

REVIEW

Song of Extinction

BY PAUL TORRENCE

Ashland, Oregon, USA, was recently the venue for a reading of a remarkable play that delves into issues we mostly refuse to face. This play was about the Bolivian Amazon, tropical deforestation, species extinction, loss, separation, cancer, death and the killing fields of Cambodia.

Playwright E. M. Lewis, is a native Oregonian. He researched this play by reading such sobering works as *The Sixth Extinction* (R. Leakey and R. Lewin), *Survival in the Killing Fields* (H. Ngor), and *Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields: Memoirs by Survivors* (D. Pran). None of these can be read without a prescription of Prozac at hand. But Lewis is not content there (if content can be imagined in this framework), but proceeds to explore other dark themes such as father-son alienation, obsession, the agonizing death of a cancer victim, the once-impenetrable shell of a war victim and the inability to deal with death.

This is no play for the weak of heart. There was palpable regret, remorse, sorrow, grief, pity and compassion amongst the audience. Yet I feared that while people grasped the unfolding human tragedy that saw some resolution, they failed, in the words of Khim Phan, (and I paraphrase) Americans just don't get it (extinction). He talks about the 30,000 species gone every year. "That is why I assign a paper," he explains. "I believe this is worthy of some thought. But they look at me like small animals. Deers. Pigeons. Wolves." And later, "If you teach high school, you must understand you will be teaching to purposefully blank faces for your whole life, and when they are not blank they will be angry." And in the opening dialog, "There are things I know about extinction I don't know how to tell to my students. Maybe I'm afraid to tell...Extinction is a very messy business," he goes on. "In books it looks clean. But I remember extinction and it was not clean."

If the opportunity presents, don't miss this play!

I refer the interested reader to further review: <http://www.curtainup.com/songofextinctionla.html>

And from the perspective of our community, I must mention the impressive pre-play violin performance of Lindan Burns who is just nine years old and already an accomplished musician. Thanks Lindan!

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Pets and livestock in disaster planning**Don't leave home without them!**

BY LIN BERNHARDT



Most of us know the importance of planning ahead in case of disaster, but the motivation to do so often comes too late, resulting in tragic losses. Katrina taught us a lot, but so have some wildfires here in the Applegate. Just this past summer we saw evacuations beginning for fires in east Medford and Ashland. These fires were small and quickly contained thanks to a series of fortunate events. We all know the potential for catastrophic wildfire in this area is great, and that we're not exempt from earthquakes and floods.

One of the most important lessons learned from Katrina, Rita, and other disasters, is the importance of planning ahead for our animals. The new mantra is take them with you if you evacuate. People often consider companion animals family members, and if unable to take them along, have refused to leave. Some people have waited until the last minute to move horses and other livestock, clogging roadways and tying up emergency efforts. A lack of planning can put not only the lives of animals at risk, but the lives of the animals' owners and responders as well.

Leading causes of death in large animals during disaster

- Collapsed barns
- Kidney failure due to dehydration
- Electrocution from downed power lines
- Fencing failures

Source: California Department of Food and Agriculture

While ensuring the safety of your animals requires some advance planning, there are a few simple things you can do **right now** to help keep your animals safe:

- Find a safe place for your animals ahead of time.

If you evacuate, plan on taking your pets with you since you have no way of knowing how long you'll be kept out of the area.

- Make sure pets are wearing up-to-date identification at all times and livestock can be identified via good photographs, names on horse halters, brands, etc.
- Vaccinations should be up to date and health records kept accessible in the event you need to evacuate.
- Prepare an emergency kit for pets and other animals (go online for specifics). It should include a minimum of three days of food and water.
- Assess your property to see if it's possible to shelter livestock in place during a disaster. If not, make arrangements to move them off site. Make sure all animals are used to loading in a trailer.
- Meet with your neighbors to develop a neighborhood plan for pets and livestock.

Following Katrina, federal and

state lawmakers realized the importance of state and local jurisdictions taking into account the pet- and livestock-owning population in their emergency response efforts. Legislation was passed at both the federal and state levels requiring these jurisdictions to have plans in effect to deal with their animal-owning populations as a matter of public safety.

Jackson County has a limited plan for pets, but is currently undergoing an effort to expand the plan to include livestock and meet other requirements of the law. Josephine County is in the process of developing a plan to do the same.

In addition to the county plans, local or neighborhood plans will also be encouraged. There will be a meeting on January 7, 10:00 am, at the Applegate library to begin developing a plan for the Applegate. All Applegate residents are invited to attend. There are many ways you can be involved, from helping to develop resource lists (such as identifying sites that could shelter animals) to hosting neighborhood meetings. For more information or assistance with developing a plan for your neighborhood, please contact the county's contractor, Lin Bernhardt at (541) 840-9903, or linb@clearwire.net.

For more information on preparing for animals in disasters, please visit www.fema.gov/individual/animals.shtm, or www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/disaster_preparedness_1.html
Lin Bernhardt •541- 840-9903

In the ditch

BY DARYL JACKSON

The folks in Williams have probably noticed people working in the roadside ditches lately. Our efforts are part of our agreement with Josephine County Public Works to maintain our roadsides. The photograph lower right might also seem familiar. So why the heck is this "ditch" so important?

First of all, it isn't just a ditch. This little waterway is actually a portion of Butcher Creek, which is a tributary to Williams Creek, and believe it or not we have spotted cutthroat trout and other aquatic beasts there.

Because this spot is one of the first things you see when you approach *greater metropolitan Williams*, it seemed appropriate to make it an example of our efforts to manage roadside vegetation. Since Williams roadsides (maintained by Josephine County), are no longer herbicide-sprayed, it was a great opportunity to try to get a grip on some of the noxious and invasive vegetation along the creek.

Last spring the Josephine County road crew mowed the blackberries and weeds along the creek and reshaped the roadside banks to improve water flow and protect the road surface. It looked so good that it seemed appropriate to us to enhance their efforts. First we placed small

structures (like the ones the county crew installed along lower Watergap Road) to reduce velocity and erosion potential. These also provide refuge and habitat for aquatic life. Next, we cut and pulled the nonnative blackberries, starthistle, peavine and scotch broom because nonnative, invasive vegetation results in a net reduction of species diversity besides creating a road maintenance headache.

Once that was done we planted native grass seed, shrubs, hardwoods and conifers.

The idea is to provide an esthetically pleasing and functional stream habitat at the roadside that does not rely on herbicides. Although this treatment was very intensive and time consuming, it is not appropriate for the entire county road system. It does provide a good example of how it is possible to succeed without chemicals. Once the native vegetation has become established it will no longer be necessary to struggle so much with the blackberry because it does not thrive in

the shade. Next time you drive by, take a look and tell us what you think.

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