

**■ VOLUNTEERS**

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Time to “huddle.” A meeting of the Applegate Lions Club was the perfect place to talk. Through pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners, the Lions Club members tried to raise money to start their own fire district in our valley. According to Brett, they eventually realized that “the only way to raise the kind of funds needed would be through the formation of a district.” So, on May 12, 1980, the Applegate Valley Fire District was officially founded.

The district’s first station was built by Lions Club members in the town of Applegate on North Applegate Road, just off what is now Highway 238. Since then, we’ve added six more stations across the valley: Station 2 is out near McKee Bridge on Upper Applegate Road; Station 3 is on Upper Applegate Road in Ruch (now district headquarters). Station 4 is on Highway 238 at Water Gap Road; Station 5 is at the top of the Jacksonville Hill; Station 6 is on Kubli Road east of Highway 238, and Station 7 is just off Sterling Creek Road on Griffin Lane.

Headquarters (HQ) is staffed by the fire chief, operations chief, maintenance chief, and the office manager. In addition, three captains, many volunteer firefighters, and six student firefighters rotate 24-hour stints at HQ. All are trained as firefighters, first-responders for medical calls, and water rescuers. (Don’t forget—we’ve got a river running through our valley!) So, most volunteers are fully trained for just about anything the Applegate can throw at them!

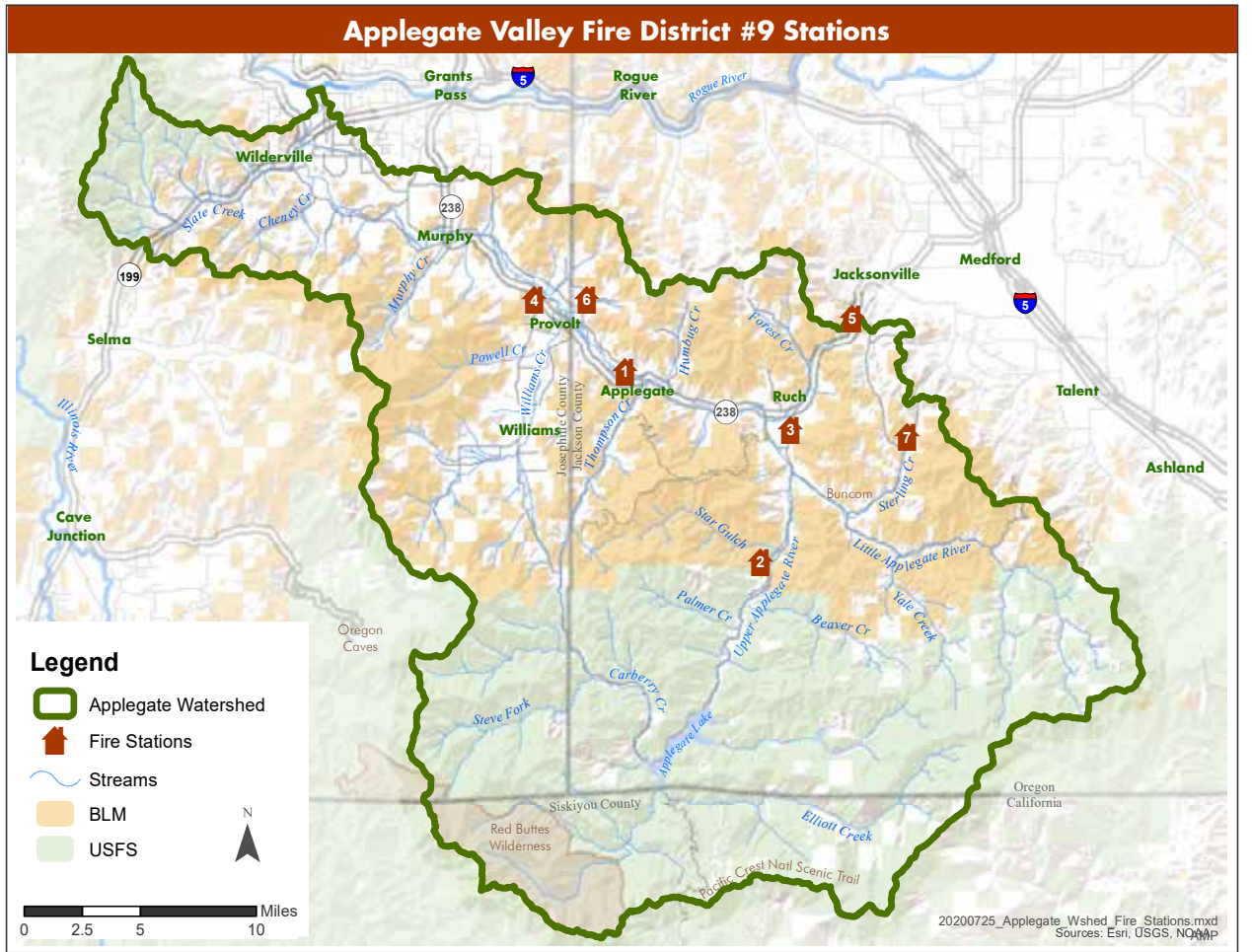
Volunteers fill many jobs at HQ, and trained volunteer firefighters/first responders from across the valley cover the needs in the other six stations.

You can see why we are always looking for more volunteers.

All of our firefighters wear pagers, and if a call is in their neighborhood, they quickly respond to their “home” station, gear up, and drive the appropriate engine to the incident.

Many of the AVRFD’s residents are retirees, a demographic that generates numerous 911 calls for general assistance, fall victims, illness, and such. Some of these calls may be covered by firefighters who live in the neighborhood, depending upon the severity of the situation. Being the Applegate, we also have a number of emergency calls during the summer recreation season, including those from sightseers visiting our local wineries.

As someone who usually has a scanner turned on to hear 911 calls, I’ve often heard several different emergency calls come in for AVRFD at the same time. HQ firefighters respond to the first call. All other volunteers know to “move up”



Volunteers are key to staffing the seven stations in Applegate Valley Fire District #9. Map by Annette Parsons.

to their closest station or prepare to head to HQ. The HQ team keeps rolling to their call. They know our volunteers have their backs!

FYI: Multiple calls are frequent when a lightning storm rolls across our valley. On a hot, dry summer evening this situation challenges AVRFD staff and volunteers alike. When a lightning storm is brewing, every firefighter is on alert, and some will bunk at their station for the night.

Probably not getting too much sleep, though!

So, yes, we really do need more volunteers in every corner of the district, but not just as firefighters! Our valley and our fire district are growing in more than one way. Think about it: This valley is all of ours.

Talk to Chief Michael McLaughlin for his thoughts on growth, training, and resources.

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**Free anti-overdose drugs distributed**

Free distribution of lifesaving overdose medication and HIV tests is set for 10:30 am to 1:30 pm Sunday, March 7, at the Sugarloaf Center, 206 Tetherow Road, in Williams. Park in the parking lot and take a short walk to the center, which is at the end of the gated driveway.

Volunteers from the nonprofit group Rogue Harm Reduction will offer free doses of naloxone to take home, along with instructions for use. They’ll also give out free fentanyl test strips, take-home HIV tests, and condoms.

Free overdose response training takes about 20 minutes. Safety protocols include masks, gloves, and social distancing.

Rogue Harm Reduction, a volunteer-run, nonprofit health collective, promotes community wellness and harm reduction strategies in response to substance use disorders and other community health concerns. The events are held the first Sunday of each month.

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

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