

# Applegater

Photo by Mikell Nielsen • applegater.org

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Celebrating  
~27~  
Years

## Locals form prescribed burn association

BY AARON KRIKAVA

An important and powerful tool for fire safety in our region has become a reality. After years of dedicated, 100 percent volunteer efforts, I and other dedicated community members have created and developed the Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association (RVPBA).

Prescribed burning is the application of controlled, low-intensity fire on the landscape to reduce fuel loads, cycle nutrients, inhibit noxious weeds, and increase native plant growth. Controlled burning is the most efficient, economical, and ecological tool for land management in our fire-adapted ecosystems. As a wildland firefighter, I've seen firsthand that water does not put out large-scale wildfires—the use of fire does. The PBA I've organized is working to put that vital tool back into landowners' toolboxes.

The RVPBA is a group of community members, including local professional fire practitioners, working together to share equipment, knowledge, and volunteer time to accomplish prescribed burns on private lands. This “neighbors helping neighbors” approach to controlled burning has been used extensively in the Midwest



Applegate community members are part of the first prescribed burn association in Oregon.  
Photo: Alan Journet.

and Southeast for decades. The first prescribed burn association on the West Coast was started in Humboldt County in 1971, and the concept has expanded quickly since then, with more than 20

California prescribed burn associations in various stages of development. Ours is the first PBA in Oregon!

This spring, RVPBA held two successful community-conducted prescribed burns

on private lands in the Applegate. The first one, on April 4, had a great turnout with 30 attendees. Participants had the opportunity to observe a controlled burn in action, learn the methods and techniques professional fire practitioners use to safely conduct a burn, help out as part of the burn crew if they were interested, and meet and build relationships with their neighbors. Everyone went away with a better idea of how fire behaves and how it can be used as a tool to make our communities safer and our forests healthier. Many attendees also left with a new relationship with fire, shifting from one of fear to one of respectful appreciation.

The process begins when an interested landowner contacts the PBA and plans a site visit. A qualified fire practitioner then meets with the landowner to do an initial evaluation for using controlled burning on the site. A burn plan is developed to determine appropriate weather conditions and resources necessary to keep the burn contained. This is called the “prescription.”

The PBA then works with landowners to get necessary permits from the Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon Smoke Management. The long-range

See **PRESCRIBED BURN**, page 21



The Applegate Valley Fire District's new engine has improved fire response capability.  
Photo: Sandy Shaffer.

## Meet the newest member of the Fire District's fleet

BY SANDY SHAFFER

Yes, this new type-six white beauty is now officially #8563 and is now responding out of our district's headquarters in Ruch. The “old” 8563 vehicle is 23 years old and has been moved to one of our district's other six fire stations that has fewer calls.

I talked to Captain Greg Gilbert and our Fire Chief Mike McLaughlin about the benefits of this new engine, and there are many! But the biggest benefit that I

heard from both men was that this new engine can carry five firefighters while the older engines can only hold three! When you need to get a team on a fire fast, you need the *whole* team! In other words, this is a fire engine for the 2020s.

Imagine having to drive a vehicle such as a bus or a moving van up and down your own narrow, long driveway, to and

See **AVFD FLEET**, page 11

## Applegate Evening Market offers much more than merchandise

BY DIANA COOGLE

“The camaraderie of the Ruch community” was the impetus driving the vision for the Applegate Evening Market, inaugurated on May 5, 2021. Its three organizers, Alison Hensley Sexauer, Sarah Osborn, and James Mulhern, envisioned a fun, family-friendly, community event, with music, a beer garden, local vendors, and crowds of Applegaters.

“We wanted it to be more than a farmers market,” Alison said. “We wanted it to be a cultural and community convening.” That's exactly what they got on opening day. Hundreds of people flocked to the Electric Gardens Flower Farm (the old Fiasco Winery) at 8035 Highway 238.

Parents pushed toddlers in strollers. Children played with balls. Newcomers to the valley and old-timers shared greetings. Shoppers chose vegetable starts from Feral Farm, tried on African-fabric wrap-around skirts by Tali Threads, picked up some bright orange carrots or a bag of greens, bought soy candles or a McKee Bridge T-shirt or a whimsical hat or a lavender wreath. Neighbors chatted with neighbors



Naphtali Shannon Riley of Tali's Threads shows off one of her offerings.  
Photo: Diana Coogle.

in front of booths, and revelers drinking cider from Blossom Bar Cidery listened

See **EVENING MARKET**, page 2

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ENVIRONMENT - FIRE - RECREATION



# Building resilient community food systems in the Applegate

BY ALISON HENSLEY SEXAUER

A “community food system” is everything involved in getting food onto our plates and what happens after. It includes the growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consumption, distribution, and disposal of food. It includes the needed inputs (water, soil, oil, fertilizers, and more) and the outputs. It includes who has access to food, and who doesn't. It includes the social, political, and environmental impacts of these actions, and, of course, it involves you. It includes the whole interconnected, complex web of life that feeds us and those around us.

“We live in a beautiful, abundant, and amazing place. So much to offer. Sure, there are missing pieces, but a lot of folks don't know what is already here and how people can access it,” said Megan Fehrman, who has been working in food systems in southern Oregon for many years with the Rogue Farm Corps and is director of vision strategy for A Greater Applegate.

Did you know you live in a food and farming mecca? The Applegate is a place where people come from afar to visit farms, wineries, and foodie destinations through both the Rogue Valley Farm Tour ([roguevalleyfarmtour.com](http://roguevalleyfarmtour.com)) and the Rogue Valley Food Trail ([traveloregon.com/things-to-do/eat-drink/oregon-food-trails/rogue-valley-food-trail/](http://traveloregon.com/things-to-do/eat-drink/oregon-food-trails/rogue-valley-food-trail/)). It is a place where, in almost every tributary of the Applegate River, one can find a small farmstand or micro ranch or farm offering plant starts, veggies, eggs, meats, breads, and cheeses. It is a place with a diversity of microclimates, native and medicinal plants, and great soils. Have you discovered your foodshed yet? If you haven't, I invite you to get to know your community food system. And I challenge you to take one step closer to localizing your diet, whatever that means for you.

If you feel like “eating local” is too expensive, consider a few things: One, if you qualify, you can sign up for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) to help your food budget. Turn those dollars around and put them straight

back into your community. To learn if you qualify, go to [oregon.gov/dhs/assistance/food-benefits/](http://oregon.gov/dhs/assistance/food-benefits/). Also, if you have access to a little plot of land, or a friend's place, growing your own is one of the least expensive and most rewarding ways to support local food production. Be sure to get localized and non-GMO seeds from our many seed growers here in the valley.

There are so many ways to deepen our relationship to our food, the place it comes from, and the people who grow it. Here are a few resources to support you in your journey to meeting your local foodshed:

- **Join a CSA.** In the Applegate we have veggie, milk, and meat shares! “CSA” stands for Community Supported Agriculture, and it is a way for our farmers to get a leg up on the season and know what to expect. You can find a list of local CSAs in this year's Rogue Flavor Guide. Pick one up or find one online at [rvfoodsystem.org/rogueflavor](http://rvfoodsystem.org/rogueflavor).

- **Shop hyperlocally** at the Applegate Evening Market in Ruch from 5-8 pm Wednesdays (see coupon, page 22), or the Williams Farmers Market on Mondays.

- **Shop at Whistling Duck Farm Store**, a one-stop shop for basic organic and local products. They now accept Oregon Trail Cards (aka EBT—electronic benefit transfer—aka SNAP—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)! Takubeh and the Williams Farm Store also often support small local growers and artisans.

- **Find your neighborhood farm stand.** Eggs, cheese, milk, dairy, or veggies—you can find it all. Consider it a treasure hunt!

- **Meet your neighbors.** Grow a garden and share the bounty, or patronize your neighbors' businesses.

Want to get more involved? There are some of us who just can't get enough of working towards a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable food system. We have a long way to go and need all hands on deck, so please reach out and let's work together.

Alison Hensley Sexauer, Coordinator  
Rogue Valley Food System  
[coordinator@rvfoodsystem.org](mailto:coordinator@rvfoodsystem.org)

# Paragliders to take to the sky again for Applegate race

BY TERRI STEWART

The Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association has been busy planning the revitalization of the annual Applegate Open Paragliding Race after the global health crisis forced its cancellation in 2020. This year's race is scheduled for June 19-26. Residents, businesses, and spectators alike can expect to see nearly

200 colorful wings soaring the skies from Woodrat Mountain. Wells Land Vineyard is the event host this year. Pilots often land there and at LongSword Vineyard during the week.

It's likely you will see pilots landing throughout the Applegate Valley and beyond depending on the weather. There are many locations open to the public, including LongSword Vineyard, to view the event. Organizers hope the public will, for safety purposes, take advantage of the many wineries to sip and watch rather than stopping along Highway 238.

Organizers are hoping the community will support the race! Here's how you can help: If you see pilots in need of a lift, feel free to offer them one. If you see a pilot in distress, please contact emergency services immediately.

Pilots will be attempting to fly to designated goal fields throughout the valley, but sometimes they don't make it and land short. Pilots are briefed to avoid fields where there are crops or where the landowner has notified the local club they are not welcome to land. But sometimes it happens. If there are problems, please contact the organizer. Also, if you have a large field on your property that you are happy to have pilots



A pilot's view of Wells Land Vineyard.  
Photo: Dan Wells.

land on, please contact [Board@RVHPA.org](mailto:Board@RVHPA.org) for further discussion.

Planning an event during a pandemic poses some challenges, but organizers want to assure the public that COVID-19 protocols are in place, including vaccinations and negative testing for pilots and staff. Attendees will be wearing masks and social distancing. Hand sanitizer will be available and proper cleaning standards will be followed. Keeping the pilots and the community safe is our top priority.

Area businesses wishing to offer discounts or otherwise increase patron traffic during race week are welcomed to contact [AO-Organizer@RVHPA.org](mailto:AO-Organizer@RVHPA.org) to discuss details.

## Volunteers needed

Finally, we are looking for volunteers. Each year about 30 non-race pilots travel to support the event and get a few flights in; however, the public health crisis is forcing many to stay safe at home. If you are interested in volunteering for the race event, lunch is on us. Please contact [AO-volunteers@RVHPA.org](mailto:AO-volunteers@RVHPA.org) to learn more.

Terri Stewart  
President  
Rogue Valley Hang Gliding and  
Paragliding Association  
[President2019@RVHPA.org](mailto:President2019@RVHPA.org)

## ■ EVENING MARKET

*Continued from page 1*

to the mellow tones of the Day Trippers band as the sun made a slow journey over the mountains.

It was all about community.

“We came here to support a local event,” said Tracy and Eric Lindorf, from Humbug Creek. “We used to go to the Barter Fair and loved the local artisans.”

Alix Marmulstein, a local business owner (Blissful Being, with massage, yoga, and herbalism), said she had come because she was “enthusiastic to support the community.”

Haley and Andy Peterson, from Thompson Creek, came out of curiosity and because it was close. “If we had to go all the way to town, we wouldn't have come,” Haley said. They were impressed by the number of booths and attendees at the event.

“Local” seemed to be the theme. Most of the vendors were from the Applegate or Jacksonville. The farthest away was from Ashland.

The initial vision for the market was clear. “Our dream is to have enough producers and farmers so the community can buy local meat, cheese, mushrooms, bread, and produce so you won't have to go to town for a grocery store,” Alison



Community residents and vendors turn out in droves for the new Applegate Evening Market. Photo: Sarah Osborn.

said. “Ruch Store is great for the things it provides, but it's hard for them to support local farmers.” She hopes the Applegate Evening Market will step into the vacuum.

The market has a good start for doing that, with beef from Salant Family Ranch, cheese from Huizache, produce from Red Buttes and Red Fern farms, eggs from Birds and Bees, and muffins from Paulazzo Pasticceria.

The idea of having a farmers market in the Applegate has been floating around the valley for a long time. A Greater Applegate (AGA) and the Rogue Valley Food Network have been listening to Applegate farmers, who prioritized a local market on

their list of needs. AGA gave the Applegate Evening Market a boost with a Technical Assistance grant for small businesses.

“It was a community call that was heard and picked up on,” Alison said.

“A void that needed to be filled” was the way Sarah put it. And she had the land to do it on. When she bought the old Fiasco Winery last year, she felt it had “tons of potential” as a spot for hosting events. So, as she and Sarah were brainstorming over lunch at the Indigo Grill, the idea of the Applegate Evening Market was born.

“Sarah took the idea and ran with it,” Alison said, but Sarah has equal praise for Alison: “She is amazing in making

Laura Ahearn does double duty in the combined McKee Bridge Historical Society and Friends of the Animal Shelter booth. Photo: Diana Coogle.



things happen. She moved everything in a forward direction.”

The third partner, James Mulhern, market manager, has been equally instrumental. He is “the face of the market.” And he was thrilled with the opening day's turnout. “Applegaters are so supportive,” he said. “There are so many small businesses in the Applegate, we have a waiting list for booths.”

The market will be open from 5 to 8 pm every Wednesday through October. There'll be music from 5:30-7:30 pm. The market is ADA accessible and family-friendly. Dogs and smoking are not allowed. Masks and social distancing are encouraged.

Ken Snope, with the Day Trippers, neatly summed up the general feeling: “It's an awesome event.”

Diana Coogle • [diana@applegater.org](mailto:diana@applegater.org)



# A whole-community approach to wildfire preparedness

BY RYAN PERNELL

Spring is a very special time in the Applegate Valley. But along with the joy of longer days and blooming flowers comes the uncertainty of the impending fire season. At A Greater Applegate's (AGA's) Neighborhood Listening Sessions, we ask folks across the Applegate Valley what is important to them and what they believe the community's priorities should be. It is no surprise that wildfire preparedness has been a prominent topic of discussion in every neighborhood we've visited so far. With time and the water table working against us, AGA got right to work considering what it would take to achieve valley-wide community readiness.

Reducing a community's wildfire risk is a complex challenge that can seem overwhelming at times. We decided to start with three focus areas: communication, education, and collaboration. Channeling our effort through this three-pronged approach allows us to focus on the community's assets and opportunities, making the task feel much less daunting. The following is a description of the projects AGA has started in an effort to cultivate a culture of resilience in the Applegate Valley.

We began by streamlining the way folks access emergency information online before, during, and after a wildfire. During 2020's hectic wildfire season, we observed that a centralized hub for up-to-date information from trusted local and state officials did not exist, costing folks precious time and much confusion. To remedy this lack of coordinated communication, AGA created the Wildfire Resource Page on Applegate Valley Connect ([applegateconnect.org/wildfire-resources/](http://applegateconnect.org/wildfire-resources/)). Here you will find links to relevant agency pages, preparedness

resources, and current updates regarding planned burns or wildfires in the Applegate Valley. You will also find recordings of "Conversations with the Crew," a collaborative effort between AGA and the Applegate Valley Fire District (AVFD) to broadcast messages intended to educate the public, familiarize the community with the AVFD crew, and provide an opportunity for folks to ask questions. Conversations with the crew are broadcast via Facebook Live. Keep an eye out for future broadcasts on the AGA and AVFD Facebook pages.

We then took our efforts offline and into individual neighborhoods, where we helped interested individuals build emergency communications systems with their neighbors. We assisted neighbors in the Little Applegate, Upper Applegate, and Humbug Creek create or update their emergency phone trees. These communications systems are tailored to individual neighborhood needs, ensuring folks without reliable internet or cell phone service can be contacted in the event of an emergency. If you are unsure if an emergency communications system exists in your neighborhood or would like help starting one, let us know and we can advise you on the process.

In the long term, AGA hopes to enhance the community's capacity to respond to emergencies by coordinating a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program in the Applegate Valley. CERT programs educate volunteers about disaster preparedness and train them in basic disaster response skills. Starting this program will require coordination among multiple stakeholder groups, fundraising, and, most importantly, community engagement. If you are interested in

## Don't miss the final AGA listening sessions

A Greater Applegate is more than halfway through our listening sessions. AGA has held listening sessions for residents of Little Applegate, Upper Applegate, Humbug Creek, North Applegate, Thompson Creek, Ruch, and Gyda Lane. We've also done focused listening sessions for Spanish-speaking residents, businesses, community-based organizations, and people engaged in the local food system.

Everything we are hearing is being used to develop an Applegate Valley Vision to ensure that the people who live and work here have a voice in our area's future. What we've learned so far is that each neighborhood may have one or more specific and very local concerns, but there is also a strong, collective vision for the Applegate Valley. Priority concerns like reliable internet, fire safety, emergency preparedness plans, more opportunities to gather together, and a strong commitment to preserving the natural beauty resonate across the watershed.

If you haven't had a chance to participate in an AGA listening sessions, please join us at one of the remaining events. It is one of the best ways we know to gather with neighbors for fun and to imagine our collective future. We bring food and refreshments and provide kid care. You bring yourself and your neighbors. We hope to see you soon!

The following listening sessions are scheduled as of press time (please contact Megan Fehrman at [Megan@AGreaterApplegate.org](mailto:Megan@AGreaterApplegate.org) to confirm logistics and reserve your space):

- Sterling Creek/Griffin Lane: Sunday, June 13, 2-4 pm at Wild Wines
- Provolt: Thursday, June 24, 5:30-7:30 pm at Dorothy Gale's Event Center
- Williams: Tuesday, July 13, 5:30-7:30 pm at Pacifica
- Applegate Lake: Sunday, July 25, 2-4 pm at Greeley Wells's place
- Wilderville and Wonder: Tuesday, August 10, 5:30-7:30 pm at Apricity Vineyard
- Murphy: Thursday, August 26, 5:30-7:30 pm, at Applegate River Golf Course.

Seth Kaplan, Executive Director  
A Greater Applegate  
[seth@agreaterapplegate.org](mailto:seth@agreaterapplegate.org)

taking an active role in Applegate Valley emergency management, let us know!

Ultimately, we've learned from the past year of separation that in-person gatherings are the best way to educate, communicate, and collaborate around the topic of wildfire preparedness. All Applegate residents are invited to join AGA, AVFD, and a variety of other local fire and forest management organizations and agencies at the Wildfire Education and Community Connection Fair planned for Saturday, June 26, 2021, from noon to 4 pm in the AVFD station #9 parking lot (1095 Upper Applegate Road). The purpose of this event is to share wildfire

information and preparedness resources, provide folks the opportunity to get connected with projects and programs aimed at reducing overall community risk, and build stronger connections between Applegate Valley residents and the organizations and agencies that serve them. We hope to see you there!

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions, suggestions, or more information on how we all can contribute to the Applegate Valley's readiness for wildfire!

Ryan Pernell, Outreach Coordinator  
A Greater Applegate  
[ryan@agreaterapplegate.org](mailto:ryan@agreaterapplegate.org)

# Trying to save Pipe Fork Creek for the future

BY CHAS ROGERS

On the eastern flank of the massive Grayback Mountain complex of granitic and metamorphic terranes lies the Pipe Fork Creek stream system. The easternmost range of the stately Port Orford cedar, this stream supports a wide variety of forest species within a narrow valley from 2,500 to 4,000 feet in altitude. Clear water from numerous perennial mountain springs supports the salmon-bearing waters of Williams Creek and Applegate River.

Hiking up the Pipe Fork canyon, which rises from the Williams Valley to the flanks of Sugarloaf Peak, is a delight and a challenge. The going is slow, through a rich forest supporting a vibrant growth of ferns, Oregon grape, salal, ocean spray, vine maple, and a variety of rare and endemic floras and flowers. The forest floor becomes a carpet of moss and lichen and gives way underfoot, like a sponge. Fallen logs lie everywhere, decaying into the ground to build the base of the soil that gives the forest life. In the stream, fallen logs form a rich, complex habitat for aquatic life.

Climbing and slipping along wet rocks and fallen logs, my hiking partner and I encounter the first of the falls that cascade over steep rocks. The water splashes over the lip, forms deep pools in the ledges and grooves, and pounds the base. Bands of

quartz and feldspar cut across the stream channel in what seems like a lightning bolt swallowed by the torrent of water. Scrambling upstream we find more falls and pools in a line of giant steps climbing the mountain.

This is a beautiful place, but it is a place in danger. The Josephine County Forestry Department is proposing a clearcut on the south-facing slopes of Pipe Fork, a move that would have severe impacts on this ancient habitat: ground dried and baked by summer heat waves, loss of stream flow and water quality—impacts found in studies of clear-cuts on other streams.

The Williams Community Forest Project and Williams Creek Watershed Council have mobilized to save this amazing environment. Concerned citizens have sent more than 1,500 letters to the Josephine County Commissioners protesting the proposed clearcut. They have attended numerous community meetings with the commissioners.

For the county commissioners, the issue is money. The timber sale would fund part of their county budget, including juvenile detention and other programs in Grant Pass. It seems reasonable, then, that if it was purchased by a reputable group intent on making it available for



Pipe Fork waters support the salmon-bearing Williams Creek and Applegate River.  
Photo: Chas Rogers.

Wild and Scenic designation, the county could buy other land without a rare forest and beautiful creek. So the Williams Community Forest Project went looking for a buyer more interested in conservation than in cutting timber.

We have now located a funder who is willing to acquire the land and then transfer it to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to protect it as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern in conjunction with the existing BLM

Pipe Fork Research Natural Area, adjacent to the proposed timber sale. We hope to complete the purchase of the land from the county before any clear-cutting occurs and to place the property into holding until BLM can acquire appropriate grant funding.

But the Josephine County Commissioners have made no promises. We can only hope they will follow through with what seems to be the best plan and sell the land for conservation purposes to preserve the forests for the future and keep the water flowing.

The fresh clear water, the falls and pools, the giant trees and lush undergrowth call to us all. This is a place for all life—humans and the native wildlife of bears, mountain lions, fishers, elk, and deer. Fish and salamanders in pools and on gravel bars thrive, as do the magnificent ferns, understory plants, and giant trees. We must save this landscape

for its beauty and atmosphere that soothe the soul and relax the mind as much as for the water that flows from the mountains and feeds the salmon-bearing streams of Williams and Applegate.

Contact us and help us on our journey to Save the Pipe Fork. We're not out of the woods yet!

Chas Rogers  
[Chasrogers360@gmail.com](mailto:Chasrogers360@gmail.com)  
For more information about Pipe Fork Creek, go to [williamscommunityforestproject.org](http://williamscommunityforestproject.org).



## POETRY CORNER

### *Plasticene Age*

by Lisa E. Baldwin  
leb.97527@gmail.com

Floating islands of discarded plastic  
in seas that are rising and losing their brine,  
colored by algae that bloom in the shallows,  
red and bright green like a grandma in Advent,  
decked out for Jesus who still hasn't come—

It was an accidental misconception.  
Brought into the world in a sloppy chem lab,  
suckled on greed and grown fat  
on addictions and throw-away ethics,  
plastic is everywhere.  
On peaks in the Rockies,  
and deep ocean trenches,  
in winter snowfall and hurricane rains,  
in the bellies of pelicans, bony and famished,  
plastic abides.

Every micro-nano-tiny-bit adds a little heat  
to the greenhouse,  
adds a little weight to the burden.  
Each single-use toss-out is another abuse  
on domestic fowl and wild mammals,  
chickens and quail, orcas and blues.  
Plastics gas and foul the air, killing  
blue skies and starry nights.

Our cities shed plastic like dead hair and skin cells,  
into the soil, into the drains,  
into our food, and our shrink-wrapped brains.  
It sloughs off in our bodies  
from hips, knees and tits.  
It flows in our arteries and veins.  
Plastic: our legacy, shame and demise.  
That's it.  
Pleistocene is over.  
Plastic is King.

*Lisa E. Baldwin, a fifth-generation Oregonian, has lived in the Lower Applegate community of Jerome Prairie since 1966. Baldwin is also a past president of the Oregon Poetry Association and is an active member of the southern Oregon poetry community. Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to Applegater poetry editor Paul Tipton at [ptipton4u2c@gmail.com](mailto:ptipton4u2c@gmail.com).*

## BOOK REVIEW IN BRIEF

### *Secret Diary* is a fine fictional tale of an Applegate area pioneer

By Margaret Myers

C. Ellen Watts has published the sequel to *The Secret Diary of Emily A: Gold Miner's Daughter*. That story took place mostly in the Squaw Lakes area of Jackson County, east of Applegate Lake. It described pioneer life through the eyes of a child and was both informative and entertaining.

In *The Secret Diary of Emily A: Beyond These Mountains*, "Emily A" chronicles her life from the age of 16, describing the life of a pioneer woman starting in 1909. This novel depicts the perseverance of the pioneers, how rugged, loyal, and committed they were in accepting their way of life.

I highly recommend this book to all people of all ages. It's a great book!

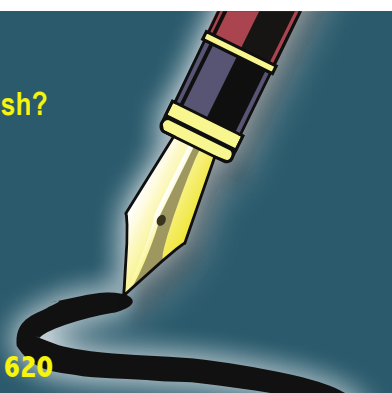
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## Authors!

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## BOOK REVIEW

### HAMNET

A Novel of the Plague  
Maggie O'Farrell  
Alfred A. Knopf  
New York, 2020

BY CHRISTIN LORE WEBER

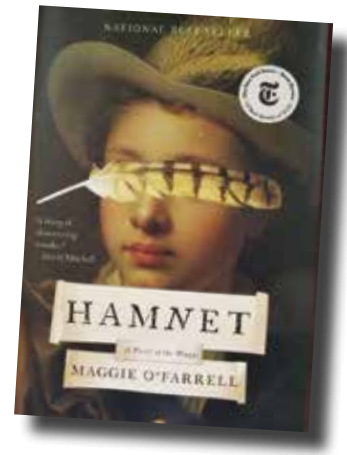
A stunning skill of the writer Maggie O'Farrell is her ability to describe a scene with such vivid precision that her readers see it too. How does she do that? I wonder as I read the first page and then as I continue, page upon page, all the way to the end. Some reviewers recommend having a tissue available for that moment, but I had a completely different reaction than tears. Awe. Awe is what I was feeling—rendered motionless by pure awe.

The names "Hamnet" and "Hamlet" were interchangeable in the sixteenth century when William Shakespeare wrote his play, and history records that the playwright had three children—Suzanne and the twins, Hamnet and Judith. The boy, Hamnet, died in 1596, age 11. About four years later his father wrote the play, Hamlet. Into this scant data, O'Farrell inserts her imagination for storytelling and characterization, and the result is this book.

Whether or not you are a Shakespeare fan, this book has the power to draw you in and fascinate you. If you know Shakespeare's plays and poetry, you will enjoy searching for connections between this story and what remains of his life's work. But the book is complete without that. O'Farrell catapults us into the final century of the bubonic plague, still cropping up here and there in Europe and England. "The pestilence" they call it when they talk of it at all. They haven't had a case of it in several years. But they keep an eye out. We find ourselves on Henley Street in Stratford at the home of a glove maker.

"A boy is coming down a flight of stairs. The passage is narrow and twists back on itself. He takes each step slowly, sliding himself along the wall, his boots meeting each tread with a thud... It is a close windless day in late summer, and the downstairs room is slashed by long strips of light. The sun glowers at him from outside, the windows latticed slabs of yellow, set into the plaster."

Here is the beginning of a story of a family in the English countryside, a family of complex and intriguing characters with



deep secrets and raw but often hidden emotions. It could be any family, though, and that makes it easy to slip into the house on Henley street and watch the goings on from the shadows. So often I wanted to warn them—"Be careful! That one has it in for you!" Or, "No! Don't leave right now! Something awful is about to happen upstairs. You'll never forgive yourself."

While the title points towards the only son, Hamnet, the conflict we experience is centered in the heart and mind of Agnes (or Anne, as she is better known by history), the playwright's wife. More than anyone else in the novel, Agnes left me breathless. She is magical. She shimmers. She's other-worldly and knows things others don't. Therefore, she is constantly seeking for her place, her role in the family, in the town, in the world at large. She's a forest creature, an herbalist, an empath, a healer, wounded as she is. Maybe she expects too much of herself. I kept wanting to warn her. Even now I can't stop thinking of her, believing that any woman will recognize her, sometimes with awe, other times with foreboding. When we first meet her on page 16 she is with the honey bees:

Agnes is circling the skeps, listening for whatever the bees are telling her; she is eyeing the swarm in the orchard, a blackish stain spread throughout the branches that vibrates and quivers with outrage. Something has upset them.... Later and for the rest of her life, she will think that if she had left there and then, if she had gathered her bags, her plants, her honey, and taken the path home, if she had heeded her abrupt, nameless unease, she might have changed what happened next... she might have headed off what was coming.

Hamnet is a dazzling read!  
Christin Lore Weber  
[storyweaver1@gmail.com](mailto:storyweaver1@gmail.com)

## Voices of the Applegate

### Pause continues for Voices of the Applegate

We are sorry to say that, due to the pandemic, Voices of the Applegate is still on hold.

You can keep in touch with us on Facebook (Voices of the Applegate).

If things change during the next few months, we will certainly let you know.

We hope you will all stay healthy and hopefully we'll see you soon.

Joan Peterson • 541-846-6988

### Stay connected

Between issues, be sure to check the *Applegater* online on:



The World Wide Web  
[applegater.org](http://applegater.org)



Facebook  
Applegater Newsmagazine



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~ FINE PRINT ~

The Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc. (AVCN) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to the publication of the *Applegater* newsmagazine, which, we feel, reflects the heart and soul of our community.

**Our Mission**

The Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., provides the many rural and diverse communities of the Applegate Watershed with a communications vehicle, the *Applegater* newsmagazine, free of charge to all watershed residents. Our quarterly paper presents constructive, relevant, educational, and entertaining reports on a wide variety of subjects such as:

- natural resources
- ecology and other science information
- historical and current events
- community news and opinions

AVCN encourages and publishes differing viewpoints and, through the *Applegater* newsmagazine, acts as a clearinghouse for this diverse community. We are dedicated to working together with community members to maintain and enhance the quality of life that is unique to the Applegate Watershed.

**Acknowledgements**

The *Applegater* newsmagazine is published quarterly by AVCN and is funded by donations from our loyal readers and advertisements for local businesses.

Special thanks to Diana Coogle, Ni Aódagáin, Margaret Perrow della Santina, Haley May Peterson, and Paul Tipton for copy editing; Lisa Baldwin, Diana Coogle, Jeanette LeTourneux, and Paul Tipton for proofing; David Dobbs for bookkeeping; Webmaster Joe Lavine; and Barbara Holiday for layout.

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All articles, stories, opinions and letters in the *Applegater* are the property and opinion of the author and not necessarily that of the *Applegater* or AVCN.

**PROTECTION OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL**

All materials submitted for publication must pertain to the Applegate Valley, be original (no press releases or reprinted articles), and be the intellectual property of the author unless otherwise credited.

All articles submitted to the *Applegater* are subject to edit and publication at the newsmagazine's discretion and as space allows. No more than one article per author per issue. When too many articles are submitted to include in any one issue, some articles may be placed on our website or held until the following issue. Letters to the editor must be 200 words or less. Opinion pieces cannot exceed 500 words (no images). Articles cannot exceed 700 words. Obituaries are limited to 500 words and one photo. Essays are limited to 500 words.

**PHOTO REQUIREMENTS**

All photos submitted must be high resolution (300 dpi) or "large format" (e.g., 30" x 40"). If you have questions, email gater@applegater.org.

Photos submitted for the front-page flag are on a volunteer basis. Credit is given in the issue in which it appears, on our website, and on our Facebook page.

Submissions for the next issue must be received at bert@applegater.org by the deadline (see Editorial Calendar).

Applegater Newsmagazine  
PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530

# The Applegater needs your ongoing help!

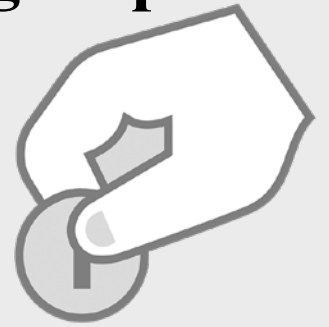
In order to keep up with our expenses—printing and postage are the biggest costs—and be able to continue mailing this newsmagazine free to every residence and business in the Applegate Valley, please take advantage of the donation envelope inserted in this issue to mail your donation to:

Applegater Newsmagazine  
PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530

Donations are also accepted online through PayPal at applegater.org and now at **smile.amazon.com** (select Applegate Valley Community Newspaper as your charity of choice)!

We are supported only by donations and advertising revenue—every dollar matters.

Thank you for your generosity. —The *Applegater* Board of Directors



## A huge THANKS to the generous donors who recently contributed to the Applegater.

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**Help us** ensure that we have the ongoing support needed to publish the *Applegater* newsmagazine. All contributions are tax-deductible, receive recognition in print.

- Sasquatch \$1,000+
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Please make your checks payable to *Applegater* and mail to PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Our nonprofit ID number is 26-2062663.

**Donors: We strive to ensure that our donor list is accurate. Please contact us if there are errors or omissions.**

## Applegater board thanks Jeanette LeTourneux, seeks new member

For two years the *Applegater* board enjoyed Jeanette LeTourneux's presence at our meetings, her unflinching willingness to do whatever needed to be done, her hard work for our fundraisers, and her unflagging good humor. When we needed a secretary, Jeanette stepped up. When we needed someone to write the BizBits column, Jeanette took it on. When we needed a manager for our Facebook page, Jeanette again jumped in to do what was needed.

In March Jeanette announced her resignation, needing to turn her attention to her family. With typical respect, she waited until Mike Schneider joined the board so her resignation wouldn't cause too much stress on the board. And though she has resigned, she is still the point person for our Facebook page, keeping it up-to-date, and continues to write BizBits. We are grateful to her for that and for all she has done for us in the past. We wish her well, moving forward, and would welcome her back on the board when family affairs allow it.

Jeanette was right that the board was in good shape with the addition of Mike, but with the subtraction of Jeanette, we are in need of at least one more board member.

Might that be you who are reading this? Step up to help your community! The *Applegater* board is actively seeking new members. The two-year commitment is to a monthly board meeting (we hope to be off Zoom by the summer) and to working in some capacity to keep the *Applegater* thriving: fundraising (we would love a fundraising chair!), writing, social media—if you have a talent, we could probably use it.

We have a step-by-step process for voting new members onto the board. Contact me for more information or just to jump in and say right now, "I'm interested. Let's get started."

I hope to hear from you!

Diana Coogle, Chair, *Applegater* Board of Directors • diana@applegater.org • 541-846-7447

**Cover Photo Credit**

Thanks to Mikell Nielsen for the photo of a cute bee on beautiful lavender at the Applegate River Lodge.

Have a photo for the fall *Applegater*?

Email it to bert@applegater.org.

**Editorial Calendar**

ISSUE DEADLINE

FALL (Sept - Nov) ..... August 1  
*Agriculture-Wine*

WINTER (Dec - Feb)..... November 1  
*Holiday-Arts*

SPRING (March - May) ... February 1  
*Commerce-Community*

SUMMER (June - Aug) ..... May 1  
*Environment-Fire-Recreation*

**Corrections**

The *Applegater* is committed to publishing accurate information in its news articles, correcting errors of fact, and clarifying misleading statements. Send suggested corrections to Editor in Chief Bert Etling at bert@applegater.org, or call 541-631-1313.

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**Living away for a while? Friends and relatives in faraway places?**

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## — Ruch Library —

## Come by and browse your library

BY THALIA TRUESDELL



Welcome back! We are so excited to offer you our Summer Reading Program at Ruch Library. We will be having outdoor, in-person programs this year, as well as incentives and prizes. Come by and browse! Discover hidden secrets in the I Spy window! All ages can register for Summer Reading, which runs June through August this year. Find out more at JCLS.org.

**Bee a Leader with the Southern Oregon Bee Association: How Bees Live and Work Together**

Saturday, June 5 • 11-noon • Ages 8-plus

Learn how thousands of bees live and work together in harmony, watch live honeybees at work in an observation hive, and discover ways you can lead a bee-, plant-, and human-healthy future.

**Social Skills for Superheroes with Anna Minter**

Tuesday, June 15 • 11-noon • Ages 5-10

When we are helpers, we feel good about ourselves. This program will focus on building self-confidence and comfort in different situations and includes a Take & Make kit to take home.

**Be a Drum Leader with Laura Rich**

Tuesday, July 6 • 1-2 pm • Ages 5-plus

Experience the beauty of West African drumming and, through the rhythms taught, learn the fundamentals and stylistic intricacies of the music.

**Leadership in Literature: The Sword in the Tome**

Thursday, July 15 • 2-3 pm • Ages 12-18

From Arthur's mythical blade Excalibur to Luke's inherited lightsaber, swords are as much symbols in literature as they are tools for the characters. Learn about the symbology of swords in literature, followed by a brief fight choreography lesson.

**Safari Animals and Quicksand Dig with Bugs-R-Us**

Thursday, July 22 • 2-3 pm

Learn about well-known animals from Africa and Asia; touch sample furs, pelts, and feathers; then play a game to save an animal stuck in quicksand—whomever you save, you get to keep!

**Make a Lavender Wand Sachet**

Saturday, July 24 • 2-3:30 pm • Ages 8-plus

Learn the ancient craft of making a wand or "bottle" with lavender stems and ribbon. A simple weave encloses the scented flowers, and the scent will last for years. This outdoor class is limited to 10 participants. Lavender and ribbons will be provided. Please bring clippers and scissors.

**Positivity Rocks! A Painted Rock Activity**

Saturday, August 7 • 1-3:30 pm

Spread positivity by painting one rock for yourself and another to hide and brighten someone's day. This will be an outdoor program on a drop-in basis, with a limit of five participants (or families) at once, as we will be practicing social distancing.

**Learn to Lead with Sanctuary One**

Tuesday, August 10 • 10-11 am • Ages 10-plus

Sanctuary One is a care farm in the Applegate Valley. Learn what a day in the life of a Sanctuary One volunteer is like, and meet the goats Ned, Lucky, and Dusty! 'Take and make kits' contain hands-on activities to make or do at home. Kits are available beginning on the dates listed on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last:

**Positivity Activism**

Available starting June 8 • Ages 12-18

Spread joy in your community! Pick up supplies to make a poster and sidewalk chalk messages, along with prompts to spark your creativity.

**Water Conservation Leaders**

Available starting June 22 • Ages 12-18

We're challenging teens to be water conservation leaders in their households this summer. Pick up a kit with a copy of Neal Shusterman's dystopian novel *Dry*, a reusable water bottle, and a water conservation challenge sheet. Conserve water this month and beyond!

**Fantasy Folk Art**

Available starting July 27 • Ages 12-18

Folk artists are everyday people who use their skills and imaginations to create unique works of art. Make your own folk art from ancient madrone wooden discs hand painted with jelly pens.

Book Barn First Saturday Book Sales are held from noon to 4 pm every month! The sales are by donation only and masks are required. Only five customers at a time will be allowed in the Book Barn and, while you wait, you can browse the free books outside. You can also find books at the Ruch Country Store or our free little libraries (McKee Bridge, Ruch Outdoor Community School, China Gulch, and Cantrall Buckley Park).

Thalia Truesdell, Branch Manager

Ruch Library, Jackson County

Library Services

541-899-7438

ttruesdell@jcls.org

## — Applegate Library —

## Reopens for in-person browsing

BY CHRISTINE GRUBB

Leaving the Applegate Branch Library shortly after 6 pm on a beautiful Friday evening, I ran into the scene in the photo. The first car in line narrowly missed getting hit by the falling tree.

Within minutes, as traffic piled up, several commuters jumped out of their vehicles and literally pushed the tree out of the road. That's community caring! That's the Applegate community! **Good news!**

As of this writing, Jackson County Library Services welcomes patrons back inside all 15 libraries for limited in-person services. Patrons over the age of five are required to wear masks and social distancing measures will be in place. We have missed you!

Computers are available at all libraries on a first-come, first-served basis, limited to a 60-minute session per day. Mobile printing is available at all branches. Learn more at [jcls.org/services/computers-wifi/](http://jcls.org/services/computers-wifi/).

The JCLS Summer Reading Program, with the theme of "Readers are Leaders," kicks off on June 12 and runs through the end of August. Check in with us to know more.

**Upcoming events**

*Please note: Masks, and social distancing, are required to attend the in-person, outside programs.*

**Saturday, June 5, 1-2 pm, Bee a Leader**, with the Southern Oregon Bee Association. How bees live and work together. Ages 8-plus. Honeybees live in groups, just like people do! Learn how thousands of bees live and work together in harmony. We will even look at some live honeybees at work in an observation hive.

**Friday, June 11, noon-1 pm, End of Life Choices**, Oregon Online. Local retired RN and hospice volunteer Jan Rowe will discuss end-of-life choices. End of Life Choices of Oregon (EOLCOR) is an organization comprised of doctors and regional volunteers who are trained to provide skilled professional guidance with the Death with Dignity Act and other end-of-life options.

**Saturday, July 10, 11 am-noon, Leadership in Literature: The Sword in the Tome**. Ages 12-18. No weapon in history has captured human imagination in quite the same way as the sword. Join us for an exploration of swords



Christine Grubb came on this scene on her way home from work. Photo: Christine Grubb.

and their symbology in literature, followed by a brief fight-choreography lesson to explore the world of the sword. All safety rules will be covered during the program and will be enforced. Be sure to wear comfortable clothes and shoes to move in. Presenter Cameron Turner has been trained in both stage fighting and safety.

**Tuesday, July 13, 2 pm, through Saturday, July 17, Christmas in July** week at the Applegate Branch Library. Join us for some Christmas festivities, treats, and music.

**Wednesday, July 28, 11 am-noon. Be a Drum Leader**, with Laura Rich

Experience the beauty of West African drumming and, through the rhythms taught, learn the fundamentals and stylistic intricacies of the music.

**Saturday, July 31, 11 am-noon. Social Skills for Superheroes** with Anna Minter. Ages 5-10. This program will focus on helping us feel more comfortable with ourselves and others in different situations, which will build self-confidence. We can all use a boost and a reminder: when we are helpers, we feel good about ourselves. This program will hand out a Take & Make.

**Wednesday, August 4, 11 am-noon. Learn to Lead** with Sanctuary One. As a care farm in the Applegate Valley, Sanctuary One believes that people, animals, and the Earth are better together. To make this vision possible, they need the support of volunteers, and Sanctuary One has a role for everyone. Learn what a day in the life of a Sanctuary One volunteer is like, and what skills their volunteers learn that can translate into real-world application. You'll also get the chance to meet the Sanctuary One Goat Ambassadors: Ned, Lucky, and Dusty.

Christine Grubb

Applegate Branch Library Manager

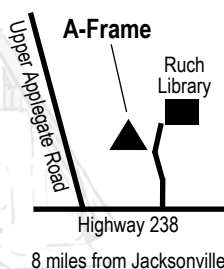
541-846-7346

*The Applegate Branch Library is at 18485 North Applegate Road.*

**Visit the Book Barn next to the A-Frame Bookstore @ Ruch Library**

Managed by Friends of Ruch Library.

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Jacksonville, OR 97530

## — Williams Library —

## You can now 'Grab &amp; Go'

Josephine Community Library branches, including Williams, began offering limited access to patrons on May 21. Patrons may enter the buildings from 1 to 4 pm Fridays and Saturdays during "Grab & Go" hours.

The library will also continue to offer curbside pick-up, computer appointments, and printing service. During Grab & Go hours, restrooms and seating are unavailable.

The following services are available at all four library branches:

• Wednesdays: 30-minute computer appointments from 1 to 4 pm. Registration is required. To register, patrons can contact

their preferred branch or email [info@josephinelibrary.org](mailto:info@josephinelibrary.org).

• Fridays and Saturdays: Curbside pick-up from noon to 4 pm.

• Fridays and Saturdays: Open to the public from 1 to 4 pm during Grab & Go hours. Patrons will have the opportunity to browse the library and check out items in person for 30-minute periods. Registration is not required.

Book drops are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For more information about the library's reopening plan and digital services, visit [josephinelibrary.org](http://josephinelibrary.org), email [info@josephinelibrary.org](mailto:info@josephinelibrary.org) or call 541-476-0571.



NONPROFIT NEWS AND UPDATES

# The Applegater partners with Oregon Digital Newspaper Program

BY MAUREEN FLANAGAN BATTISTELLA

The Applegater will soon be searchable along with millions of pages of Oregon's history in the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program. The board of directors and editorial staff recently approved this significant partnership for Applegater's retrospective issues and new issues as they are published.

Thanks to the foresight of writers and publishers, the Applegater has long been available as PDFs on the Applegater website. This online availability has made it easy for those in the know to search back issues and find articles of interest. The new partnership with the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program brings news, stories and poetry of the Applegate to a broader audience, enables keyword searching of Applegater articles, and retrieves Applegater articles as part of a much larger repository of newspapers.

The University of Oregon began preserving Oregon's history in the 1950s as librarians microfilmed hundreds of newspapers from around the state. With the advent of new technologies and federal funding, in 2009 preservation moved from microfilm to searchable, online platforms focusing on public domain newspapers published from 1860-1922. Today, the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program has more than 1.5 million newspaper pages online, published from 1840-2020, searchable by keyword, newspaper title, and date range. The Oregon Digital Newspaper Program is free to all with no associated cost or membership required to access the collection.

In 2019, local historians, librarians and genealogists formed the Southern Oregon Newspaper Project to work towards increased coverage of Southern Oregon's newspapers in the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program. The Jacksonville Booster Club funded the digitization of early issues of the Jacksonville Times and Jacksonville Sentinel in 2021, work that will be completed and extended thanks to funding from the Dirk Siedliecki and the Friends of Jacksonville's Pioneer Cemetery in 2022. Also in 2022, early issues of the Grants Pass Courier and its predecessor, the Rogue River Courier will be digitized thanks to funding from the Library Services and Technology Act administered through the State Library of Oregon. Travis Moore, publisher of the Grants Pass Courier has agreed to release newspaper issues published from 1923-1945, which are now in queue. Work planned for 2023 includes the Talent News, thanks to funding from the Talent Historical Society, and the Ashland Tidings, thanks to the Rogue Valley Genealogy Society and a private donor.

Historian and preservationist George Kramer has also focused on historical newspapers as a way to mitigate changes brought by architectural renovation and excavation under the requirements of the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. Kramer depends on newspapers as a primary source of information in



The Applegater has now joined other Oregon newspapers in the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program searchable archives at the University of Oregon, including historical southern Oregon publications such as The Ashland Advertiser and The Central Point American.

his work to investigate, document, and describe historic structures and is keenly aware of the importance and relevance of historical newspapers to today's work. Thanks to Kramer's efforts, the Rogue Valley Irrigation District funded the digitization of early issues of the Central Point American, Central Point Herald, and Southern Oregon News. Between 2018 and 2019, the Ashland Family YMCA funded the digitization of several Ashland newspapers, as the YMCA renovated and restored Camp Low Echo as Camp DeBoer, which will open this summer. The Lake of the Woods Girl Scout campsite, constructed between 1946 and 1962, has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 2003. The newspapers digitized thanks to the Ashland Family YMCA include the Ashland Register, Ashland Advertiser, Ashland American, and Southern Oregon Miner, published between 1893 and 1944.

The Applegater and other Oregon historic newspapers can be searched at OregonNews.UOregon.edu, where the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program is hosted at the University of Oregon. For more information on the Southern Oregon Newspaper Project and to contribute to the funding pool, contact Maureen Flanagan Battistella, Southern Oregon University Sociology/Anthropology, at battistem@sou.edu and 541-552-0743.

Maureen Battistella  
battistem@sou.edu

# History worth saving

BY LAURA AHEARN

Have you visited McKee Bridge and marveled at how sturdy she is at 104 years of age? Have you taken a peaceful stroll through Logtown Cemetery and wondered about the lives of those buried there 150 years ago? Isn't it remarkable that you can do these things 24/7? There are no locked gates, no "Keep Out—No Trespassing" signs. These experiences are possible only if our community engages, volunteers, donates, and shows support.

For 56 years the Applegate community has rallied to keep beautiful McKee Bridge standing. She is the second oldest covered bridge in Oregon on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest to stand continually at her original location. The McKee Bridge Preservation Committee started funding work to preserve the bridge in 1965. A major restoration project was conducted in 2014-15, at a cost of more than \$500,000. She's due for an in-depth structural inspection this year; the price tag has jumped from \$6,000 to \$9,000. If this inspection is not performed, the bridge will be closed.

In 2020, McKee Bridge Historical Society (MBHS) received a grant from A Greater Applegate to buy supplies to clean grave markers at Logtown Cemetery. A volunteer spent two days detailing two damaged marble tablets in the middle of the oldest section: Maranda Ann and Phoebe who died in 1873. It looked like the family name was Carey. We couldn't figure out where they fit among early settlers until we realized that the stonemason chiseled "Garey" instead of "Geary," the spelling that appears most often in records. Maranda Ann was the wife of Lewis Geary; Phoebe was their first-born. Their homestead straddled the Applegate River southwest of what we now call Hamilton Road and Highway 238.

But that told us nothing about Maranda's past and lineage. Only recently did we discover that she was the daughter of a freed slave who came to Jackson County in 1853 with the extended Mask-Mathis-Matthews family of former slaves and



Susannah Johnson, left, and Penelope Ellender Mask, were freed slaves and the mother and grandmother of Maranda Ann Johnson Geary, who is buried in the Logtown Cemetery. Photo: Courtesy of Barbara Hegne.

their progeny. This is extremely significant. Very few—if any—African Americans braved the Oregon and Applegate Trails to come to Oregon Territory where they were not legally permitted. The 1843 pre-territorial laws of Oregon Country banned slavery but were amended in 1844 to give slave owners time to "remove" their human property. Freed slaves were ordered to leave, with males given two years to depart; females were allowed three. Blacks who did not exit the territory were subject to lashing. Barbara

Hegne, a descendant and prolific researcher and author, laid out this incredible saga in books available through the county library, and PBS featured the story in the 2015 series Finding Your Roots (actor Ty Burrell, who plays the father in "Modern Family," is also a descendant, born and raised in the Applegate).

MBHS has applied for grants to restore and preserve Maranda Ann's and Phoebe's grave markers, install interpretive panels, and help cover the costs of the upcoming bridge inspection. But grants require matching funds. We need to show that this is important to our community, that Applegaters care about keeping McKee Bridge open and acknowledging the bravery and contributions of Maranda Ann and her family. If these things are important to you, please make a donation or become an MBHS member. Membership is only \$20 per calendar year for your entire household. It's quick and easy to donate and sign up online at mckeebridge.org. You can also visit our booth at the Applegate Evening Market, 5-8 pm on Wednesdays through October at the Electric Gardens Flower Farm, 8035 Highway 238.

Save and celebrate the history of the Applegate!

Laura Ahearn  
McKee Bridge Historical Society  
mckeebridge1917@gmail.com



Maranda Ann Johnson Geary (1843-1873), pictured with her son James Irwin (1869-1958). Photo: Courtesy of Barbara Hegne.



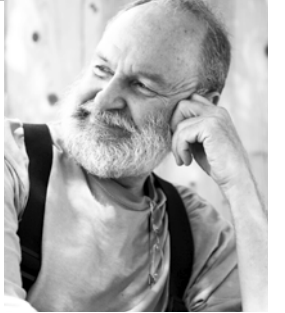
Donations are needed so the McKee Bridge Historical Society can use grant funds to restore and preserve Logtown Cemetery markers. Photo: Alan Caddell.



**THE STARRY SIDE**

**Spring swings over – welcome to summer**

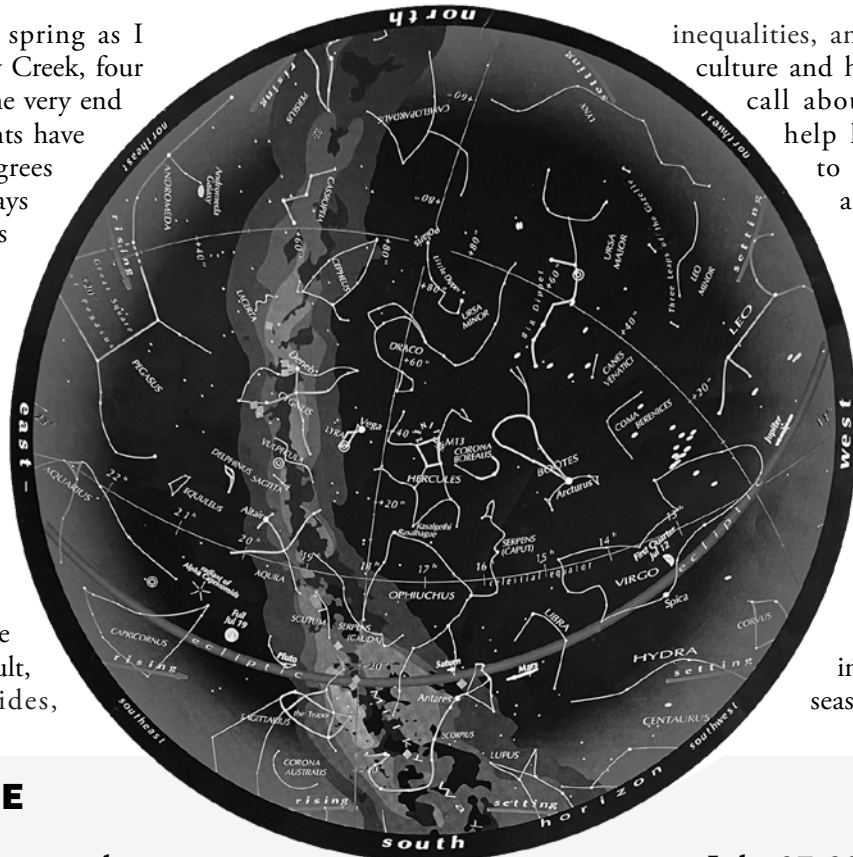
BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells

We're swinging out of spring as I write this. Here at Carberry Creek, four miles of dirt road west of the very end of Applegate Lake, the nights have still been freezing—26 degrees the other night, and the days have gotten into the 70s and now 80s! What a swing of temperature all in one 24-hour period and repeated day after day. Wow.

Even though spring will have ended by the time you read this, many other things are having trouble ending, like COVID-19. (You can help end the spread of COVID-19 by getting vaccinated!) While the pandemic has been difficult, it has also exposed divides,



Guy Ottewell's Astronomical Calendar

inequalities, and dependencies in our culture and has been a real wake-up call about what we can do to help humanity. Responding to this call, many people and organizations have begun actions to create a better future, a return to a better, fuller, happier, more equal, and safer normal. We should all be a part of this effort!

Meanwhile, the stars continue their normal swing with the seasons. Summer brings the reappearance of the Milky Way rising in the east. Spring is the one season in which our galaxy

is spread out on the other side of the earth, invisible to us at night. The galaxy sinks in the west in early spring, then starts to show up late in the evening towards the end of spring with the rising of our old friend, the Summer Triangle.

Have you noticed how each season has its own set of stars, just as it has its own weather? I am constantly learning new configurations and recognizing old friends up there. Before the invention of electric lights and television, the night sky was an important part of life for the human species. For many people today it has become quite secondary. But a few of us crazies remain fascinated with it.

Greeley Wells  
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**OF NOTE**

**A reader asks: "What was that string of strange lights I saw from Williams on May 8, one right after the other? Must have been 30 of them."**

The reader saw some of the many satellites launched by Tesla owner Elon Musk's SpaceX Starlink project to provide internet coverage to the world, especially for those in remote and rural areas, according to space.com, which says it may expand service later this year. The satellites are most visible shortly after launch,

before they've reached operational altitude, and Starlink is taking steps to make them less reflective.

We hope so, as we treasure our dark, starry sky over the Applegate!

••  
**June 21.** The sun reaches its northernmost position for the year, and we start back towards shorter days and longer nights, with increasing speed, until the equinox.

**July 27-30.** Peak of the Delta Aquariid meteor shower, which normally offers up to 20 meteors an hour. This time, however, a mostly full moon will bleach out all but the few best meteors.

••  
**August 12-13.** The wonderful Perseids meteor shower—up to 60 an hour! A crescent moon sets early, so there will be no lunar interference. Later in the night is better for viewing, and just before dawn is best. These meteors frequently leave persistent trains.

**Planets**

**Jupiter** is at its brightest, facing the sun and close to us. It's visible all night.

**Mercury** is visible in the mornings from June 27 to July 16 and in the evenings from August 31 into September.

**Venus** is in the western sky at dusk throughout the summer. It is always bright and during this season sets after the sun.

**Mars** will be visible in the evening through August 22.

**Saturn** is visible in the predawn sky. It's brightest August 1-4.

**Got News?**

The *Applegater* welcomes submissions! We're your newspaper and want to share your news with readers throughout the Applegate Valley watershed's many neighborhoods. What's going on around you? Let us know! Send your writeup and photos to [gater@applegater.org](mailto:gater@applegater.org). Thanks! See you in the *Applegater*....

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**DIRTY FINGERNAILS AND ALL**

# This is a dirty cover-up story

BY SIOUX ROGERS



Sioux Rogers

“Hmmm, sounds interesting. Are you covering up with a big old trench coat? Or bib overalls?”

Actually, I am using old sleeping bags, old blankets, old rugs, cardboard, old clothes, stacks of newspaper, *poop*—in abundance (from animals, that is). Sure, I have forgotten half of the cover-ups, but not to worry, will remember later. I am a hard-core mulcher.

Predictions of severe drought have made me take notice of the water requirements in my garden. I have a very thirsty garden, I embarrassingly admit. It is very lush.

Mulch is used for many reasons. I am most interested in moisture retention and weed control. Aside from those two purposes, mulching has numerous (definition of “numerous” is more toes and fingers than I have for counting) benefits, such as keeping foot traffic from compacting the soil, making sure plants aren’t splashed by mud with water on non-porous soil, and preventing soil erosion.

Anyhow, what is “mulch”?

Mulch is a layer of organic, or inorganic, material spread over the surface of ground.

Considering just the organic kind, not plastic, rubber, or something else not made by Mum Nature—organic mulches will eventually break down. This makes the soil a lovely place for micro-nutrients



Left photo: To keep your soil from doing this...  
Right photo: ...it helps to do this: Cover the soil with mulch (straw, in this case)!

Photos: Via Wikimedia Commons (left) and Yahoo Images.

and earthworms (my favorite in-the-dirt friends). Mulching is a win-win activity. Worms have a new menu for dining, and the underground soil is friable and nourished while you just glow at your glorious, functional, and healthy garden. You may notice your sandy soil, after a short while, holds together and retains water. Your clay soil now is soft and fluffy, and water does not run off. This is an indication of healthy and friable soil.

Mulches I have known and loved (no snickering please) include carrot pulp left over from carrot juice, and okara, a waste product from soy. To clarify: I got truckloads of carrot pulp from a juice factory. It is fabulous mulch. The okara was from the not-there-any-more tofu factory in Ashland. Okay, so those were weird. Here are some of the other organic mulches I have or could have used: straw from the chicken coop, rice hulls, all kinds



of animal manure, leaves, grass clippings, wood chips, horse stable gleanings, cardboard, and newspaper.

When I mulch, I usually aim for a two-inch cover. I like to mulch everywhere I see the need. So what makes me jump into *mulch* mode? Cracked ground, for one thing, is a “get-to-it” sign that grabs my attention. Areas where I cannot seem to keep the vegetation happy because it’s always thirsty are another indication mulch is needed. These are all indications of lack of organic matter in the soil, so... I *mulch*.

I idolize Ruth Stout, who wrote *How to Have a Green Thumb Without an*

*Aching Back*. Her secret? Mulching. So let’s mulch. Your garden’s overall health may be dependent on this “exercise.”

Mulching is not all just la-de-da perfect and free from concern. For example, mulching with an organic material, say grass clippings filled with weed seeds, is not a great idea, as they (the weed seeds) will be very happy and grow. Mulching with wet and compacted organic material, such as grass (again), can have the opposite effect from your planned agenda. The grass can mat down, making it difficult for water to penetrate. It can draw nutrients from the soil as it decays. It may become very odiferous as it is decaying. (That was just a “grassroots” example; make sure your mulch is dry.)

As for the opening paragraph, mentioning my mulching with old sleeping bags, rugs, and trench coats, let’s clarify. I do not mulch with old underwear in my vegetable garden, flower garden, or front lawn. I use the old rags, rugs, blankets, etc., for large areas where I want to eliminate (ha ha ha) weeds. This area could be the large spaces, as in my rose garden, or the flat space in my “other” garden. You get the idea? *Mulch* for water’s sake, it is a *win-win*.

“Gardening is cheaper than therapy and you get tomatoes.”

Sioux Rogers

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## Park features new sculptures, 'Little Library'

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON



A shiny monarch butterfly perches above the pollinators garden just inside the park. Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.

Join me on a tour of three new features with bright colors that have added to the colorful spring bloom scenes at Cantrall Buckley Park this year.

### Monarch in flight

The first stop is at the butterfly and pollinators garden just inside the park, past the fee booth. If you look up you'll see, on a large pine tree, a bright orange and shiny black monarch in flight above the planted beds—a sculpture by metal artist Cheryl D. Garcia, installed in April.

### Little Library

Also in the garden area, near the bench and kiosk, you will notice our new "Little Library," with free books available for readers young to old. You can take or borrow items or do an item-for-item exchange. You can even pass a book to a friend to read, too. Learn more details about this great project in the Friends of Ruch Library article on page 17.

### Large raven

Continuing our tour, we slowly drive down to the lower part of the park for another great new sculpture. If you park near the playground and wander into the play area, you'll meet the large shiny black Common Raven. It is so shiny that reflections from the brightly painted cement tunnel fort nearby dance in red, orange and green on the sculpture frame.

If you look closely, you'll see a song that Cheryl welded on the frame so you, too, could talk Raven. Try it: *Rrruk - Prruk - Prruk - Tok - Tok - Tok - Kraa.*

### Outdoor educational programs

Jackson County Parks offers the park for outdoor educational programs. This spring the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council gave classes on watershed studies on the lower terrace by the river and additional training in small-group work for teachers. The goal was to give students a chance to engage in study in the outdoors while still following health guidelines. Both students and the teachers really enjoyed being by the river and in the beauty of the park.

You may notice some newly downed logs in the park as trees in this mature forest succumb to drought and disease. The Parks Department allows them to become rotting logs to add nutrients to the living soil community.

### Get your yearly pass

If you have not yet gotten your yearly pass for all the Jackson County parks, you can buy one from the park hosts or nearby at Ruch Hardware at 181 Upper Applegate Road.

### Volunteers needed

We can always use volunteers. Contact me if you are interested in community service in the great outdoors. We hope you can also come and enjoy the sights and sounds along the Applegate River.

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Azalea Lake should be on Applegate residents' bucket lists. Photo: Suzie Savoie.

## Summer! Time to cool off at an Applegate lake

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

Escape the summer heat in the valley and cool off at one of the many small lakes accessible by trail in the Applegate watershed. Each lake has unique features and plant communities that add to the biodiversity of our region.

### Azalea Lake

Located at the headwaters of the Butte Fork of the Applegate River, deep in the Red Buttes Wilderness, Azalea Lake is lined in fragrant azaleas and lodgepole pine. With scenic Figurehead Mountain towering above and abundant flowers triggered by the 2017 Knox Fire, Azalea Lake is a bucket-list-worthy destination for any longtime Applegate resident. Azalea Lake can be accessed via the Butte Fork Trail or the Fir Glade Trail.

### Echo Lake

A small, picturesque lake perched at the top of Echo Creek, a tributary of the Butte Fork of the Applegate River, Echo Lake can be accessed from the Horse Camp Trail or Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). It can also be viewed from above on a rock outcrop just off the PCT. Although just outside the official boundaries of the Red Buttes Wilderness, Echo Lake is a wild and rugged place framed by the Red Buttes above.

### Frog Pond

A shallow, large pond lined in colorful leopard lilies and false hellebore, Frog Pond is the site of the historic, and now fallen-in, cabin of local legend, John Knox McCloy, who built the cabin into massive incense-cedar trees on the edge of Frog Pond. You can access Frog Pond via a steep climb along the Frog Pond Trail or Cameron Meadows Trail in the Red Buttes Wilderness. Just above Frog Pond is a rare population of Alaska yellow-cedar trees.

### Hinkle Lake

Accessed via an old, closed road after parking at the Fir Glade trailhead, Hinkle Lake is a little-known gem of the Applegate. Located in the Hinkle Lake Botanical Area, the area is renowned for its floral and species diversity, including many rare plants like alpine liverwort, that grows in only four locations in the world. The lake is more like a shallow, large pond, but the meadows in the Hinkle Lake basin are unbeatable when in full bloom.

### Kettle Lake

Tucked into the forest on the flank of Observation Peak, Kettle Lake is accessed via a short off-trail scramble below the Pacific Crest Trail. The lake is a perfect

destination after enjoying the many rare and endemic, serpentine-adapted plant species that grow on Observation Peak. The quickest access to Kettle Lake is via the PCT, starting at Observation Gap on Road 20 on the Siskiyou Crest.

### Lonesome Lake

One of the most remote lakes in the Applegate watershed, Lonesome Lake is perfect for swimming and camping. This deep, gorgeous lake is situated in a cirque basin on the flank of Figurehead Mountain in the Red Buttes Wilderness and can be accessed via the Butte Fork Trail, Boundary Trail, or Fir Glade Trail.

### Miller Lake

A popular destination for families, Miller Lake is a deep swimming lake that is only a short hike in from the Miller Lake Trailhead. Located at the headwaters of Sturgis Creek, a tributary of Carberry Creek, Miller Lake is in the Oliver Mathews Research Natural Area, designated for the botanical diversity of the area, including some of the largest rare Baker's cypress trees in the world. Although the road is generally in good condition, high clearance vehicles are required to access the trailhead, as you'll need to ford a small creek where a bridge was washed out by the 1997 flood.

### Squaw Lakes

If you haven't made a trip to see Squaw Lakes, you've been missing out. Squaw Lakes is perfect for day use or camping with family and friends. Extremely popular due to the scenic qualities, recreational infrastructure, and easy access, Squaw Lakes has a \$5 day use fee, and camping requires a reservation. Haul in a canoe or kayak a short walking distance from the parking area to enjoy a quiet boating experience, or swim across the lake on a hot summer day!

### Local guidebooks by locals

More information and directions to these lakes can be found in the following hiking trail guides by local, Applegate authors:

- *Favorite Hikes of the Applegate* by Diana Coogle and Janeen Sathre;
- *Hiking Trails of the Lower Applegate*, by Evelyn Roether; and
- *The Siskiyou Crest: Hikes, History & Ecology*, by Luke Ruediger.

Suzie Savoie

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Friends of Ruch Library board member Janis Mohr-Tipton, left, and library manager Thalia Truesdell check out the growing collection of books at the newly installed Little Free Library in Cantrall Buckley Park. Photo: Barbara Krack.



A raven created by metal sculpture artist Cheryl D. Garcia is one of two new members of the metallic menagerie at the park. Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.



# Fire in the Applegate: Progress toward fire resilience

BY RICH FAIRBANKS AND ALEXI LOVECHIO

If you live in the Applegate Valley, you know we live in a fire-prone environment. Fortunately, engaged local residents are doing all they can to prepare for wildfire. Many have moved from making their own property fire resilient to working on wildfire issues at the community level. Three examples illustrate how we are moving forward on these issues.

## Prescription for Safety

Introduced in the fall *Applegater*, Prescription for Safety (P4S) is a community-led group in the Little Applegate, focused on implementing fuels treatments along critical evacuation routes in the area: Highway 238, Griffin Lane, and Sterling Creek Road. To make these evacuation routes safe, vegetation must be maintained to reduce fuel buildup. Having well-managed roadside vegetation makes wildfire suppression more efficient and controlled burning safer, reducing the potential for high-severity wildfire. This is strategic fuel treatment: providing egress, facilitating safer fire suppression, and encouraging more prescribed fire.

Through a wildfire planning strategy known as PODs (Potential Operational Delineations), Oregon State University scientists have identified roads in the Little Applegate that could be used to help contain wildfires. Working with fire practitioners, scientists have worked up a preliminary “Atlas of Potential Control Lines” for a portion of the Rogue Basin. Prescription for Safety has taken these lines, combined them with some local knowledge about possible evacuation routes, and come up with priority roads for treatment.

Prescription for Safety’s goal is to have most of this work funded through grants, so the landowner pays little. P4S has applied for a federal grant and has

tentative approval for \$80,000. After our first virtual community meeting in February 2020, 35 landowners who live on the main evacuation roads signed up for a free property assessment. Pairs of skilled fuels assessors conduct assessments on each property to determine what treatment is needed. To complete the assessments, P4S has teamed up with the OSU Extension’s My Southern Oregon Woodlands and their peer mentors. Peer mentors are already doing property assessments and are generally graduates of the Certified Master Woodland Manager.

To summarize, P4S is working to make certain roads play these roles: evacuation, fire lines and anchor points, strategic fuel treatment, and safer for an increase in controlled fire. P4S has received help, advice, and major staff time from Jackson County Extension, KS Wild, Oregon Department of Forestry, OSU School of Forestry, and the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative.

To learn more about P4S or to get involved, contact Rich Fairbanks at richfairbanks3@gmail.com.

## Regional fire specialist

Oregon State University Extension’s new regional fire specialist for southwest Oregon, Chris Adlam, PhD, will work toward the following goals:

- Conduct outreach and education around prescribed fire and individual wildfire preparedness
- Tackle obstacles to prescribed fire and landscape-scale forest restoration by supporting agency partnerships, advancing policy change, and addressing smoke-related concerns
- Support the formation of community-based Prescribed Burn Associations such as the one recently launched in the Applegate Valley

- Build a more fire-adapted culture in southwest Oregon by supporting indigenous cultural burning and ecological fire management, with local input through forest management collaboratives.

## Forest and Fire Toolkit

Partners of Prescription for Safety recently released the *Forest & Fire Toolkit*, a “one stop shop” for all the resources residents need to acquaint themselves with the forests of the Siskiyou region. The toolkit provides information on how to prepare your family, home, and community for a wildfire emergency.

In section two of the Toolkit you will find:

- A how-to guide on preparing your property for wildfire: defensible space and home hardening

• Funding opportunities for home defense

- Post-fire checklist and financial assistance

- Steps to plan and be ready for a wildfire emergency and evacuation

- Resource directory of national forest districts, fire districts and more!

There is so much residents can do to prepare their property and community for wildfire season. To learn more about the *Forest & Fire Toolkit* and how to download a free copy, check out the KS Wild website at [kswild.org/forest-fire-toolkit](http://kswild.org/forest-fire-toolkit).



Oregon State University scientists have worked up a preliminary Atlas of Potential Control Lines for a portion of the Rogue Basin showing the best places to stop a fire (blue) with somewhat less effective places (green). These control lines are almost always roads. This zoomed-in detail of the Sterling Creek Road area shows a blue area at the upper right, which is the relatively nonflammable streets and landscaped yards of Jacksonville. Running from the upper right towards the lower left is Griffin Lane and Sterling Creek Road (highlighted in green).



A treated stand with piles ready for a controlled burn. There’s a low load of surface fuels and a high canopy base height. Photo: Rich Fairbanks.

Applegate community members are coming together to better prepare the area for a wildfire emergency and to restore fire resilience to our forests. As we come into what looks like another severe fire season, we hope that more people will get involved in making our communities safer.

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## AVFD FLEET

Continued from page 1

from Medford or just to Jacksonville for a few groceries. No thanks! Same thing for our fire district’s older apparatus—heavy, long, and not quite as responsive as the firefighters might need. Especially if someone’s home or life is threatened!

This type-six engine also has more water capacity, better pump capacity, and a hose size that allows firefighters to “pump and roll” (yes, just as it sounds—apply water to a spreading fire as you roll along the edge of the fire). It also has a unique feature that is invaluable: there is a Cascade system in the vehicle, which allows firefighters to refill their breathing apparatus on the scene of a structure fire, so that they can get back to the fire more quickly. The new #8563 is also easier to operate, maneuver, and drive. (Not to mention to train new firefighters as drivers!)

Our fire district was established in the 1980s. The goal was to provide timely responses to both structural and forest fires in the Applegate. Today our fire district has seven stations across the Applegate Valley. Staff and volunteers respond to fires, accidents, injuries, illness, and other emergencies. With #8563 now in service out of headquarters, the plan is to have an identical new type-six engine stationed on the west side of our district in the coming months. (But don’t jump out of your seats!



The new engine has plenty of room for medical supplies. Photo: Sandy Shaffer.



Blankets, hoses, and other supplies in their new engine niches. Photo: Sandy Shaffer.

By purchasing a second type-six engine at the same time, the cost was 50 percent of the full price. And best of all, some of the cost was covered by a grant, and the remainder was matched by generous donations!) Way to go, team!

Sandy Shaffer  
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# Wildflowers, gifts of the road

BY CHRISTINA AMMON

The native wildflowers in my valley mark time like a calendar. The first purple larkspurs and shooting stars indicate the start-line of spring, and then the blooms progress toward summer like a slow-motion fireworks display: red *Fritillaria*, white trillium, purple lupine, and then blazing red Indian paintbrush.

I get to know these flowers on my daily hikes on the Jacksonville woodlands and even feel bonded to particular ones, like the singular mission bell that grows each May in an old gold-mining ditch. I feel as protective over the blooms as a parent and fume when I pass a hiker carrying a bouquet of the rare and endemic *Fritillaria*—or worse, see the flowers plucked and then dropped on the ground. Nothing gives me a more pessimistic view of humanity than a rare flower smashed into the dirt—a small transgression perhaps, but one that feels deeply symbolic of something larger.

That said, there is one flower I allow myself to freely harvest: the magenta sweet



“Gifts of the Road”  
by Christina Ammon.

peas that grow along our country highway in June. When I see them, I carefully slow my car, find a pull-off, and pick to my heart’s content. This particular *L. latifolius* is somewhat invasive, crowding out native plants, so in picking it you might even feel you are doing nature a favor.

The sweet pea is originally from Sicily.

The annual variety was brought here from England, intentionally cultivated, and even sold in the Burpee catalogs.

As pretty as sweet peas are, they are considered simple and unspecial. According to a poet named Junkin, sweet peas are “built of common earth” and grow “in lowly place beside village lanes.”

But for me, these roadside flowers are as magnificent as any store-bought bouquet, and when every tableside in my house is adorned with a splash of magenta, I know for sure it is June.

Christina Ammon  
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We want your letters to the editor! Email to [gater@applegater.org](mailto:gater@applegater.org).





# Fire hazard? Take away all those 'ladder fuels'

BY TOM CARSTENS

There I was, sitting in an Oregon State University Extension class for landowners. We were discussing the degrees of drought tolerance for tree species in our area. Douglas "Doug" fir wasn't high on the list. Suddenly everything became clear: this must be why my Doug fir trees keep dying! All my other trees do just fine.

Sound familiar? It should—we can see large clumps of dead and dying Doug fir trees all over the Applegate Valley. Even now, when I look across the valley at Ferris Gulch, it makes my heart sick. When they go up in flames—and they will—it's not going to be pretty. Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and Applegate District fire crews will have their hands full protecting homes.

Just after that class, Aaron Krikava published an article in this paper offering help to private property owners who might want to do some controlled burning to

remove unwanted forest undergrowth—so-called ladder fuels. I'd only heard of this being done on large public land tracts, so I was interested to see how this could work on a smaller private parcel.

As it happened, the US Forest Service was offering a field trip to examine the results of a prescribed burn in the Upper Applegate, so I signed up. What I saw was not forest destruction, but a clearing of hazard fuels between the trunks of thriving, established trees. The forest canopy remained intact and healthy. The added bonus was that it mimicked the natural restorative process of periodic wildfire.

Okay, I thought, this is what I want to do. But first I had to get rid of all those beetle-infested fir trees before I introduced fire on my property, which hadn't seen a flame in over 90 years. A neighbor put me in touch with a local logger. In exchange

for a couple of truckloads of millable logs, he agreed to help me thin my forest and pile the slash. Some of my neighbors were able to gather some of the smaller logs for firewood. For a lighter touch, we brought in a team of large Percheron horses to skid the Doug fir logs.

Now—how to deal with all those slash piles? I asked Biomass One if they'd be interested in chipping the waste for energy. They were, but they couldn't negotiate my steep drive. So I contacted Josh Weber, the owner of Greenpath Landscape, to help me burn those piles. On burn days, we gradually worked through the slash. Afterwards, the property looked much more open. Taking advantage of the pandemic slowdown, I continued to manually thin my property of more fuel hazards. I dug out troublesome blackberry patches, removed buckbrush overgrowth, cut and piled smaller dead trees, limbed others, and burned the waste. Once this was done, I felt confident and ready to finish the job with a controlled burn.

Aaron and Mel Wann of the Applegate Partnership drafted a 69-page burn plan and put me in contact with Grayback Forestry, a local company with a lot of experience managing burns on large public tracts. I began talking to my neighbors to let them know what was going to happen. I dug a protective hand line around my house. Josh and a neighbor helped me put in more fire lines where needed. ODF looked over the plan, inspected the lines, and issued a burn permit.

When the weather conditions met ODF guidelines, we notified Applegate Fire District. Grayback Forestry brought out a couple of fire engines, a water tender, and a crew of 24, who ringed the entire property with charged fire hose. Small, controlled flames slowly licked up the ground litter and duff. Five hours after light-off, it was done. I had a clean, fire-resistant forest floor.

Expecting another bad fire season, I feel about as protected as possible. Collectively, there are enough of us Applegaters who own a sizable quantity of dry forest land; maybe we can contribute to reducing the fire hazard for all of us. Controlled burning can help.

It's worth considering.  
Tom Carstens  
541-846-1025



Tom Carstens brought in Percheron draft horses to move logs while thinning fuel from his property. Photo: Tom Carstens.



Tom Carstens scrapes a fire line around his house. Photo: Kathy Carstens.



Greenpath Landscape helps burn slash piles to reduce fuel load on the property. Photo: Tom Carstens.

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*Courtesy Oregon State University Extension Service*

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# Sierra Nevada Blue flies high

BY LINDA KAPPEN

The Sierra Nevada Blue (*Agriades podarce klamathensis*), aka Gray Blue, is a butterfly in the family Lycaenidae. This species is endemic to our area in the Siskiyou and Southern Oregon Cascade mountain ranges.

In 2012 my son Dakota and I hiked into Bigelow Lakes basin. I observed these butterflies and took photos, then sent the pictures of a pair I hadn't seen before to an entomologist friend, Dana, who verified my identification of the Gray Blue. This sighting was a documented record for Josephine County, as it was 30 miles west of the known populations at Mount Ashland.

The Sierra Nevada Blue is one-half inch or less in size. The males are grayish blue above. The females are blended lighter brown above. Below they both have black spots ringed in white and are darker along the borders with white fringes. They can be found from late June to early August. The female lays her eggs on the host plant, and the caterpillars overwinter at a small larval stage. In our areas the host plants are the Alpine Shooting Star, *Dodecatheon alpinum*, and the Jeffrey's Shooting Star, *Dodecatheon jeffreyi*, which both grow in specialized high-mountain meadow habitats at 5,000- to 7,000-foot elevations.

The Sierra Nevada Blue is considered a species of concern because its hostplants grow in

fragile, wet, headwater meadows and along meadow streams. These can be easily damaged by unnatural activities such as cattle grazing, off-road vehicles, and even heavy hiking traffic. These activities damage the functional ecosystem to our headwaters that also support other wildlife. Naturally occurring threats, such as climate change, can also result in damaging droughts and wildfires in these areas.

While monitoring Sierra Nevada habitat on the Siskiyou Crest, I have witnessed fluctuations in the population of this butterfly. When cows graze in these meadows, they cause extreme damage by eating plant life to ground level and leaving deep footprints. In the years with cows, the butterfly counts dropped dramatically because of this damage.

In comparison, at Bigelow Lakes, a local environmental group, KS Wild, began buying cattle allotments in the basin,

Sierra Nevada Blues favor habitat along streams and wet meadows. Photo: Linda Kappen.



thus removing cattle from the equation since 2009. Now the host plant grows thick at its bloom time, and other wildflowers follow. I believe, after observing the thin populations on the Siskiyou Crest, that the population of the Sierra Nevada Blue at Bigelow Lakes has been saved.

This butterfly mates in the meadow and does not travel very much outside its habitat. A friend and I witnessed hundreds of Sierra Nevadas flying around us as we stood at the edge of one of the meadows at Bigelow Lakes. Having done butterfly blitzes (a citizen-scientist way of taking inventory of butterflies) and a few NABA (North American Butterfly Association) counts, I was able to estimate between 400 and 500 butterflies flying around us.

Observing so many Sierra Nevada Blues in the protected meadows at Bigelow

Sierra Nevada Blues can be found in the Bigelow Lakes area. Photo: Linda Kappen.



Male (left) and female Sierra Nevada Blue (aka Gray Blue) butterflies share a perch. Photo: Linda Kappen.

Lakes, I am concerned about the danger to the moist meadow habitats on the Siskiyou Crest in the headwaters of our watersheds. A beautiful butterfly living in some of our most beautiful landscapes is a treasure we should try to protect.

I would like to add a link to a real-life study of these areas for you to view and consider. This is the Siskiyou Chapter Native Plant Society of Oregon's YouTube Channel: [bit.ly/SCNPSOregon](http://bit.ly/SCNPSOregon). At the beginning of the video entitled "TALK: Public Land Grazing in the Siskiyou Mountains," they speak of a locally invasive plant, then the high mountain habitat presentation begins.

Linda Kappen  
humbugkapps@hotmail.com  
Linda Kappen is a southern Oregon naturalist specializing in lepidoptera.

# Ecological benefits of prescribed fire

BY CHRIS ADLAM

I recently hiked the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail, looking for signs of past fires. It was a beautiful hike, with the balsamroots and mariposa lilies in their full glory, but something looked wrong: We saw few signs of recent fire activity. And that is a bad thing.

Before the removal of Indigenous people and the start of fire suppression, this area of oak woodland, grassland, and chaparral would have burned every three to five years. You can still find clues to this frequent burning. For example, I found a dead fire-scarred tree on private land nearby with evidence of 17 fires! (See photo.) And that number doesn't include fires so mild they didn't leave scars. The owner of that property is aware of problems caused by the lack of fire and has been conducting prescribed burns to reverse the damage. And prescribed burns are a good thing.

Fire shapes ecosystems by opening the way for species that enjoy sunny, open conditions. It is a friend to pines, which have adjusted to life with fire by growing thick bark, dropping its lower branches

as it grows so fire can't climb them, and using thick sheaths of long needles to protect their growth buds from scorch. Surface fires cause pines to make more resin, which is the trees' immune system, protecting them against beetle attacks. By cleaning out undergrowth, fire also helps pines because pines can't grow in the shade and their seedlings can't root in deep litter. Without fire, shade-tolerant species like firs tend to take over and eventually outcompete our sun-loving species. Unfortunately, these dense, shady forests are more vulnerable to drought, so the firs end up dying also. Prescribed fire lessens competition and shifts stands back towards drought- and fire-resistant species, which are also important for wildlife and understory plants.

Plants and animals in our region have lived with frequent fire for thousands of years. Many of our wildflowers need bare mineral soil to germinate their seeds. Their regeneration is impaired by deep litter and duff that builds up without fire. Some species have seeds that require heat to germinate, like manzanita and buckbrush. The only manzitanas on the ditch trail are relicts of decades-old fires; there are no seedlings, no new generation.

Because there is no new growth, there is also less food for deer and elk. Ungulates prefer succulent young shoots, common after a fire. In other parts of the country, hunters commonly use fire to enhance habitat for game species,

including ungulates, pheasants, and quail. In 1916, Klamath River Jack, a Karuk man, wrote to the US Forest Service to explain that Native people use fire partly for this reason. He pointed out that deer were dying from eating grass that had soured from too much shade after the agency outlawed burning. The USFS ranger took no notice, and today sour grass and sick deer are the norm except where tribes or others burn to maintain healthy foraging grounds. There the deer and grasses recover in abundance and health.

All the benefits of fire could hardly be described in a short article, but here are a few more. First, fire helps with water retention, as the removal of leaf litter that would otherwise intercept rainfall allows water to reach plant roots rather than evaporating back into the atmosphere. Second, the charred material fire leaves behind is nature's biochar, adding carbon to the soil, recycling nutrients, and increasing water retention. Many people will also appreciate that fire burns ticks and poison oak, at least for a short while.

Fire also teaches us about our responsibility to care for our cherished landscapes. On the Sterling Mine Ditch trail, dead manzanita piles up and drought-stricken Douglas-firs turn orange and die. Poison oak abounds, while grasslands shrink.

But there are promising signs that we will rise to this challenge. Prescribed Burn Associations are making prescribed fire accessible to private landowners, forest restoration collaboratives are building partnerships between communities



Numerous fire scars (marked by arrows on detail photo above) on a dead pine tree show how common fire was until the early 20th century. Photo: Chris Adlam.

Fawn lilies thrive in what was a poison oak thicket until a prescribed burn three years before. Photo: Chris Adlam.



and agencies, and tribes are leading a cultural shift in our relationship with fire. Prescribed fire is not the only tool we have to maintain healthy ecosystems, but it is a critical piece of a great puzzle that includes all of us and our plant and animal neighbors.

Chris Adlam, Phd  
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# Rogue Forest Partners tackles major projects

BY TERRY FAIRBANKS

Here's an update on three major projects Rogue Forest Partners are working on.

## West Bear Initiative

In April, Governor Kate Brown visited the West Bear All-Lands Restoration Project to show her support for restoration efforts across the Rogue Basin. She praised the collaborative partners of the Rogue Valley for their ability to come together and advance win-win solutions that reduce wildfire risks to nature and people. The Rogue Forest Partners worked closely with an array of community organizations, public agencies, and fire departments to design the West Bear project boundary and objectives. The 27,000-acre footprint spans the wildland-urban interface west of the I-5 corridor, in the foothills of Talent, Phoenix, west Medford, and Jacksonville. This densely populated part of the Rogue Basin is ranked highest in need for forest restoration and risk reduction close to communities.

Lomakatsi Restoration Project planted the seed for the West Bear project after

securing funding of \$490,000 for the Anderson Creek Hazardous Fuels Mitigation Project through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Following the Almeda Fire, the Rogue Forest Partners worked with Sustainable Northwest—which brought a \$2 million grant—to leverage additional investments. The Partners helped delineate the West Bear landscape and Lomakatsi sponsored a proposal to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and received a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant of \$2.6 million. In addition to supporting West Bear, the Partners are exploring ongoing work with the Oregon Department of Forestry, two Bureau of Land Management (BLM) projects, and the proposed Jacksonville Community Protection project.

## Rogue Forest Restoration Initiative

Led by the Rogue Forest Partners, the RFRI is a collaborative effort to implement ecological restoration and fuels reduction

on 6,000 acres across six sites in the Rogue Basin.

Williams: RFP, BLM, and the NRCS partnered on an “all-lands” approach to cross-boundary coordination to treat adjacent parcels on both federal and private lands. Lomakatsi has completed fuel reduction on 194 acres of private lands and 80 acres of BLM lands. The work continues through 2023.

Upper Applegate: Klamath Bird Observatory conducted a pre-treatment bird monitoring survey on 36 commercial thinning units covering 1,371 acres. Surface and ladder fuels reduction work started in mid-May on 276 acres, consistent with the Upper Applegate Environmental Assessment, with more acreage to follow.

Shan Apple: These treatments are part of the larger Upper Briggs Project on the ridge above the Applegate River in the Illinois Valley, within the Wild Rivers Ranger District of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. A local workforce prepared 194 acres for ecological commercial thinning, and implementation will begin later in 2021.

## Multiparty monitoring and third-party review

Rogue Forest Partners want to thank the RFRI Implementation Review Team for their thoughtful review of the Upper Applegate project. In place of an in-person event, the Partners provided a virtual meeting with field maps, photos, descriptions of representative units, and thoughtful discussions. Implementation members included recreation, Tribal,

industry, and conservation representatives. The team expressed strong support for prescribed fire and continued progress toward a landscape where fire management options are improved. Climate adaptation approaches incorporated into the project were also broadly supported. The prescriptions, especially with the strong emphasis on spatial patterning, were perceived as beneficial for wildfire, fire risk mitigation, and forest resilience. For a full meeting summary, go to [rogueforestpartners.org/monitoring](http://rogueforestpartners.org/monitoring).

Monitoring Plan: The Rogue Forest Partners have drafted a multi-party monitoring plan based on past monitoring efforts, such as the Ashland Forest All-Lands Restoration Initiative; on input from recent public meetings; and on review by researchers and academics from the USDA Forest Service Pacific and Southwest research stations, Humboldt University, Oregon State University, Southern Oregon University, and others. The monitoring will keep tabs on restoration objectives: promoting resilient landscapes; reducing wildfire risk to people and nature; building public knowledge and support; growing capacity for planning, implementing, monitoring, outreach, and engagement; and improving socioeconomic conditions and developing a skilled ecological restoration workforce.

The Rogue Forest Partners recognize the importance of working in landscapes where people live and work. Their mission is to collaborate with communities to reduce the hazards to our homes, roads, woodlands, and forests while learning to live with fires that become more “mild” and less “wild.”

For more information, visit [rogueforestpartners.org](http://rogueforestpartners.org). Terry Fairbanks, Executive Director, Southern Oregon Restoration Collaborative Coordinator, Rogue Forest Partners [tfairbanks@sofrc.org](mailto:tfairbanks@sofrc.org)

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with Tami Quinn Hollenbeck

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# Project Youth Plus and Grow Youth programs nurture outdoor education

BY NATHAN GEHRES

Over the past year plus, the educational experiences of local students have been greatly disrupted. The outreach and education program of the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC) was not immune to that disruption. With COVID-19 protocols in place and improved conditions locally, APWC restarted and revamped our outdoor education efforts through partnering with Project Youth Plus and Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS) and designing a pilot service-learning project at Cantrall Buckley called Grow Youth.

In March, APWC partnered with Project Youth Plus and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for an event at the Provolt Recreation Site.

Project Youth Plus provides education and support for students 16 to 24 years old wanting a career in the outdoors. APWC and the BLM set up stations to demonstrate riparian restoration and anadromous (salmon and lamprey) fish passage habitat restoration. The Provolt Recreation Site was perfect for in-the-field demonstrations of habitat restoration projects. BLM staff members from the Grants Pass Field Office were indispensable partners for this event. They demonstrated electrofishing for lamprey ammocetes (larval lamprey), providing amazing visual aids to illustrate the life stages of fish. They gave context and history of the BLM property and answered technical questions related to project infrastructure. The Grants Pass Field Office of the BLM is committed to outdoor education, and the Provolt Recreation Site is going to be an amazing location for outdoor education events.

The APWC worked with ROCS this April to provide two days of outdoor education for sixth-grade students from ROCS and Kennedy Elementary. These days came with COVID challenges, but we were able to successfully provide more than 60 students with lessons in salmon biology, riparian/habitat restoration, watershed science, water quality, macroinvertebrates, sound mapping/haiku, and outdoor yoga. These classes and a teacher training day for ROCS staff and volunteers are helping us set up and lay the groundwork for our Grow Youth project.

Grow Youth is a pilot project that builds upon existing local partnerships with Jackson County Parks Department, ROCS, and A Greater Applegate and will provide lesson plans and service-learning opportunities at Cantrall Buckley Park. The goals of Grow Youth are highly aligned with many community needs, mainly for outdoor education opportunities and high-quality riparian habitat on the Applegate River that is open to the public.

Through hands-on science activities students will learn about watershed



The Grow Youth project uses a “stream table” model as part of its watershed education program. Photo: Nathan Gehres.



Ruch Outdoor Community School students net macroinvertebrates in the Applegate River in April. Photo: Nathan Gehres.

health and the principles of natural resource stewardship, keystone species and life cycles, water quality, riparian zone function, and collecting and analyzing data. Providing students with this type of discovery-based service learning is invaluable, especially during critical developmental years, and opportunities for field instruction are exceedingly rare as school budgets are squeezed. K-8 students will receive integrated watershed education, funded through a grant from Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District.

The second component of Grow Youth is riparian restoration and the installation of interpretive signage at Cantrall Buckley Park. Currently, a large portion of the riverbank is inundated by invasive species, such as Himalayan blackberries and poison hemlock. APWC has recently secured funding from the Carpenter Foundation and the Schwemm Family Foundation to fully implement the Grow Youth initial restoration phase of this project, carried out by our Restoration Crew. After the initial removal, our service-learning opportunities begin with local elementary students who will have the opportunity

to apply their lessons and get their hands dirty planting native species and setting up plant growth monitoring plots. ROCS has established a tree nursery as part of its outdoor education program, and some of the trees that the students cultivate will be used in the project.

The APWC and ROCS Grow Youth project leverages resources to build on programs that have proven successful and to enhance future planned projects. In addition, the Grow Youth project has set goals for expansion throughout the Applegate Valley, forging partnerships with additional schools.

Thank you to the teachers and students who participated in the watershed education program and to the volunteers from the community and agency staff who helped make these events possible.

If members of the community would like to assist or donate to the Grow Youth project and associated interpretive signs at Cantrall Buckley Park, please contact the APWC at [contact@apwc.info](mailto:contact@apwc.info).

Nathan Gehres  
Habitat Restoration Project Manager  
APWC  
[contact@apwc.info](mailto:contact@apwc.info)



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Essay

# Learning to fit in, in peace

BY GAY BRADSHAW

Charlie Russell and I worked 10 years together writing a book about his seven decades living with bears. He was—and still is—regarded as the world’s grizzly expert. We’d talk two, sometimes three, times a week, batting ideas about things bear back and forth. Sometimes neither of us had many words to share. The ideas we were trying to communicate to policy-makers and the public about the real, wonderful nature of bears were so simple and straightforward, words were inadequate. Similar to love and truth, bears don’t need words.

When I called, Charlie would pick up the phone, and then, unless the weather was too fierce, step onto the porch of his cabin in Alberta’s mountains. I’d hear the screen door bang shut, then a chorus of voices—a nuthatch chirping, a jay squawking, or some other winged neighbor celebrating the day. Other times, Charlie would tell me what and who he was seeing, like the recent male puma.

Cougars weren’t uncommon there. Invisible to the careless eye, their golden form weaves through grassy contours below the cabin. One time Charlie called, bursting with joy, to report that he had come across a pair of bouncing cougar kittens at play.

Today’s cougar, however, was a full-grown adult. He had been hanging around the cabin, laying low in the shelter of a nearby grove, obviously ailing.

Charlie decided to help the big cat, so he put out some meat. He felt for him. Similar to grizzlies, cougars need to scavenge on occasion because of foodstuffs made scarce by white settlement. In this case, human intervention came as a saving grace for the injured cougar. The substitute fare that Charlie put out seemed to do the trick. In a few days, the cougar was back on his feet, thin, but capable.

When you wait and watch, and wait, quiet, and wait some more, Charlie’d say, you see things you would never see otherwise. When you wait and listen for no other reason than to learn and hear nature’s pulse, you become part of the landscape, blend in, fit in, and start to pick up on the inside world of animals. This really was Charlie’s point and foundational to what he called “paying attention.” Being able to fit in with bears and their world meant listening and looking at what nature served up, not only studying what is interesting.

One day, I asked Charlie, “After all the years living so close to nature’s bones, what is one essential lesson you have learned?” The jay called and a woodpecker knocked

a few times before he answered. “If I could only use one word to describe nature, I’d say ‘gentle.’ Nature is gentle.”

You wouldn’t think that, given where he grew up, with the eyes of Canada’s formidable Front Range staring straight at him, Charlie would regard nature as “gentle.” Alberta’s cold weather and harsh winds are legendary, the kind that make up round-the-campfire tales of woe and hardship. He and his pioneer family certainly had their share of nail-biting stories like the time his grandparents came home from the store to find their house blown off its foundations and sitting smack in the middle of the creek. Or when Charlie and his brother, when they were about seven or eight years old, got caught up in a blizzard white-out, snowshoeing from school and almost didn’t make it home. But, Charlie insisted, nature is gentle and, he added, unlike a lot of humans, fair.

Nature is not out to get you, Charlie’d say. Cougars, wolves, rattlesnakes, bears, bees, and other wildlife are not out to get you. They are trying to eke out a living just like anyone else—except they came here long before we did. He’s right. Our wildlife family is what made this valley so beautiful and peaceful. To restore the peace, we need



Charlie Russell with a wild grizzly. Photo: Tom Ellison.

to take a page from Charlie’s book and learn how to fit in with the land, fit in with the bears, cougars, and all the other animals who grace this heaven on Earth.

Gay Bradshaw, founder The Kerulos Center for Nonviolence [bradshaw@kerulos.org](mailto:bradshaw@kerulos.org)  
Gay Bradshaw is author of *Talking with Bears: Conversations with Charlie Russell* (Rocky Mountain Books, 2020).

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## Four new 'little libraries' are connecting more people to free books

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

The Friends of Ruch Library (FORL) is a nonprofit organization that supports the distribution of free books to our local rural communities through “little libraries.” Little libraries build community spirit and are a way for people in rural areas—who may lack internet and electronics or feel especially isolated due to COVID-19—to connect with the Jackson County Library Services.

With health restrictions still in place for their smaller public space, FORL can't operate the A-frame Bookstore yet. This means FORL has lots of books to share! So the Friends' idea of encouraging more little libraries in our communities has taken off.

The first one was the McKee Bridge Little Library, designed and built by students at Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS). Bryan della Santina, FORL board member and volunteer at the school, prepared the structure for mounting and installed it. He also keeps it stocked weekly with books and has noticed that the local community donates books and even non-perishable food to share with neighbors. Located close to the old historic bridge, it has proven to be a positive addition to the community.

Myron Hauser built the unique, tall, ROCS Little Library just inside the campus on the one-way entrance. The students helped install this one and helped prepare a nice parking pull-off for easy access by the community to use it. Julie Barry, ROCS principal and a very creative painter, had fun giving it its bright and delightful color scheme. Bryan also keeps this one well stocked weekly. It's open to the public to borrow and exchange books. Please drive slowly through the campus and follow the road out to the exit on Highway 238.

Folks on China Gulch have created their own China Gulch Little Library for their community. They are keeping it supplied themselves, and Bryan supplements books, as needed.

The newest, Cantrall Buckley Little Library, was installed by park ranger Jonathan Bernhardt in April. This one was designed, totally created, and painted by Steve Rhodes and Wende-Martin Rhodes. They have since moved from our community but loved doing this service. FORL supported their efforts by supplying the materials. Just after you pass through the fee booth at the park, look for the parking lot on your right and the pollinator garden. You might also see the new monarch sculpture, too. This little library is also a borrow-and-exchange-if-you-wish setup. Thalia Truesdell, Ruch Branch manager, restocks it frequently, with my assistance.

FORL really appreciates your support of our communities with your book donations, which help keep our little libraries well stocked. Many FORL members volunteer to help sort the wonderful donations we receive. Some go to Ruch Country Store to sell, some go to the Book Barn for the first-Saturday-of-the-month sales each month (as allowed by health regulations), and lots are set aside for free distribution to the little libraries. If you have books to donate, you can drop them off during a first-Saturday Book Barn sale.

FORL has received requests for several more little libraries, The Ruch Fire Station would like one, and the communities of Buncom and Humbug are both interested in adding a little library next to their new community bulletin boards sponsored by A Greater Applegate. If you are crafty or



Myron Hauser built the Little Free Library at the Ruch Outdoor Community Schools. Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.



As you approach the historic McKee Bridge, this Little Free Library sits to the right, in front of the old restaurant and store. Photo: Janis Mohr-Tipton.

know someone who might be interested and would like to build a Little Library, please contact me.

Remember, you are welcome to add a book to any free little library that you borrow from. Also, if you would like to get involved with Friends of Ruch Library, ask for a membership form at a Book

Barn sale or at the Branch Library. For more information, call Thalia at Ruch Branch Library at 541-899-7438. She will pass your question on to the appropriate FORL contact.

Janis Mohr-Tipton  
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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

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541-826-9149

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## THE SISKIYOU MOUNTAIN ADVOCATE

# Spinning their wheels at BLM

BY LUKE RUEDIGER

For decades, unauthorized off-road vehicle use and the associated impacts on public lands in the Applegate have been extremely controversial. Although opinions vary, one thing is certain: For more than 25 years, land managers at Medford District of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been spinning their wheels.

In the 1995 Resource Management Plan (RMP), the BLM was directed to conduct Travel Management Planning (TMP). This process would require an analysis of motor vehicle use, including human and environmental impacts. Based on that analysis, the agency would be required to designate routes or areas either open, limited, or closed to motorized use. TMPs are important because they help create a sustainable, responsible system of roads and motorized trails while reducing environmental impacts, addressing conflicts with other public land users, and eliminating private land trespass, cross-country motorized travel, unauthorized route development, and the general free-for-all we have historically called BLM off-road vehicle management—or, in this case, mismanagement.

During the 1990s, the BLM began identifying areas for potential motorized use but never conducted an open, transparent approval process for motorized trails and never implemented TMP. Instead, they looked the other way and allowed motorbike riders to build hundreds, if not thousands, of miles of unauthorized, user-created trails in our area. With a wink, a nod, and a few words in the RMP, the BLM had identified areas for potential motorized use, but they did

not actually approve that use. They also did not analyze or disclose the environmental effects, fully consider the social concerns or user-conflicts, or provide a public comment period.

What they did do was spin their wheels and let the problem get worse, while the impacts to wildlife, soils, surface erosion rates, stream sedimentation, rare plant populations, intact plant communities, and wildland habitats kept mounting.

Recently a new and particularly troubling invasive species, shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum*), was introduced into the Applegate Valley in the Forest Creek watershed. Invasive shiny geranium was discovered in 2016 after it was introduced along an unauthorized, user-created motorcycle trail. For numerous years, BLM failed to adequately treat this site of the new and highly aggressive noxious weed or to close the area to OHVs, and shiny geranium has continued to spread quickly. Despite repeated requests by Applegate Neighborhood Network and others to close this noxious-weed-infested off-road vehicle trail and others nearby to reduce spread, the BLM has completely failed to act.

In some places unauthorized routes have become so badly rutted and eroded that four-foot-deep erosion gullies are now extending down ridgelines, heavily altering existing water drainage patterns. The region is now riddled with unauthorized, user-created routes that were driven, not constructed with sustainable grades or planning. These routes extend across streams and down nearly every semi-accessible ridge or drainage on some portions of BLM



Extreme soil erosion from an unauthorized, user-created, off-road vehicle trail on BLM lands. Photo: Luke Ruediger.

land. Unauthorized motor vehicle routes also extend through nesting sites of the northern spotted owl, rare plant populations, and noxious weed sites; across non-motorized trails; and into beloved areas for non-motorized recreation like the Wellington Wildlands, Anderson Butte, and the Sterling Ditch Trail.

In 2016, the BLM approved a new Resource Management Plan and authorized a “limited to existing” designation for motorized trails, but completely failed to produce an accompanying route inventory, which would have made this policy somewhat enforceable and at least somewhat effective. They also failed to acknowledge that there was not a single existing authorized motorcycle trail when the 2016 RMP was approved, making their “limited to existing” designation meaningless. Instead of addressing the

problem, the BLM has allowed the free-for-all to continue. Reports of illegal cross-country use and unauthorized motorcycle trail development are often ignored by the BLM, and many new routes have been developed through illegal motorized use since the new RMP’s approval.

Also in the 2016 RMP, the BLM again identified a need to implement Travel Management Planning across the entire Medford District BLM by the end of 2021. To date, they have not conducted TMP on a single acre of BLM land, allowing illegal use to continue and expand into new areas. We ask the BLM to keep their promise, abide by their management plan, immediately analyze a TMP across the entire Applegate Valley, and quit spinning their wheels.

Luke Ruediger  
siskiyoucrest@gmail.com

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For more information, contact:

**Jackson County**  
Ron Turpen @ 541-601-1867 or [ron.turpen@gmail.com](mailto:ron.turpen@gmail.com)

**Josephine County**  
Max Unger @ 541-373-1445 or [imaxunger@gmail.com](mailto:imaxunger@gmail.com)

**Next deadline: August 1**



# Free vaccines now available to everyone 12 and older

BY JESSICA BULLARD

All Oregonians aged 12 and over are now eligible to sign up for a free COVID-19 vaccine. In Southern Oregon, Jackson County Health and Human Services and Josephine County Public Health both offer vaccine scheduling information online and by phone.

At the Jackson County Vaccination Equity Center at the Expo, there is no cost and you don't need ID or insurance. Proof of residency is not required. Appointments are encouraged but are not required. Go to [jacksoncounty.org/getvaccinated](http://jacksoncounty.org/getvaccinated) or call 211 for more information regarding scheduling vaccinations at the Expo or other Jackson County sites.

Josephine County Public Health has a COVID-19 call center to help residents schedule vaccine appointments. County residents can call 541-916-7030 from 9 am to 6:30 pm Monday through Friday to speak to an operator in English or Spanish. The call center can directly schedule vaccination appointments for residents at one of 12 local providers using an online form. That same form can be accessed online at [co.josephine.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=2299](http://co.josephine.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=2299).

Parental consent is required to vaccinate people under age 15; an adult

must accompany the youth during the vaccination and sign the consent documents. If a parent or guardian cannot be present, another adult can accompany the child along with written consent from the parent or guardian. Those 15 and older can independently consent to be vaccinated in Oregon.

When 70 percent of adults in Oregon receive at least one dose of an authorized COVID-19 vaccine, most pandemic-related restrictions will be lifted statewide and Oregon's economy will be able to more fully reopen, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Counties will be eligible to move to lower risk when 65 percent of county residents 16 years of age and older receive their first dose of any COVID-19 vaccine and the county submits a plan to close vaccine equity gaps. About 42 percent of Josephine County and 48 percent of Jackson County residents 16 and older had received at least one dose of vaccine as of May 23, according to the Health Authority. Updated data are available at [tabsoft.co/3eVyCkA](http://tabsoft.co/3eVyCkA).

Jessica Bullard  
jess.northwest@gmail.com

## EDITOR'S NOTES

# Something in the air: Fire and COVID-19

BY BERT ETLING

They say to fight fire with fire. Applegaters have gotten the message. This edition of the *Applegater* brings to you eight fire or fire-related articles, most focusing on the benefits of using "good fire" now to prevent a bad fire later.

Public agencies have used controlled burns for a long time. Now, Applegaters and others have joined together to form the first prescribed burn association in Oregon. Besides that front-page story—and another on a new Applegate fire engine—you can read about how one person prepared his land for the fire season (even enlisting the aid of a draft horse to haul away logs); management of roadside vegetation to ensure that potential evacuation routes stay safe; how managed fire is good not only for wildfire prevention, but also for the ecosystem; how a "forest restoration and risk reduction" project brought the governor here to check it out; what those truckloads of burned logs rumbling through the Applegate are all about; and an upcoming event where you can get more information about wildfire preparedness.

You can read more about that June 26 Wildfire Education & Community Connection Fair at the Applegate Valley Fire Department station on Upper Applegate Road on Page 3.

With all that attention you might say, "There's something in the air." We just want to make sure that if that something is smoke, it's from a good fire, not a wildfire.

•••

We seem to finally be getting a handle on another type of wildfire: the COVID-19 pandemic. We know how to keep that fire from spreading: by socially distancing,

wearing a mask, and getting a vaccine. Any of those three functions as a firebreak that keeps the "fire" of COVID from spreading to new people.

Governor Kate Brown has said when 70 percent of Oregon adults have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, most pandemic-related restrictions will be lifted statewide. We're already (as of May 23) at 62.9 percent statewide, but need to keep those vaccinations going in arms to get to where we need to be. The rates for Josephine and Jackson counties, however, hover in the mid-40s—that gives us lots of room for improvement.

Getting vaccinated will keep us healthy, both physically (most important) and economically. And it's easy (and free!) to do: Go to [vaccines.gov](http://vaccines.gov), click on "Find COVID-19 vaccines," enter your zip code and mileage search radius (one, five, 10, 25, or 50 miles), and find out what your options are. If you have a preference, you can even choose which of the three vaccines (Moderna, Pfizer, or Johnson & Johnson) you'd like to find. A map with places you can get your free vaccine pops up, including such places as Bi-Mart, Sav-On, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Fred Meyer, Walmart, Costco, Safeway, and CVS, as well as many independent pharmacies. There's more Jackson and Josephine county vaccination information elsewhere on this page.

Vaccinations are the prescribed burning of medicine. Take control and stop the spread by getting your shot.

•••

Like what you read in this edition? To keep it coming, please take a moment to take advantage of the enclosed donation

envelope to keep the *Applegater* coming. You and your neighbors are what make this community publication possible. Thank you!

Bert Etling  
Editor in Chief  
*Applegater* Newsmagazine  
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## OPINION PIECES AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opinion pieces and letters to the editor represent the opinion of the author, not that of the *Applegater* or the Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc. As a community-based newsmagazine, we receive diverse opinions on different topics. We honor these opinions, but object to personal attacks and reserve the right to edit accordingly. Opinion pieces and letters to the editor **must pertain to and mention the Applegate Watershed. We encourage authors to include verifiable facts to back up their arguments.**

Opinion pieces. Limited to 500 words; no images. Opinion pieces submitted by the same person will not be run consecutively. Responses to previously published opinion pieces will not be published. Must include publishable contact information (phone number and/or email address).

Letters. Limited to 200 words; must be signed, with a full street address or PO Box and phone number. Only the writer's name and hometown will be published.

**Anonymous letters and opinion pieces, reprinted articles, press releases, and political campaign articles will not be published.** Individual letters and opinion pieces may or may not be published. All submissions will be edited for grammar and length.

Email opinion pieces and letters to [gater@applegater.org](mailto:gater@applegater.org) or mail to *Applegater*, Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.

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## ASK THE GATER

## Where are the burned logs coming from?

BY LISA BALDWIN

*Truckloads of burned logs roll through the Lower Applegate. Where are they coming from?*

Lower Applegate resident Kate Hoffman posed this issue's *Ask The Gater* question when she wondered about the numerous log trucks crossing the Applegate Bridge going toward Grants Pass on Highway 199 (and some heading down Riverbanks Road), fully loaded with charred timber. She wasn't aware of any salvage logging being done yet in the Slater Fire burn area, and she wanted to know where all these burned logs were coming from.

Scott Blower, Wild Rivers District Ranger (Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest), confirmed that (as of late April) no fire salvage timber sales have been let for bids yet in the Slater/Devil fire burn area, but there are burned logs being taken out of the Slater burn and hauled to the Swanson mill in Glendale. These are likely the trucks spotted in the Lower Applegate.

Last September, when the Slater Fire was still burning, US Forest Service (USFS) and Pacific Power personnel worked together to cut trees posing a hazard to firefighters and to safeguard the

electrical power transmission line that runs through the area. Five million board feet of timber were cut and decked as part of the firefight. That wood, 48 decks, from the Slater Burned Area Emergency Response, was bought by the Swanson Group in February for \$2.3 million. Blower believes most, if not all, of that timber is going to the Swanson operation in Glendale.

"All of the Slater footprint is still closed to the public," Blower said in late April, but the Slater Fire Safe Re-entry Project has USFS actively working to get the area reopened. Following the NEPA analysis, the Safe Re-entry Project decision was signed by Blower on April 9, allowing timber sales to be put together to treat the burned area south of Takilma, west of Sucker Creek, and east of Hwy 199. The project encompasses approximately 146 miles and 4,194 roadside acres. The first sale was planned to open for bids in mid-May. A top priority is repairing the roadway and removing dangerous fire-weakened trees along the Happy Camp/Grayback Road, work that must be done before the area will be fully open to the public.

Lisa Baldwin • leb.97527@gmail.com

## Changes in the works at riverside properties

BY MICHAEL SCHNEIDER

Two well-known Applegate Valley businesses are looking at changes to each of their popular establishments.

In the first, the iconic Red Lily Vineyards is for sale. According to an electronic offering memorandum by Pegasus Investments, the Los Angeles-based real estate firm handling the sale, the 255 acres of the vineyard house a winery, a tasting room, a horse barn, a hay barn, a workshop, a 4,470-square-foot home, and a 1,700-square-foot guest house.

The vineyard is approximately 18 acres, with additional grape-growing possibilities on the entire property, which has nearly a mile of frontage along the Applegate River. According to Pegasus, the existing vineyards could be increased by an additional 82 acres, for a total vineyard yield of up to 15,000 cases of wine annually.

Red Lily was purchased by the current owners in 2006 and has undergone a number of renovations in the subsequent years, such as installation of a new irrigation infrastructure and construction of a new winery and tasting room. The winery has won several awards since the renovations were completed, including Best Winery by *Southern Oregon Magazine*, and Double Platinum and Platinum awards in the Northwest Wine Competition.

The asking price is \$8,850,000.

The second business undergoing change is the Applegate River Golf Club, on New Hope Road in Grants Pass, which has applied to Josephine County for permission to build an RV park alongside the golf course. The proposed 25-space RV park would be built on an adjacent piece of land, owned by Pat Bernard, whose family owns the golf course. The company would have to comply with a number of county requirements, including building at a distance of at least 50 feet from the river, enclosing the area with a fence, and limiting occupants to a maximum stay of



Red Lily is four miles west of Ruch on Highway 238. Photo: Michael Schneider.



Applegate River Golf Club is along the Applegate River at 7350 New Hope Road in Josephine County. Photo: Michael Schneider.

30 days every six months. As of press time, the process was still undergoing the review and appeal process. Bernard submitted the original application in mid-2019 and received a conditional use permit (CUP) later that year.

Almost immediately after the CUP was approved, a group of neighbors filed an appeal, and a public hearing was held in May 2020. Some residents voiced their support for the proposal; others voiced objections. Two months later, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners denied the appeal, but subsequently the group opposing the park filed another appeal with the state Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA). On March 19 this year, LUBA denied the project opponents' appeal and remanded the matter to the county, where the application presently resides.

Michael Schneider  
mschneider@masassociatesinc.com

## BIZBITS

## Awen Winecraft's Tasting Room

(dubbed the Inspiration Station) opened in February at the McCully House in Jacksonville, on the corner of 5th and California, across from their friends at Quady North. With ample heated outdoor seating and indoor seating in a room with hand-crafted woodwork, customers have good spaces for enjoying the laid-back "rock and roll" vibe.

Co-owners and winemakers, Sean Hopkins and Tom Homewood, began making wine together in 2006. Starting in California with relatively large lots (eight-plus tons in 2007), Sean continued learning his craft with the local varietals of southern Oregon, specifically the Rhone, Italian, and Spanish varietals that grow so well in this area. In due time, Sean and Tom decided to go pro.

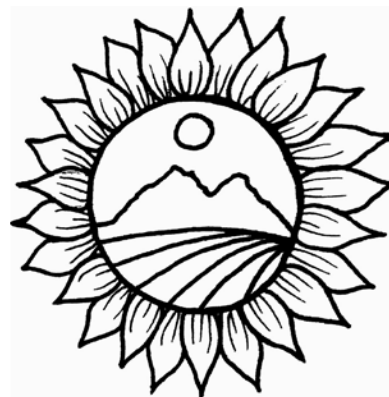
Fast forward to 2016, and Awen Winecraft was born. Taking its name from the Welsh word and Celtic rune meaning the spark of creativity or the source of divine inspiration, and "winecraft" from their partners at Barrel 42, a winery in Medford, Awen Winecraft's owners decided to focus on balance in winemaking and to work within the limits of what the local fruit can provide. Working with master growers, Awen could be selective with what they made and use some "off the beaten path" varietals, such as Grenache Blanc, Vermentino, and Dolcetto, along with some more popular varietals in the area, Tempranillo and Viognier. Awen always works to achieve balance.

Awen has won numerous awards both inside and outside of Oregon. The 2017 Viognier won best of show at the Oregon Wine Experience and a double-gold medal at the *San Francisco Chronicle* Wine Competition. The 2018 Albariño was a reserve champion, the 2017 Sangiovese a multi-gold medal winner, and many Grenache Blancs have won best of show. "We hope you'll find something that you will love!" Sean says.

Awen Winecraft: 240 E California Street, Jacksonville

Open 3-9 pm Wednesday through Friday; noon to 9 pm Saturday; noon to 6 pm Sunday. Closed Monday and Tuesday.

Contact: Sean Hopkins, 541-702-2164, info@awenwinecraft.com  
awenwinecraft.com, Instagram.com/awenwinecraft.



The Red Buttes Farm logo was created by Leigh Normandin.

**Red Buttes Farm** owner, Patrick Homa, recently took over operations on what was formerly known as Sun Spirit Farm, just outside of Murphy. "Red Buttes Farm (RBF) grows produce on 15 acres in three different locations in the Applegate Valley," Patrick said. "We currently go to the Grants Pass Farmer's Market and the Thursday Medford Market and will be participating in the new Applegate Evening Market in Ruch as well. You can also find our produce at Shop'n Kart in Ashland and Cartwright's in Medford." The farm may have familiar faces to some of you, as Patrick managed Barking Moon Farm for the past three plus years, and Kyra, who, Patrick says, "was the heart and soul of Sun Spirit," has joined the team.

"Since we grow just about everything, subscribing to a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is an excellent way to get the freshest, highest-vibe veggies," Patrick says. "Things are in full swing! We have about 10,000 brassicas in the ground, a house full of zucchinis, and carrots sizing up. Spoiler alert: The first CSA box will contain carrots, a lettuce mix, zucchinis, kale, spring Walla Walla onions, and much more!"

Deliveries will begin the third week in May and end the second week in October for a total of 20 weekly boxes. Buyers can pick up boxes at four locations: the farm, at 10241 Williams Highway, Murphy; the farmers market in Medford on Thursday; the Grants Pass Market on Saturday; and the Applegate Evening Market in Ruch on Wednesday. Price: \$600 (deal!) at sign-up or \$350 at sign up and an additional \$300 by July 1. Each box is valued at a minimum of \$35 (\$700 value total). If you are interested or have any questions, email Patrick at redbuttesfarm@gmail.com or call him at 608-632-4042. He hopes to be your farmer this season!

Jeanette LeTourneau • jeanette@applegater.org

**BizBits** highlights businesses new to the area, holding special events, or offering new products. If you are a business owner, let us know when you move into the area or to a different location, hold a special event, expand your business, or mark a milestone. Email gater@applegater.org.

## 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, June 6, 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.

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).



# Sturgis Fork straddles three watersheds

BY EVELYN ROETHER

Greetings, fellow hikers! It's time to hit the high country! Leave these hot valleys behind and head for them thar hills where a cool, quiet respite awaits you. We're so fortunate to have the Siskiyou Mountains and more specifically, the Kangaroo Roadless Area, in our backyards.

Sturgis Fork Trail is one way to access these wildlands that straddle the ridge crest delineating the Applegate, Illinois, and Klamath river valleys. So hop in your four-wheel drive rig and treat yourself to a hike up the mountain and do some exploring in these beautiful wild forests. Enjoy!

## Sturgis Fork #903

**Difficulty:** Moderate

**Distance:** 1.6 miles round-trip

**Elevation gain:** 500 feet

**Access:** Mid-June - late October

**Map:** Grayback Mountain USGS quad

## Directions

Take Highway 238 to the town of Applegate. Go south on Thompson Creek Road for 11.9 miles until the pavement ends at a four-way intersection at the top of the hill. Continue straight on Road 1020, paralleling Sturgis Fork Creek. Do not turn left towards Miller Lake. After 8.1 miles turn right onto the *very rugged* Road 1020/600 and commence uphill for 0.5 mile to the large trailhead parking and horse camp area on the left. (Note: A 4-WD high-clearance vehicle is necessary for the last half mile.)

Named for Albert Sturgis, a 20<sup>th</sup> century miner in the area, the Sturgis Fork Trail is mostly used as an access to the Boundary Trail #1207, which is only 0.8 mile from

the trailhead. This is also the shortest, though not easiest, trail route to the Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve from the Applegate watershed.

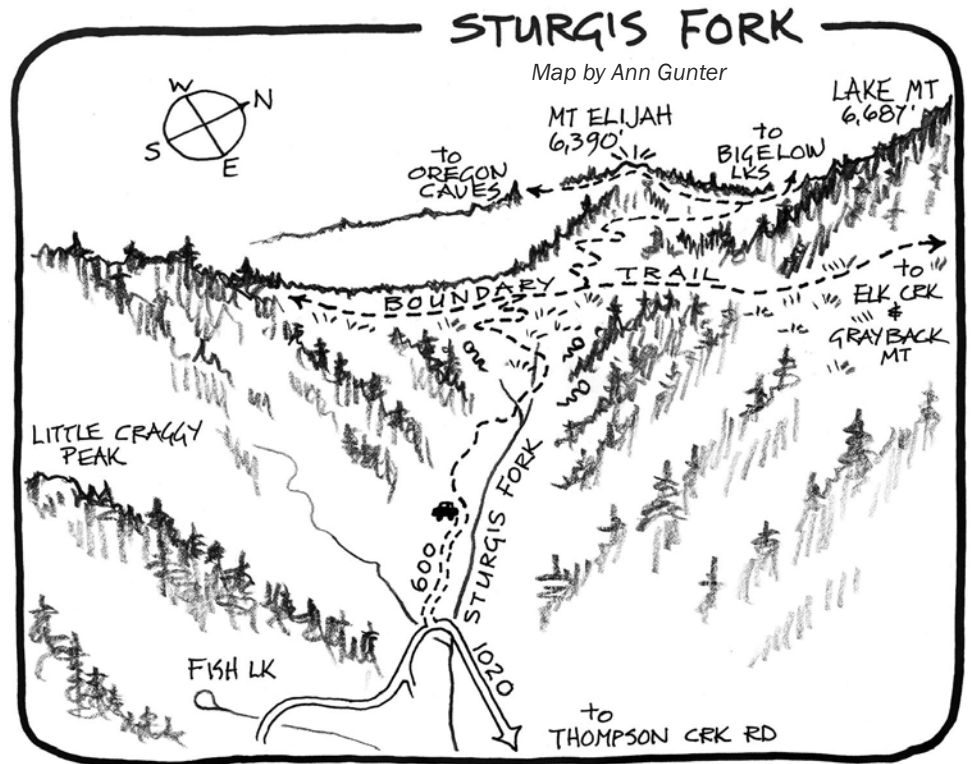
From the parking area the trail quickly ascends through stands of old growth grand fir. Under the towering trees, marshy meadows soon emerge. In June and early July expect to see Sitka valerian, poke knotweed, mountain bluebells, and yellow violets along with a sprinkling of other wetland wildflowers along the way. After crisscrossing the headwaters of Sturgis Fork Creek several times, the trail winds its way up to the ridgeline separating the Applegate and Illinois River watersheds.

At the unsigned 'T' junction on the ridge, the subtler Boundary Trail to the left (south) leads to:

- Elkhorn Prairie (about a mile)
- Horse Springs (water and camp) (about 2 miles)
- Sucker Gap (water and camp) (5.7 miles)
- The Red Buttes Wilderness, eventually, and the Pacific Crest Trail

If you instead turn right (north) on the Boundary Trail, you can get to:

- Mt. Elijah and/or Bigelow Lakes. Continue 0.3 mile then turn left (west) at the intersection and proceed 0.7 mile uphill to the junction with the Mt. Elijah Trail #1206. Turn left (south) and follow the ridgeline 0.3 mile up to Mt. Elijah. Or go right (north) to get to Bigelow Lakes, which are visible below.
- Oregon Caves National Monument. Continue past Mt. Elijah for 3.8 miles, where the trail ends at the caves.



- Sparlin Camp. Stay right at the junctions, and continue 0.8 mile along a subtle trail, through spectacular subalpine meadows, to the camp, which is at the top of the Elk Creek Trail. There is water a few hundred yards down the Elk Creek Trail at D. Healy Spring.
- Grayback Mountain. The tallest peak in Josephine County, Grayback is 4 miles past Sparlin Camp. (See map and O'Brien Creek Trail description for guidance.)
- The top of the O'Brien Creek and Grayback Mountain trails, about 5 miles past Sparlin Camp. The Grayback Mountain Trail marks the northern terminus of the Boundary Trail.

Sturgis Fork Trail is mighty fine in its own right, just a bit short for the amount of time it takes to drive there. If you continue

either way on the Boundary Trail, you're in for some spectacular mountaintop views and wildflower displays. As always, leave no trace.

To learn about more trails in our area, check out my book, *Hiking Trails of the Lower Applegate*, a trail guide describing 20 trails in the Lower Applegate area. It's available at the Williams General Store and Takubeh Natural Market in Williams, Provolt Store and Whistling Duck Farm and Store in Provolt, Rebel Heart Books in Jacksonville, Oregon Books and Games in Grants Pass, and Northwest Nature Shop and Bloomsbury Books in Ashland. Trail guides can also be purchased directly from the author at [lowerapplegatetrails@gmail.com](mailto:lowerapplegatetrails@gmail.com). Happy hiking!

Evelyn Roether  
evelynkr@gmail.com

## ■ PRESCRIBED BURN

*Continued from page 1*

weather forecast is watched closely until an appropriate weather window is identified. If the required volunteers and equipment are available, the controlled burn is scheduled.

Forty-eight hours before the burn, a site-specific spot weather forecast from the National Weather Service assures the burn boss that the temperature, humidity, and wind conditions will be safe. The afternoon before the burn is scheduled, Oregon Smoke Management gives approval if the winds will move the majority of the

smoke away from populated areas. On the day of the burn, weather conditions are continually measured at the project site. If all the measurements align with the prescription, a "test fire," is ignited to observe how the fire behaves.

If flame lengths and rate of spread are as predicted, the controlled burn is conducted. The burning starts from the upslope/upwind edge of the burn unit and proceeds downslope and into the wind. This allows for a slow-moving, "backing," fire to accomplish fuel consumption. After the burn is completed, "mop-up" begins: Any materials still burning are

put out using water and hand tools. This crucial step prevents the fire from getting outside of the burn unit after the burn is completed. The landowner and PBA members then check the burn unit multiple times over several days to be certain the fire is completely out and contained within control lines.

Controlled burning is an involved and complex process, vital to the health and safety of our community and forests. Sharing the knowledge and resources available within our community, we can accomplish it safely and effectively. If you are interested in being informed about



A crew manages a prescribed burn conducted by RVPBA earlier this year in the Applegate.

Photo: Alexi Lovechio.

future events, hosting a burn, or have any questions or comments, please email me.

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## NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

## New educational options could enhance valley vitality

Initially, seeking only a little support in the effort to provide our children with individualized, home-based education, we found the public charter school Teach Northwest fit the bill. Our own little branch of TNW-South was established in 2020 and has a rapidly growing waitlist. This process revealed just how many Applegate families utilize education outside the valley and wondered if having more local education options, especially a high school, could be of service to our children and the community. We began dreaming *big* about what we might accomplish.

TNW started in Alaska when a group of teachers opened a “Learning Cafe” on the docks, where many high school dropouts worked. These students began dropping in and finishing their educations. Then the founders opened another program in the rural community of Marcola, Oregon. When we asked if a program was possible here, TNW confirmed their ability to support us.

“As principal of Ruch Outdoor Community School, and more recently moving to and joining the Applegate Valley community, I am firm in the belief that families need options and educators need to recognize that children have different learning styles,” Julie Barry says. “Hands-on, engaging, individualized, relevant, and inspiring education is proven to result in much more academic success and social-emotional and physical wellness when it is delivered in a setting where the students are connected and where the learning can be transferred to their lives outside of whatever educational setting they are in. Providing these best practices and also allowing students to learn in their community is the greatest thing we can offer to our children. Providing a local high school experience also helps mitigate the anxiety and fear that a lot of our students experience when transitioning from a small rural school setting to a large high school.”

Applegate Valley is home to a wealth of skilled movers and shakers. We are writers, historians, agriculturalists and farmers, ecologists and foresters, tradespeople, millwrights, a variety of builders, permaculturists, craftspeople, artisans, musicians, hospitality workers, restaurateurs, owners of cottage industries, and more. We have a full-circle opportunity to design a school for the community based on our needs, interests,

and talents. Students can learn from their neighbors, enhancing local connections and providing further economic and social opportunities here.

“There is a lot of potential to network, partner, and collaborate to the benefit of learning in ways that fit each child’s needs,” said Janis Mohr-Tipton, a community builder, parent, and grandparent. “Let’s explore this possibility and include the voices of our students.”

Could the Applegate become home to an innovative school that facilitates individualized learning on alternative schedules? Can we offer place-based, trade-school type experiences in community partnerships in addition to more traditional (distance learning) paths? Can our children learn through participation in relevant, local projects and graduate with meaningful, community relationships based on training and experience? Our students may eventually leave the valley, seeking meaningful work in new communities, or they might just end up sticking around as contributing members to the vitality of the Applegate. Either way, we serve them well by offering learning opportunities that can lead to purposeful life work.

“As a credentialed teacher, an environmental educator, and a mother, I would like to see educational opportunities for careers in natural resource and wildfire management and a technical high school in the Applegate Valley,” Jennifer Payne says. “I believe it is possible to invite Teach Northwest to expand hands-on science opportunities for all students using a collaborative model that also supports public schools. Our older students need local education options that do not entail long daily bus rides and that also support local forest and wildfire management.”

We would like to hear *your* thoughts and ideas toward our goal of supporting existing schools while creating more opportunities, particularly for our high-school-level students. Our email address is below.

To check out Teach Northwest online or sign onto the waitlist for our existing distance-education option (access to a teacher and \$2,000 per year per student for supplies and local vendors), visit [marcola.k12.or.us/teach-nw/](http://marcola.k12.or.us/teach-nw/).

Julie Barry, Amber Bishop,  
Jennifer Payne, Shauna Sorce,  
and Janis Mohr-Tipton  
[applegateteachnw@gmail.com](mailto:applegateteachnw@gmail.com)

## Congratulations in order for resilient Applegate School students

BY JEAN HALL

On February 1, the Applegate School community rejoiced over re-opening for full-day, on-site instruction for kindergarten through grade five. With the hard work of staff, middle schoolers were able to return on February 10.

The resounding word echoing from all staff members is *resilience*. They designated the month of March as Resilience Month, and a student from each grade, displaying strong qualities of resilience, was honored as Student of the Month. These students are: Jimmy Ridenour-Saunders, kindergarten; Joshua Bernardi, first grade; Trenea Saunders, second grade; Emma Guidici, third grade; Teytum Power, fourth-fifth grade; Emary Hanning, sixth grade; Peter Moline, seventh grade; and Lorenzo Duenas, eighth grade.

Other special student honorees are two Applegate students named as Rotary Students of the Year: eighth-grader Josiah Saunders and fifth-grader Madison English. In the past Rotary Students of the Year shared lunch with Rotary members and delivered a speech. This year Josiah and Madison participated by Zoom. However, as in past years, both students received a number of prizes from Rotary Club members.

With their return to in-person school, students joined the staff in welcoming Jessica Hill, a new member of the school team, who has become a valuable member of the Applegate Cougar family.

Mrs. Hirschmugl and Mrs. Halsted, teachers of kindergarten through third grade, have been deeply pleased to have students back on campus. The children are enjoying in-person friendships, and the teachers are enjoying in-person learning.

All the K-3 students are learning gardening skills with the help of Clair Highfield, a teacher from White Oaks Farm. Last year White Oaks Farm obtained a grant to partner with local schools. Clair visits every Tuesday, teaching about plant life cycles, pollination, and farm-to-table opportunities. Students work in their garden, plant seeds, and keep a garden journal. Big thanks to Clair and White Oaks Farm!

In K-1 students have done a number of art projects—directed drawings, a display of perky penguins, crystal-infused pipe cleaner hearts for Valentine’s Day, and green play dough for St. Patrick’s Day.

Mr. Skull, fourth- and fifth-grade teacher, took his students on a virtual field trip in April with Wildlife Images. Linda Kappen has been teaching art to his class, creating line drawings and making color wheels with the use of watercolors.

Recognizing a good opportunity to share with the community what Applegate students are feeling, Mr. Skull asked his class two questions. The first was: “What do you like about being back at school?” A sample of student responses include:

“Back in school is cool. I’m happy not to be stuck in my house.”

“I like being back at school. I felt like I was forgetting all the school skills, like reading and math.”

“I appreciate working with the teachers and friends face-to-face. In-person learning is easier for me.”



Applegate Lions Club members spruce up the track and field facility at Applegate School. Photos: Steve Fuller.

“Online learning is too much screen time, and it gave me headaches.”

The second question was: “What do you look forward to as we continue with in-person learning?” Responses include:

“Allowing students to get within six feet of each other.”

“When Covid isn’t a thing, we can eat our breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria again.”

“Desks being closer together so that we can work with our friends on projects.”

“Having people other than students come on campus to help with parties and stuff.”

“I’m looking forward to a time that we can go on field trips again.”

Middle school teacher Mrs. Daw reports that several students received special recognition since returning to in-person school. Besides Josiah Saunders, Emary Hanning, Peter Moline, and Lorenzo Duenas (mentioned above), eighth-grader Tainn Burton and sixth-grader Christopher Jordan advanced to the district spelling bee, where Tainn took third place. Congratulations to all these winners.

In closing, a big thank you to the Applegate Lions Club for refurbishing the track and long jump pit and renewing the gravel under the swings at Applegate School. Thank you, Lions, from the Applegate Cougars.

Jean Hall

[Jhall80@juno.com](mailto:Jhall80@juno.com)

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**NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS**

**Butterflies of HOPE**

BY KIM NEISWANGER

When a butterfly emerges from a chrysalis and begins to move its wings, not only is it completing the life cycle, but it is also setting into motion another phase of life. As the wings flap, they begin to make a small change in the environment around them, and when they continue to move, the area affected becomes broader and broader. In theory, life is changed when one small butterfly's wing is set into motion. What a beautiful thing!

At Ruch Outdoor Community School we decided to study the butterfly effect and teach all of our students, from kindergarten through eighth grade, that everything they do has a greater impact on the people around them. To first graders this is a huge concept that doesn't begin to make sense

until they see it in action. After all, how can a little six-year-old possibly change the world? To middle-school students, this means stepping outside of themselves to realize the value of someone else.

We decided to help students set their wings into motion with several school-wide activities, such as raising butterflies, planting pollinator gardens, designing butterfly kites, engaging in lessons that foster student empowerment and recognizing each one's value.

In a challenge we titled "Butterflies of Hope," students were asked to change someone's day by writing a positive message such as "You are important," or "You matter," on a paper butterfly. These messages will be delivered to retirement homes around the valley in an effort

to bring some hope during these lonely times.

Our school has a strong partnership with Pioneer Village, and I have seen the impact the relationships with the residents have on our students. This is a way for us to continue to reach out to our friends and also to make a connection with residents in other facilities.

Our goal is for our students to understand this quote from Andy Andrews: "Every single thing you do matters. You have been created as one of a kind. You have been created in order to make a difference. You have within you the power to change the world."



Ruch students huddle around a butterfly cage. Photo: Jody Hubler.



Paper butterflies colored by students are hung in a window. Photo: Jody Hubler.

Ruch Outdoor Community School staff, students, and community are changing the world, one flap of our wings at a time.

Kim Neiswanger  
First-grade Teacher  
Ruch Outdoor Community School

**A traditional close to a nontraditional year**

BY LISA BALDWIN

Hidden Valley High School's class of 2021 will have a traditional graduation ceremony (as traditional as COVID-19 restrictions will allow) on June 2, bringing to a close a very non-traditional school year. Diplomas will be presented to 130 graduates. One unusual aspect of the class of 2021 is the naming of three valedictorians, but no salutatorians. Principal Damian Crowson said the decision "was cut-and-dried. There was no question about the top three" academic honorees.



Co-valedictorian Kaiah Fisher.

Those addressing their classmates in valedictory speeches are Kaiah Fisher, Jada Hurley, and Noel Sandeen. Commencement exercises begin at 7 pm, outdoors on the main athletic field on the school campus, 651 Murphy Creek Road.



Co-valedictorian Jada Hurley

With the school year ending for all students, HVHS has two summer programs to help students recover from what has been, for many, a bumpy academic ride. One program, Summer School, is intended specifically for credit retrieval by finishing or reworking courses not successfully completed. Summer School runs for four weeks, June 21 through July 15, four days a week (Monday through Thursday), four hours each day (8 am to noon). The other summer program, Summer Academy, is meant to connect or reconnect students with their school.



Co-valedictorian Noel Sandeen.

Incoming ninth graders are welcomed to the high school in their Summer Academy, August 16-19. Next year's 10th graders have a Summer Academy the week of June 28 through July 1. These students

have not yet experienced a full-time instructional year in high school, and Summer Academy activities will address that unique situation for the sophomores. Next year's juniors and seniors, grades 11 and 12 in the fall, also have a Summer Academy, June 14 through June 24, a two-week program that may include some credit retrieval and other activities.

Planning for the 2021-2022 school year is focused on returning to "a normal year," according to Mr. Crowson. Students can expect a seven-period day, starting at 7:30 am and releasing at 3:45 pm. The first day of the school year is August 30.

The new year brings some exciting changes to Hidden Valley. Elective programs are growing with the addition of a full-time woodshop, a metal shop/welding program, an expanded foods/culinary program, and expanded offerings in the business program and physical education (PE). A full-time music teacher will also be on staff.

Passage of the Three Rivers School District's Bond Levy in the May 18 special election would have funded significant facilities upgrades at Hidden Valley, including new roofing, a new water treatment plant, and a new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system. The bond would have provided better campus security, driveway resealing, lights in the parking lot, additional parking, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility to the athletic fields.

Lisa Baldwin  
le.b.97527@gmail.com

**Williams Elementary School kindergarten registration opened**

BY STEVE FULLER

Spring is in full bloom, summer is fast approaching, and Williams Elementary is close to wrapping up what has been a challenging year for everyone. With the exception of the brief winter move to Comprehensive Distance Learning (Oregon Department of Education's plan for online learning), Williams has been teaching on-site full days for kindergarten through fifth grade all year.

The school held its annual Jog-a-Thon fundraiser on April 15. Everyone had a great time and ran lots of laps, although the students did miss having all their family and friends who usually come and cheer them on. This year's theme was the Color Run. Everyone got a little wet and doused with color. The students ran a combined total of 2,070 laps, and we are on target to raise over \$8,000.

Williams Elementary held a kindergarten Meet and Greet on May 13. Students and parents had the opportunity to meet the kindergarten teacher, Ms. Hart, and tour the classroom, always following COVID protocols of wearing masks and social distancing.

Online kindergarten registrations open June 1. Registrants will need immunization records, birth certificates, and proof of address so we can make copies and have them on file.



Williams Elementary students competed in their annual Jog-a-Thon in April, raising more than \$8,000. Photo: Steve Fuller.

We will be having summer school in combination with Applegate School for two weeks, June 14-24, from 8 am to noon Monday through Thursday. Busing and food will be provided. If you are interested, please contact the school for more information.

Steve Fuller, Principal  
Williams Elementary  
steven.fuller@threerivers.k12.or.us



Ruch School students will take "Butterflies of Hope" to retirement homes. See story at top of page. Photo: Jody Hubler.



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**Clockwise from top left:**

—**Shayne Edelhertz**, who owns property in the Applegate but currently lives in Hawaii, gives a shaka salute to the latest edition, mailed to him thanks to his personal mailing label subscription (\$20/year, \$35/two years; sign up at [applegater.org](http://applegater.org)). "I love the Applegater!" he writes. "We lost our local Maui Times independently run publication last year and only have a corporate-owned newspaper. Keep up the good work!"

—**Jenny Emick and her son Ronin** reading the Applegater in the High Sierras.

—**Jeanette LeTourneau** peruses the Applegater at Indian Palm Canyons in Palm Springs.

Keep those articles, letters, opinions, and "Reading the Gater" photos coming in. You are the Gater!

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