

BLM backs the Applegate Ridge Trail

BY MARK HAMLIN

Years of preparation and planning by the Applegate Trails Association (ATA) has culminated with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) reinforcing their commitment to the Applegate Ridge Trail (ART). In a meeting last fall, Medford District Manager Elizabeth Burghard and Field Manager, Ashland Office, Lauren Brown committed their resources to begin the environmental analysis (EA) for enhancements to the East ART and a nearby Jack-Ash trail segment in early 2024. An EA is a prerequisite to any new trail construction. The map shows the proposed trails to be analyzed in orange—about 30 miles of new trail in all.

Expanding day-hiking opportunities that are easily accessible from Highway 238 has been an ATA priority. Therefore, day-hiker loop trails of three to five miles are in the plans for the following trailhead locations: (1) Bunny Meadows off Forest Creek Road, (2) China Gulch, and (3) the existing East ART trailhead. Plans also include progress on the Center ART, the next section of the backbone ART. That section goes from Bunny Meadows near Ruch to Humbug Creek Road.

The environmental analysis, to be followed by seeking funds and trail building, will be done in two phases. The first phase includes some enhancements to the popular and existing East ART trail. A few years ago, the ATA Board of Directors identified an area of outstanding scenic value where the whole Siskiyou Crest comes into view. One can see the crest all the way from Mt. Ashland in the south to Grayback in the west. A new trail, totaling 4.6 miles, will access this extraordinary scenery. The new trail,

the upper portion of which will be named the Crestview Cutoff, will branch off the East ART and return to the Highway 238 trailhead. The environmental analysis has already begun with a target completion date of late 2024, assuming delays don't intervene. Then we can get to work looking for funding and organizing volunteer trail-building crews.

The second phase involves multiple trails in the area between Ruch and Humbug Creek. Out of Bunny Meadows will be a shorter and a longer loop up

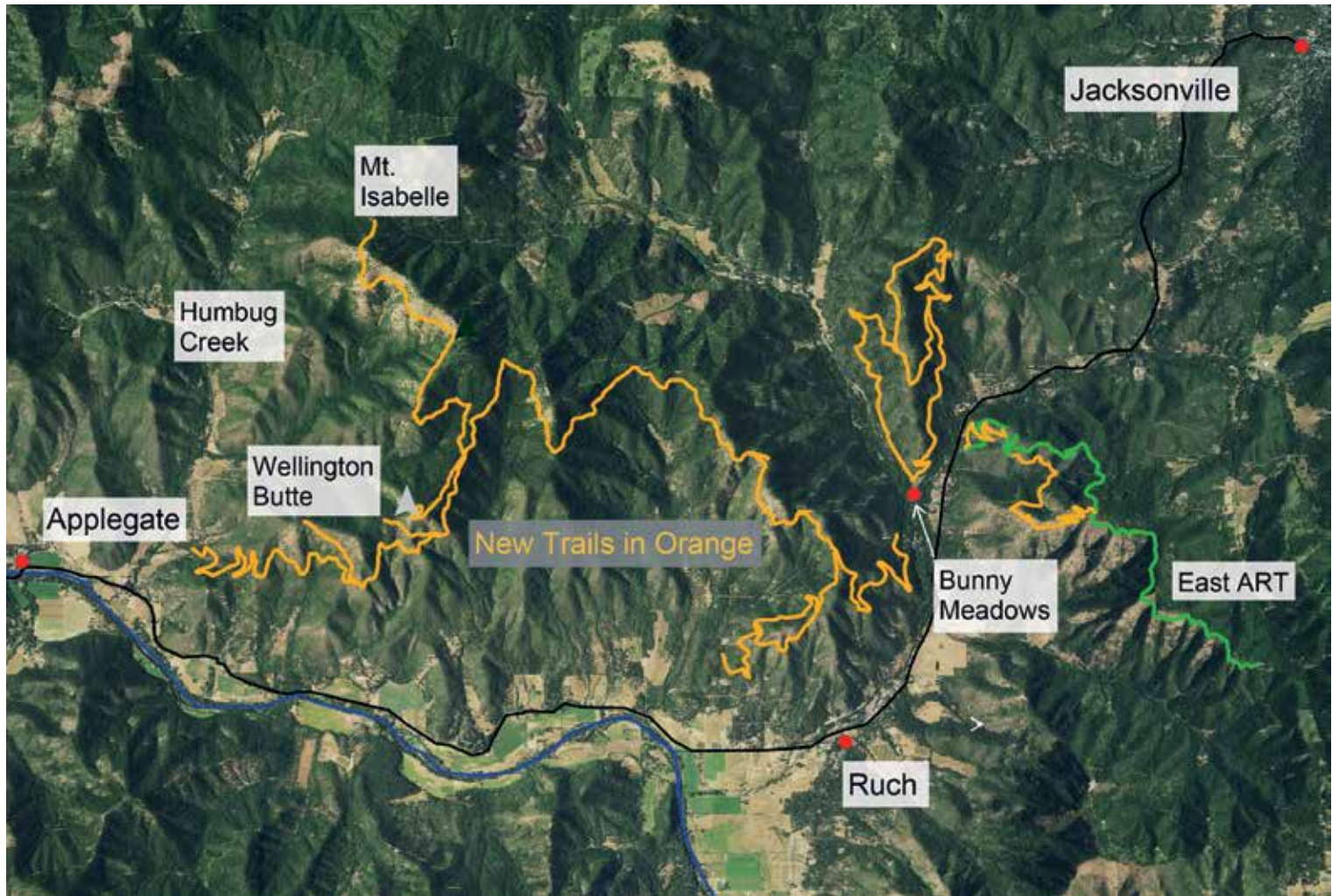
to a ridgetop, north of the parking area, that has great views. This area is also known as the North ART. We hope to eventually connect into Jacksonville via a to-be-determined route. Also from Bunny Meadows, the Center ART begins its journey westward toward Grants Pass. Much outstanding scenery is in store for the hiker, equestrian, or bicyclist. The trail ascends to the ridgetops and trends along the ridges before descending to Humbug Creek Road, marking the end of the Center ART. Of course, there is a short spur along the way to the top of Wellington Butte. The target for completion of this phase of the EA is late 2026.

You can begin to see that this process—planning, EA, funding acquisition, and finally trail building—takes a long time. Extending the ART all the way to Grants

Pass might take two decades. Moreover, only ongoing community commitment will bring these trails to completion.

The BLM is the land manager; however, the resources they can provide are limited. It's up to volunteers from the community, in partnership with BLM, to drive the process forward. The planning, fundraising, and trail-building are all largely up to volunteers. The ATA, an all-volunteer nonprofit dedicated to this effort, is currently seeking volunteers and additional board members. If you, or someone you know, might be interested, please contact us by visiting our website at applegatetrails.org or emailing chairman@applegatetrails.org.

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■ SFI CLASSES

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classroom session, learn how the geologic terranes of the Klamath Mountains formed and how the water stored in the plutonic rocks of the Grayback Mountain area has important effects on streams, salmon habitat, and water flow in the Applegate Watershed. Then, in the field, explore the geology of the Grayback Pluton first-hand by hiking the beautiful trail to Mt. Elijah, with its spectacular views and meadows around the Bigelow Lakes Basin.

The Wide World of Butterflies and Diurnal Moths, 8:30 am-5 pm June 18-20, Ashland. Get a hands-on introduction to the butterflies and diurnal moths of the Siskiyou and southern Oregon Cascades. We'll begin day one in the classroom, learning what butterflies and moths do, discovering where and when to find them, and viewing reference collection specimens on display. We'll then spend the afternoon in the field with nets as we observe, catch, and learn more about the species we encounter. Days two (Illinois Valley) and three (Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument) will take place entirely in the field, where you'll get plenty of hands-on practice netting and identifying a diversity of local species.

An Immersive Marine Biology Experience, June 21-23, Charleston.

Explore marine biodiversity in the field, offshore on a research vessel, and up close in the lab at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology. We'll see benthic and planktonic marine organisms, pelagic and shorebirds, and marine mammals using scientific tools to get to know them better. We'll also learn about ecological and oceanographic processes influencing the form, function, and survival of marine species and discuss uses of marine resources by local communities, coastal tribes, and wildlife.

Unraveling Oregon's Coastal Geology, 9 am-5:30 pm July 12, Selma. Get ready to learn about an area so complex that even geologists disagree about where the Siskiyou Mountains end and where the generally more recent Franciscan complex begins. We'll go coastal from the Oregon-California border to 11 miles north of Brookings to find out when or if the Siskiyou stopped growing, why they are uplifting and moving north, and why the Far West has doubled in girth in the last half billion years. Find pillow basalts, clastic dikes, kinky folds, debris flows, and dirty sandstones in unmorphed mint condition.

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■ EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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must also subscribe to a satellite telephone service, which starts at about \$12 a month.

Mercy Flights helicopter service

Our area is lucky to have emergency medical helicopter service through Mercy Flights for its members. Although there are some Federal Aviation Administration weather minimums that can restrict flying, helicopters can fly day and night and land on relatively flat ground with at least a 100-foot by 100-foot clear space. They can use only preestablished night landing zones (LZs) that have been pre-surveyed in the daylight prior to its use. So, if you have property that you would like Mercy Flights to use as a preestablished LZ, contact them for an evaluation of the site to ensure its suitability.

Laura Duey
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AGA to offer funding for neighborhood gatherings!

Bring your neighbors together for a potluck to discuss emergency preparedness (or other topics).

A Greater Applegate (AGA) will provide \$250 each for a total of ten neighborhood gatherings. Apply at bit.ly/44NHMYq.

For more information, contact info@agreaterapplegate.org.

Online resources to help you prepare

- Applegate Valley Fire District (AVFD) Community Connect: communityconnect.io/info/or-applegatevalley.
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) preparation checklist for people who depend on powered devices: fda.gov/media/80782/download.
- FDA's advice on food safety during an emergency: fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/food-and-water-safety-during-power-outages-and-floods.
- Mercy Flights: mercyflights.com.
- Pacific Power has a good list of Safety and Preparedness Resources: pacificpower.net/outages-safety/storm-emergency-preparedness/safety-preparedness-resources.html.
- Ready.gov is a federal government website with advice and checklists for preparing for emergencies.
- Rogue Valley Disaster Registry: rvco.org/home/sds-2/emergency-preparedness/disaster-registry.

Have a happy and safe Fourth of July