

OPINION

Williams water at risk

BY SANDY OLKEN

For several years, the future of Pipe Fork, a beautiful creek in Williams and an important year-round source of water for many in the community, remained uncertain.

First, Josephine County Commissioners proposed to clear-cut Pipe Fork. Facing a great community outcry, they then agreed to sell it if the Williams Community Forest Project (WCFP) could find a buyer. WCFP contacted the Conservation Fund, who was willing to buy the land. This plan would have earned the county \$300,000 over the Yellowbook Appraisal (Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions). It would have guaranteed the preservation of the forest and protection of Pipe Fork, but the county commissioners reneged on the agreement and refused to sell the land. On November 14, Pipe Fork and eight other parcels of county land went up for auction. Many of those parcels were in the Williams watershed.

Pipe Fork, East Fork, Williams Creek, Clapboard, Sugarloaf, Tree Creek, Lone Creek, Goodwin Creek, Munger Creek, Spring Creek, Mule Creek, the right hand of the West Fork, Bill Creek, Swamp Creek, and West Fork were all in jeopardy. If lumber companies won the bid and set about clear-cutting all 1,800 acres of forests, not only Pipe Fork but other roadless areas, mature forests, and wildlife habitat would be devastated.

The fire-resistant mature forests would be replaced by fire-prone young saplings. The erosion resulting from logging on steep embankments would wash into the creeks, stifling their flow. The sunbaked treeless earth would hold little promise of cool shade, warming the creeks, instead, and reducing fish habitat. The mandatory barrage of poisonous pesticides would follow the clear-cuts. Life in Williams

would never be the same, our beautiful forests, our water, our home, forever scarred by this assault.

In the face of this Orwellian nightmare, the good efforts of community members, along with WCFP, the Rogue Advocates, and other local environmental organizations, worked toward an outcome of conservation, water certainty, continued crucial fish habitat, biodiversity, outdoor activities, and forest longevity.

Even as we worked to forestall heartbreak, joy flourished and the abundance of life's gifts kept us focused on beauty, gratitude, and love. Through the shadow of ignorance, light finds its way. In this extraordinary precious moment we could gather in solidarity and peace and give thanks for each holy day.

At the auction, Low Divide, Bear Wallow, Munger Creek, Cedar Flat, and Little Sugarloaf sold, but there were no bids for Clapboard, Little T, and Thompson Creek/Pipe Fork. Pipe Fork has been spared!

And yet, questions remain. Will the county commissioners finally agree to sell the land to the Conservation Fund, which is still willing to buy it? Will the commissioners give us time to find other forest-preserving buyers for the remaining two parcels? Can these forests and waters be protected for the life they sustain and for our children?

I personally am hopeful that my home will continue to be abundant in lush woodlands, clean water, wildflowers, medicinal plants, and spawning salmon, and that our home for seven generations and onward will remain a sacred place where we can rejoice in the glory of creation.

Thank you to all the people who have helped protect this life.

Sandy Olken • sandyolken9@gmail.com

REPORT FROM THE
CHAIR OF THE BOARDDon't forget to donate
in November and December in order
to double your tax-deductible donation!

BY DIANA COOGLE

With many thanks for Barbara Holiday's years as editor in chief of this newsmagazine, we raise a glass to her in farewell and send warm wishes for her future.

We will miss Barbara sorely, after her decade and more of serving the Applegate community as editor of the *Applegater* and as a board member. We hope to see her at every one of our community events as the years go on.

This is Barbara's last issue. In preparing it for publication, she has been working with our new editor, Annika Hodges. We offer Annika a warm welcome to the *Applegater* and to our board meetings. See page 2 for an introduction to her.

I am happy to report that the board is thriving, with two potential new members and a good retreat in September, where we hashed out visions and new possibilities for the *Applegater* and did a good critique of our organization. I would love to have your input too. What do you like best about the *Applegater*? What would you like to see the *Applegater* do that we haven't been doing? What ideas do you have that we haven't thought of? How would you like to participate? Email me! I would love to hear from you.

Finally, of course, DON'T FORGET TO DONATE TO THE *APPLEGATER* DURING NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

Oh, I'm sorry to have shouted. But I wanted to get your attention because it's so very important that we receive donations from our loyal readers before the end of the year. We have been on solid financial footing ever since Bert Etling, our previous editor, connected us with the Institute for Nonprofit News, with its matching-grant segment, NewsMatch, but that only stays true as long as we receive those important donations. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so your donation is tax-deductible, but most of all, it keeps the *Applegater* coming to your mailbox four times a year.

I wish all the best to all our readers, advertisers, and volunteers for a joyous holiday season and a happy new year.

Diana Coogle
Chair, *Applegater* Board of Directors
diana@applegater.org

RETIRED?
AGING WITH VITALITY
It's your new job.

541 777-0124 **Call for Custom
Meditation**

Master Bodyworker
Gabrielle Pullen
MFA, GCFP, LMT #25754

Your Life Matters

To capitalize on your experience:

- meditate for insight
- move with new awareness
- open to innovations in healthcare
- let me educate you!

LIGHT TECHNOLOGY
AGE REVERSAL
30 day money back guarantee



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 or mail to *Applegater*, Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.



rebel·heart
· B O O K S ·

541-702-2665

157 West California St.
Jacksonville, OR 97530www.rebelheartbooks.comShop Our Bookstore
via Bookshop.org