

## OBITUARIES

**Thomas Doty****Dec. 9, 1952 – June 11, 2020**

Noted storyteller Thomas “Tom” Doty, 67, died in his sleep at his Ashland home on June 11, 2020.

Doty was born in southern Oregon, where his ancestors arrived after coming across the Oregon Trail, settling near the Rogue River in the 1800s. He also had family connections to Takelma and Shasta ancestors from the native village of Coyote’s Paw along the Klamath River near the Oregon-California border.

Tom attended historic Beaver Creek School in the Applegate in his youth and spent time exploring the backcountry with his dog Tippy, hiking and camping with family and friends. Night after night, in the light of a campfire, he listened to stories about relations who have called southern Oregon home for generations. These included native stories told by Grandma Maude.

In the 1970s, Tom studied writing and theater at Southern Oregon University and Reed College, and he spent time listening to storytellers in England and Ireland and in southeast Alaska, the homeland of the Tlingits. In 1981, he returned home to the Rogue Valley and became a storyteller, learning his art from native elders.

“Our association began in the 1980s through my work as an anthropologist/archaeologist in southern Oregon,” recalls Tish McFadden of Ashland, “and through his performances as a native storyteller throughout the state.”

Tom did a lot of research on the Dakubetede, the original indigenous people of the Applegate Valley, Tish said, noting that the tribe was completely different from the Takelma and spoke a different language. Tom’s cultural and educational contributions to Tish’s “Upriver to Morning” project, a

multimedia dramatization of the teachings of the late Takelma elder and spiritual leader Agnes Baker “Grandma Aggie” Pilgrim, helped make the project accurate, compelling, and in alignment with native Takelma beliefs and practices.

“As a touring native storyteller, he witnessed a dire need for authentic indigenous curriculum in public education at every grade level,” Tish said. “He tirelessly helped me forge a path from concept to near-completion. He was resolute in his passion and commitment to provide content for ‘Upriver to Morning’ while honoring native ways in modern times. His rich storyteller’s voice created the audiobook.

“The seeds of Tom’s research, teachings, storytelling, and programs have grown into deep and lasting roots of awareness, respect, and understanding of our region’s cultural heritage. His attention to accuracy and interpretation of Oregon’s indigenous cultures reflects his personal integrity, passion, and wit. His life’s work literally fills volumes.” Tom frequently was the star attraction at storytelling events in the Applegate, and with Grandma Aggie reinstated the traditional indigenous salmon ceremony on the Applegate River.

“All who heard him share stories of Salmon, Coyote, and Rock Old Woman unite in this profound loss,” Tish said. “He was a one-of-a-kind educator, a two-legged archive of indigenous culture, a prolific writer, a revered public speaker, and life-long wanderer. Thomas Doty, may you rest in peace among the stories and stars, with no beginning and no end. You will be profoundly missed and lovingly remembered here on earth as your life carved a story in stone that will never fade.”

**Watershed project plan protest deadline nears**

An agreement between the two largest public land management agencies in southern Oregon will have a far-reaching impact on 52,000 acres in the Upper Applegate Watershed, according to an August 14 announcement by the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management Medford District.

The official Decision Notice for the joint-agency Upper Applegate Watershed Restoration Project was signed August 13, marking a milestone for the project, which was initiated as a collaborative effort between the agencies and interested community stakeholders in 2015.

According to the announcement, the agencies sought to use an all-lands approach that utilizes nature’s benefits. Paramount to the work was to address the need for fuels reduction at a larger scale and the importance of collaborative efforts in landscape management.

Each agency has issued a unique decision with a wide variety of actions, including cross-boundary fuels reduction work, recreation work, and pollinator habitat restoration and enhancement.

In keeping with the intent of the Applegate Adaptive Management Area, the decision will also allow for adaptive management and collaboration during implementation.

**Highlights of the decision include:**

- Up to 100 acres of riparian restoration;
- 1,228 acres of habitat enhancement for *Fritillaria gentneri*;
- 4,876 acres of prescribed fire work;
- 1,920 of thinning treatments meant to enhance and promote forest health;

- 2,890 acres of thinning in plantations;
- Restoring a short foot trail near McKee Bridge Picnic Area;
- Decommissioning up to four miles of unauthorized OHV trails;
- Designating and enhancing 2.5 miles of existing trail for multi-use access;
- Designating 1.8 miles of trail for non-motorized recreation;
- 1,497 acres of oak and hardwood enhancement work; and
- 3,198 acres of pollinator habitat improvement.

To see the BLM Decision Record, visit the BLM project page at [bit.ly/3aupC1O](http://bit.ly/3aupC1O) (click on the “Documents” box at left). A 15-day protest period for the BLM document that opened August 19 closes at 4:30 pm Thursday, September 3. Protests may be emailed to [BLM\\_OR\\_AFO\\_VMP@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_OR_AFO_VMP@blm.gov) or mailed to the Medford District Office at 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504.

For additional information about the BLM Decision Record, email Lauren Brown, Ashland Field Manager, at [lpbrown@blm.gov](mailto:lpbrown@blm.gov), or call 541-618-2232.

Visit the RRSNF’s page dedicated to the Upper Applegate Watershed Management Project at [bit.ly/3aun4Rx/](http://bit.ly/3aun4Rx/). To see the Forest Service Decision Notice in its entirety, go to [bit.ly/3ausnQI](http://bit.ly/3ausnQI). The Forest Service’s final opportunity for comment on the draft plan was in September-October 2019. For additional information about the Forest Service final Decision Notice, email Donna Mickley, district ranger, at [donna.mickley@usda.gov](mailto:donna.mickley@usda.gov), or call 541-864-0900.

**Provolt recreation site now open**

BLM has re-opened the new Provolt Recreation Site across from the Provolt Store on the Williams Highway. The site is open year round, Thursdays through Sundays, sunrise to sunset, for non-motorized recreation only. Visitors can use the northern-most gate (the only one that’s open).

**Reminders:**

- Admission is free.
- Picnickers, hikers, runners, bikers, anglers, paddlers, wildlife enthusiasts, and equestrians are all welcome.
- Dogs are welcome, too, but must be kept on a leash.
- The site is closed to overnight use, campfires, shooting, off-highway vehicles, motorized boats, mining, and firewood cutting.

**Free anti-overdose drugs distributed**

Free distribution of life-saving overdose medication and HIV tests is set for 10:30 am to 1:30 pm Sunday, September 6, at the Sugarloaf Center, 206 Tetherow Road, in Williams.

Volunteers from the nonprofit group Rogue Harm Reduction will offer free doses of naloxone to take home, along with instructions for use.

Safety protocols include masks, gloves, and social distancing.

Rogue Harm Reduction hosts these events the first Sunday of each month.

For more information, email [rogueharmreduction@gmail.com](mailto:rogueharmreduction@gmail.com).

**Food pantry there for those in need**

The Applegate Food Pantry is there for those in need of help. Feel free to come by and see us from 11:30 am to 1 pm Mondays at Ruch Outdoor Community School, by the cafeteria, at 156 Upper Applegate Road.

We say “thanks” to our generous donors and all the Upper Applegate community. We have had tremendous support from our friends and neighbors that allowed us to stay open during this pandemic. To our wonderful volunteers, we say we are humbled and so appreciative for your loyalty and hard work.

If you’re interested in keeping our pantry going, donations are always greatly appreciated. To donate, make checks out to ACCESS/Applegate Pantry and mail them to or drop them off at 3630 Aviation Way, Medford OR 97504.

Any questions? Feel free to contact us.

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Thomas Doty with Agnes Baker Pilgrim.