Do be aware of the heat, though. Those fabulous views are possible because much of the trail crosses open slopes, which can be very hot in extreme temperatures, so wear a hat and bring plenty of water. On other days open slopes could be windy and cold, so wear a hat and a windbreaker and, as always, bring plenty of water. The trail goes through evergreen-and-madrone forests and oak savannahs as well as those open slopes, so keep your eye on the weather and plan your hike accordingly.

Next up for ATA will be the equestrian improvements on the East ART, the establishment of a good trailhead on Highway 238, and the preliminary work on the Center ART.

See our video about hiking the route of the Applegate Ridge Trail on our website at applegatetrails.org, where you can also contribute to our funds, if you like. And enjoy the Applegate trails while the weather is good!

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How climate change affects grapes in southern Oregon

BY DEBBIE TOLLEFSON

Though climate change has the potential to greatly impact agriculture of all types, it could be especially significant for growing grapes, since the right climate—from winter dormancy through harvest abundance—is essential for optimum results in grapes and, ultimately, in wine.

One of the foremost scientists studying the effects of climate change on viticulture (the science of the cultivation of grape vines) and viniculture (the science of making wines) is Greg Jones, formerly of Southern Oregon University. (More information about his new home appears on page 16.) I highlighted Greg in a "Grape Talk" article a couple of years ago.

In 2005, Greg conducted a study of the nature of, and changes in, the growing season (April - October) for California, Oregon, and Washington grape-growing regions. (See page 16 sidebar for specific parameters.)

Using data from the US Historical Climatology Network (USHCN) that cover the region from the Puget Sound of Washington to the Central Valley of California, he created a 1950 - 2049 model comparing these regions. Statistics for the Rogue Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA) came from weather facilities in Ashland and Grants Pass. Because the

See *CLIMATE AFFECTS GRAPES*, page 16

Lawmakers work to preserve Oregon's agricultural heritage

BY NELLIE MCADAMS

Oregon is known for its abundance of farms and ranches; in fact, agriculture is the state's second largest economic driver.

Jackson County alone is home to more than 200,000 acres of agricultural land. That translates into 1,700 farms and ranches, 72 percent of which are owned by those over the age of 55. In addition, new research shows that a large majority of that 72 percent don't have a comprehensive succession plan in place to ensure that their land will stay in agricultural production once they retire.

This brings up the question: Who will be our next generation of farmers and ranchers? With land prices in Jackson

County increasing almost 30 percent in ten years—from \$3,604 in 2002 to \$4,682 in 2012 (according to the 2012 US Department of Agriculture Census of Agriculture)—beginning farmers and ranchers are finding it more difficult to acquire the large sums of acreage it takes to run a successful agricultural operation.

But it's not for lack of trying. This became apparent last May when dozens of interested parties attended a succession planning workshop co-hosted by the Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District, the Josephine County Farm Bureau, and Rogue Farm Corps.

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