

Applegater

SUMMER 2026
Volume 19, No. 2

Applegate Valley Community Newsmagazine
Serving Jackson and Josephine Counties — Circulation: 13,500

Photo by Linda Kappen

Celebrating
~32~
Years

The Applegate Valley Resilience Hubs initiative

BY MEGAN FEHRMAN

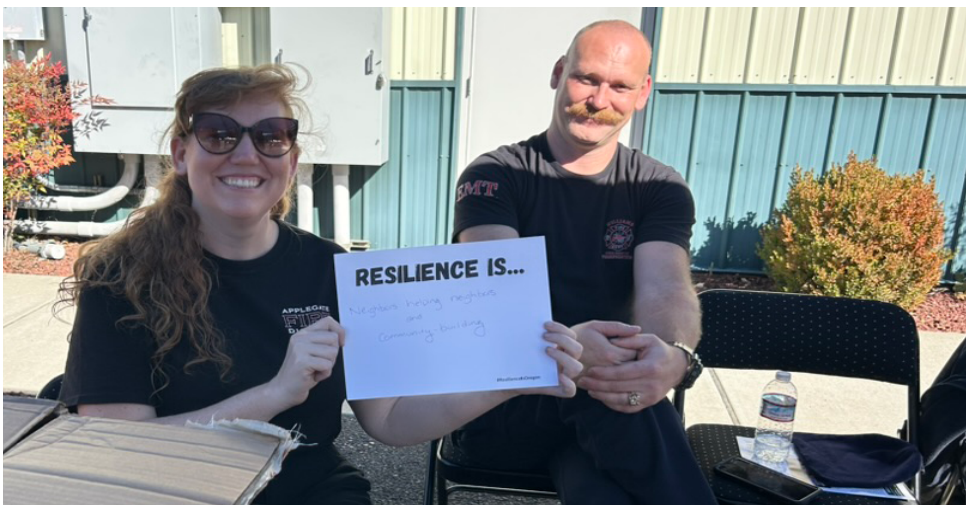
Let's say a wildfire starts in the vicinity of your property, the power goes out, and you don't have cell service. What do you do? How do you find out what's going on? Where do you go? Many of us have had to consider these questions in real time over the last several years.

A lot of times, folks feel like they're left with three choices: drive into cell service, head to the Fire District looking for information, or evacuate the valley entirely. Unfortunately, cell service is often spotty at best, and the Fire District is actively fighting the fire. That rules out two of your choices, leaving one option—evacuating the valley entirely.

But what if there were locations you could temporarily evacuate to nearby? Places you could go to receive up-to-date information on the fire and a safe shelter without leaving the Applegate? A Greater Applegate (AGA) has been working with local organizations in Ruch and Williams to turn this "safe shelter" vision into a reality. We're terming these local sheltering spaces "Resilience Hubs."

To be clear, we're not constructing entirely new structures to serve as these hubs, but rather using existing community spaces and retrofitting them with needed

See **RESILIENCE HUBS**, page 2.



Rachel Couch from the Applegate Fire District displays what 'resilience' means to her at the All Things Fire Fair on March 7th in Ruch. Photo by Megan Fehrman.

Applegate Fire District 2025 Awards

BY BABETTE RAPP

The Applegate Fire District takes great pride in building a strong team, and that includes celebrating achievements. This past March, the District honored members for excellence in several areas in 2025. 2025 had an especially successful district-managed fire academy program, which resulted in eleven new firefighters! We wish them well as they begin their careers as first responders in Oregon and across the nation.

Completed Fire Academy

Justin Adams
Greg Britt-Hart
James Davis
Damian Fernandez
Luke Mason
John Rohr
Terry Schreck
Thomas Strate
James Swanson
Enrique Tovar
Taylor Tucker

Length of Service Awards

Five years—Dan Bowers and Jason Schonhoff

Rookie of the Year

Joaquin Barragan

Student of the Year

Joaquin Barragan
Alessandro Acevedo

EMS Award for Achievement in Emergency Medical Services

Jonah Michael



Chris Partida and Josh Howell were honored with the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association Award for Meritorious Conduct. Photo by Liza Crosse.

Achieved Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Certification Paramedic

Thomas Crosse

See **AFD AWARDS**, page 3.

Joe Lavine resigns

BY DIANA COOGLE

For more than 17 years, Joe Lavine has been the *Applegater's* magnificent webmaster. Like the wizard hidden behind the machine of Oz, Joe has been the invisible genius behind what we see when we go to applegater.org.

It was Joe who consistently and promptly put the latest issue of the *Applegater* on the website. It was Joe who entered and updated the names, bios, and photos of new board members. It was Joe who responded with goodwill and promptness to every "Joe, will you..." about website matters. For years, Joe has tirelessly served as webmaster "extraordinaire and volontaire" for the *Applegater*.

But nothing lasts forever. Joe has told us he is ready to retire. This will be the last issue he posts on applegater.org.

Former *Applegater* editor Barbara Holiday, who thinks the world of Joe, said, "Over the many, many years that we worked together during my time as managing editor/editor-in-chief, he has always been so reliable and responsive that it's hard (and sad) to envision the *Applegater* without him. I wish him many, many years of unfettered enjoyment in his retirement. He is certainly ready"—and, I would add, deserving.

With Joe stepping out of the webmaster position, the board has taken advantage of this moment to do a complete revamp of the website. Alyssa Prophet, of Prophet Solutions (and our ad rep for Jackson County), is working with board member and artist William (Whit) Whitney to design and

implement the new website. Stay tuned! Before the next issue of the *Applegater*, you will be able to access a new applegater.org with all of the elements that Joe created—the current and past issues, the board bios, information about advertising, article requirements, books for sale, ways to donate, and much more—in a new form.

Joe Lavine was one of the longest-serving and most important of the *Applegater's* numerous important volunteers. We offer him our heartfelt thanks for these many years he served as our webmaster and wish him well as he steps out from behind the curtain of applegater.org and sets aside his wizard hat.

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



The *Applegater's* own webmaster, Joe Lavine, shows off the *Applegater* website on his iPad while in Avignon, France from the back page of the *Applegater*, 2012.

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HISTORY - HERITAGE

OBITUARY

**Robert Allen Stewart
November 16, 1945-2026**

BY LILLIAN EATON STEWART

Robert Allen Stewart was born on November 16, 1945, to Peggy Oglesby and Gene Allen Stewart in Turlock, California. Growing up, he lived in Merced, Turlock, San Francisco, and Manteca, California, where he ran marathons and held a variety of auto, farm, and architectural positions. He graduated from Manteca High in 1963 before going to San Joaquin College. He raced NHRA (National Hot Rod Association) professionally and held a variety of jobs in the auto business, ending with the famous Roy Brizio custom street rods.

From 1973 to 1977, his Navy positions were Storekeeper and Photo Intelligence. He took pictures of the last chopper to leave the U.S. Embassy in Saigon in April 1975.

He married Lillian Kusiek in 2002, who survives him, along with his half-sister, Cathy Stewart; stepchildren, Sara and Ben (Leticia) Ward; step-grandchildren, Tacitus, Caius, Trajan, Deacon, and Adalie; and cousins Bea Sousa, Bev Halliday, and William Stapp.



He passed away at home following a long battle with cancer.

Lillian Eaton Stewart
waterlildar@gmail.com

■ **RESILIENCE HUBS**

Continued from page 1.

emergency equipment. For example, locations like Ruch Outdoor Community School and the Williams Grange have been identified as effective “hub sites” depending on where and when the disaster strikes. Our Mobile Emergency Response Vehicle (aka MERV), which was donated by the Red Cross, will also be able to support these sites and more.

Over the last 18 months, we’ve been working with local partners and community leaders to secure needed emergency infrastructure for their facilities (e.g., back-up power) and to build capacity among community leaders to operate these hubs, such as training folks on how to operate on HAM radio and supporting the development of the Williams Applegate Amateur Radio Club (WAARC). The hope is that this pre-disaster planning work will enable the Applegate to better support itself during emergencies, with a particular focus on wildfires.

The Resilience Hubs will be included in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan update that is being led by the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council, as well as the Plan for a Resilient Oregon project. A Greater Applegate, along with several other organizations from southwest Oregon, has organized local activities that reflect the lived experience of Oregonians already impacted by natural disasters

and other compound challenges. A goal of the Plan for a Resilience Oregon project is to create a flexible, actionable framework that identifies Oregon’s most urgent resilience needs and the policy, funding, and community tools to meet them. During the “All Things Fire Fair” in March, Applegaters got to participate in a “Resilience Is...” activity that will be incorporated as data, along with input from communities from around the state. Our Williams Resilience Hub cohort got to provide direct feedback to the plan as well. After reading about these efforts, what does resilience mean to you and our community?

We’re still in the development phase of these resilience projects, but we will be conducting more serious outreach beginning this summer. So keep an eye out over the next several months! The plan is to get informational flyers about where the hubs are located in community spaces. We’ll also have more information on the project at A Greater Applegate’s table at the Applegate Evening Market, which kicked off on Wednesday, May 20, at the Lindsay Lodge from 5-8 pm!

If you have any questions, just want to learn more, or are compelled to get involved, shoot Tucker, AGA’s “Resilience Hubs Coordinator,” an email at tucker@agreaterapplegate.org.

Megan Fehrman
megan@agreaterapplegate.org

Welcome to our newest board member, Lynn Towns

BY DIANA COOGLE

The *Applegater* board gives a warm welcome and a smiling greeting to our newest member, Lynn Towns.

Lynn has lived on Hogan Road in the Applegate for 30 years, coming here after birth in Georgia, childhood in Ohio, college in Alabama, and teaching in California.

Lynn taught fourth grade in Burlingame, California, and comes to

us with a background of working with people and in the community. She joins the board with a deep understanding of nonprofit organizations and the importance of volunteers. Since moving to the Applegate, she has done volunteer work with SMART (Start Making a Reader Today), Britt Festival, Friends of the Applegate Library, and Habitat for

Humanity, notably in the capacity of interviewing potential recipients of housing.

We are especially glad to have Lynn join us on the board for two skills she said she could bring: paying attention and asking questions.

Lynn is pleased to be joining the board. “It’s a fertile time to get into community,” she says, recognizing that, among other things, “the *Applegater* serves as a vehicle to inform and celebrate the people and happenings in the valley. I’m tickled to be a part of the team putting the word out.”

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



New board member, Lynn Towns.

The *Applegater* is seeking passionate community members to join our board of directors. If you value local voices, care about connecting neighbors, and want to help guide the future of our community newspaper, we’d love to hear from you! For more information, contact Diana Coogle at diana@applegater.org.

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House of Threads

BY ROGER WIRTH

*In the valley of mist and morning frost
A house stands alone, almost like it's lost
And the violets bud, and the dew turns to moss
And the house sees the world go by*

*And the years are threads, a mess of string
Arrive, stay, leave; it knows everything
It perceives the gunshot, the man who died
And a few other things as the world went by*

*The tree named for her who is buried nearby
The land and its form under cobalt skies
And the house kept its secrets 'til she came by
'Til she found an echo and wondered why
—Ryan Pfeil*

Have you ever been in an old, historic house and thought, “If only these walls could talk—what stories they could tell!”?

Well, the House of Threads, a charming 125-year-old farmhouse on a 160-acre homestead near Williams, Oregon, is such a place.

Three years ago, Heather Paladini became the property’s most recent owner, coincidentally—or perhaps fatefully—closing the deal on this, her dream house, on her 40th birthday. Though busy with clearing out and moving in, Heather knew she eventually wanted to research the history of the house and hoped to tell its stories once the dust had settled. But while she was cleaning the house, she found some 100+-year-old letters in a bowl on top of a kitchen cabinet that

sent her straight into the past and onto a path of discovery about the history of her home.

About a year later, Heather found some Facebook posts by Laura Ahearn, local Applegate historian and director of the McKee Bridge Historical Society, about historic events that happened on the original homestead of her home. She and Laura compared notes and shared their research. In May 2025, Laura suggested Heather present the fascinating history she’d uncovered about her property as part of the Windows in Time program, a series of historical presentations

produced in partnership with Southern Oregon Historical Society (SOHS) and Jackson County Library Services (JCLS).

Through that program, Heather met Ryan Pfeil, Marketing Specialist for JCLS and videographer, scriptwriter, and former newspaper reporter and editor who edits the recorded Windows in Time presentations for the JCLS YouTube channel. Intrigued by Heather’s presentation, he asked if she would like to collaborate on a documentary short about the interconnected lives of the previous inhabitants of the home and property. With Heather’s enthusiastic “yes,” *House of Threads* was born.

Produced by JCLS, this delightful 24-minute documentary tells the story of some of the early settlers of this area who were connected to the property: Samuel

Provolt, Oregon Trail pioneer, farmer, gold miner, and Applegate Valley landowner, whose name is familiar to us all; Provolt’s granddaughter, Myrtle Letteken (whose letters Heather found), who tragically died in an automobile accident at age 31 and for whom a still-thriving myrtle tree was planted next to the house 100 years ago; Thomas Kenney, of Jacksonville, who likely built the original dwelling. Back in 1876, predating Kenney and the Provolt family, a Portuguese immigrant named Antone Joseph acquired the land through the Homestead Act. Joseph was an industrious gold miner who worked hard and kept to himself, as he spoke little to no English, but rumors that he had accumulated a fortune in gold likely led to his heinous murder. In 1893, he was found dead on a trail near his house, shot in the head. Charles Slagle, age 22, another

notable Applegate Valley family name, was soon arrested and eventually found guilty of killing old Antone and sentenced to life in prison. Then began a ten-year battle over the assets, including the property Heather now owns, in the contested last will and testament of Antone Joseph.

From what I’ve heard, there is a lot more to the stories. You can watch the documentary at the Applegate Library on Saturday, July 18, 1-2 pm, and at the Ruch Library on Saturday, August 1, 1-2 pm. Stay to meet Heather, Ryan, and Laura, and for a Q&A session after the viewing. Additional viewings are being planned for the Jacksonville library and perhaps at the Williams Grange and at a winery on Slagle Creek. Check applegater.org and jcls.libcal.com for further details.

Roger Wirth
treasurer@applegater.org



■ AFD AWARDS

Continued from page 1.

Volunteer of the Year

Arthur Johnson

“Mary Ziegler” Family of the Year

Kariane Turnbull

Johnathan Turnbull

“Marc Chaput” Spirit Award

Jason Schonhoff

OFCA Meritorious Award

Josh Howell

Chris Partida

Firefighter of the Year

Alessandro Acevedo

Officer of the Year

McKenzie Turnbull

Chief’s Award

John Stagg

Hall of Flame

Tallie Jackson

Meritorious Conduct Award presented to Applegate Firefighters!

Late one evening, a community

member was driving to a remote spot in the mountains above the Applegate Valley to join her family for camping. The woman’s vehicle rolled down a long, steep embankment, and she was ejected from the vehicle. At first, the woman could not be found by her family, but eventually she was located, and a 911 call was placed. Applegate Firefighter Chris Partida and Captain Josh Howell were the only Applegate Fire District emergency responders on duty at the time, and the nearest access for an engine was 1.5 miles from the remote accident site, requiring a long hike in the dark while transporting medical equipment to reach the patient.

Jacksonville Fire Department also responded, and by coincidence, an Ashland battalion chief and his son were in the area and came to the aid of the Applegate responders. After traversing rugged terrain, the emergency responders provided medical assistance,

including an IV and stabilization of suspected fractures. The patient was transported out of the wildlands by a family member’s quad vehicle to a waiting Mercy Flights helicopter, and the responders hiked out.

Based on the exceptionally challenging circumstances of this call and the outstanding cooperation between several agencies, the Oregon Fire Chiefs Association Award for Meritorious Conduct was conferred on Applegate Captain Josh Howell and Firefighter Chris Partida, as well as the entire team of collaborating emergency responders and one civilian.

Ashland Fire and Rescue Chief Marshall Rasor had this to say about the award: “It has been a truly rewarding experience to highlight the resourcefulness, collaboration, and capability of southern Oregon agencies working together to accomplish shared goals.”

Thank you, Josh and Chris, for your service to our community!

Babette Rapp
President, Friends of the Applegate
Fire District
brapp5@aol.com



New graduates (Mark Astry, Joaquin Barragan, Aiden Bland, Daniel Bowers, Greg Britt-Hart, Hunter Krouse, and Gage Nichol) of the Applegate Fire District’s Fire Academy being sworn in.

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POETRY CORNER

Joy

By Haley May Peterson

*“As the moon kindles the night
As the wind kindles the fire
As the rain fills every ocean
And the sun the earth
So your heart will kindle my heart”*

*-Kindle my Heart, from A Little Princess, by Patrick Doyle, David Snell,
and New London Children’s Choir*

Joy

Igniting joy now
feels like laughing at a funeral—
inappropriate, but necessary. And catching.

Globally, disaster.
Locally, a beating heart.
The mismatch hums inside my ribs

Seeking resonance. Who’s with me?

Rebellion is growing,
And it is joy.

Time to touch grass—
To gallop, drinking wind,
To plunge into cold lakes,
To climb until breath replaces thought,
To embody wonder that dissolves dread.

As I inventory what remains intact,
Joy appears—
not as optimism,
but as refined clarity in the darkness.

Gratitude, the spark.
Attention, the friction.
Joy, the heat,

The woolly insulation
for this cold century of confusion

Joy is kindled
By the kindness we share now;
For every person who enters or exits our lives—
Every person—
Ignites it again.

Haley May Peterson is from Wyoming but has lived half of her life in the Applegate. She moved to Oregon to attend SOU and massage school and spend time with her grandmother, Joan Peterson, who lived on Thompson Creek Road for 50 years. She recently moved to Medford, but still visits the valley regularly and feels deeply connected to the land and the community

hmaylmt@gmail.com

Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either written by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to *Applegater* poetry editor Paul Tipton at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW

In My Time of Dying

How I Came Face to Face with the Idea of an Afterlife

by Sebastian Junger

BY PAUL TIPTON

If you’ve ever taken an extreme risk or have been in a “life-or-death” situation, then imagine being someone who has spent most of their life chasing the biggest wave, hanging from ropes in trees with a chainsaw, and covering wars as a correspondent, embedded with troops in terrifying situations in Afghanistan and other countries. That was the “normal” life of Sebastian Junger for many years, the life that he chose to live.

Junger says, “Everyone has a relationship with death whether they want one or not; refusing to think about death is its own kind of relationship. When we hear about another person’s death ... the pity we feel is rooted in the hope that that kind of thing could never happen to us. It’s an enormously helpful illusion. Some people take the illusion even further by deliberately taking risks, as if beating the odds over and over gives them a kind of agency” (p.16). And Junger does take risks.

I have read Junger’s books, *War* and *Tribe*, which deep-dive into war and its effects, both negative and, ironically, positive, with respect to the tribal feelings of closeness and loyalty generated by being with others in risky situations. As a veteran, I know that he has “been there,” that he gained his knowledge the tough way.

But curiously, it was after most of the dangerous parts of his life and after PTSD had caused his first marriage to fail, that, at age 58, having finally settled into a normal life with his soulmate and their two young children, things came crashing

down. That’s when he experienced a medical emergency that was extremely difficult to diagnose and nearly fatal. The experience took Junger to the threshold of, and perhaps through, death’s door.

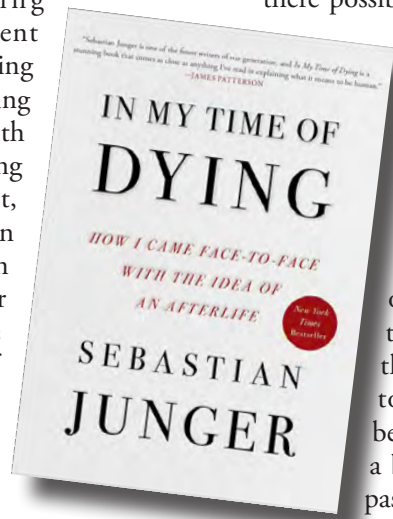
That is what this very well-researched book is about: exploring the possibility or likelihood that even when our physical bodies fail and we “die,” there may be a consciousness that is attached to our identity that does not “die.” Is there possibly a portal through which

that consciousness can pass back and forth? Junger says, “Our understanding of reality might be as limited as a dog’s understanding of television. So, abandoning likelihood for a moment, one might try out the idea that death is simply where the veil of belief gets rent to reveal a greater system beyond. ‘Reality’ may just be a boundary that we can’t see past” (p.172).

In his search for explanations, Junger takes us along on his mind’s journey through Einstein’s relativity; Higgs’s boson, photons, and monads; Heisenberg’s uncertainty; and all the way back to the lapsed Jesuit Casimir Liszinski, who in the 1600s was tortured to death for considering the possibility that man created God, rather than the reverse. But when Occam’s razor splits that last thin hair, the author says, “a last, terrifying, theory proposes that it is cosmically prohibited to have that knowledge beforehand because consciousness cannot survive a complete understanding of itself” and “the ultimate truth must never be known, because [the knower’s understanding] that he is the entirety of all things” would lead to the collapse of the universe and the annihilation of all history (p.198). Try to wrap your head around that!

This is a fascinating book that will keep you thinking about its ideas for a long time after reading it.

Paul W. Tipton
ptipton4u2c@gmail.com



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Our Mission

The goal of the Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., is to provide the Applegate watershed with a communication vehicle, the *Applegater*, that will provide educational information, increase community networking, and represent all the area's diverse communities. Through honest, constructive, relevant, and entertaining reports on a wide variety of subjects and viewpoints, including our natural resources, historical and current events, and community news, we can work together to enhance the quality of life we have in the Applegate, and continue to make a difference in our valley.

Acknowledgements

The *Applegater* newsmagazine is published quarterly by AVCN and is funded by donations from our loyal readers, matching funds from NewsMatch, a program of INN, and advertisements for local businesses.

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All submissions to the *Applegater* are subject to editorial review and editing to meet the newsmagazine's standards and guidelines. Publication decisions are made by the editorial committee, and as space allows.

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 banner 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 gater@applegater.org by the deadline (see Editorial Calendar on this page).

Applegater Newsmagazine
PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530
applegater.org

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Setting the record straight on the Applegate CWPP

BY AMELIA LIBERATORE

Luke Ruediger's contribution "A Community Wildfire Protection Plan should focus on protecting homes and communities" (2026 Spring edition, page 16) is presented as a factual article, yet it contains multiple inaccuracies about the CWPP process. Although Mr. Ruediger attended our public meetings, several of his statements do not reflect the facts:

- The CWPP document is not complete
- It will include recommendations for home hardening and defensible space.
- Community infrastructure was clearly identified as a priority by all of our survey respondents.
- The project maps presented in January were explicitly described as preliminary examples shared for public discussion. These were not final versions of prioritized "community projects" as implied by Mr. Ruediger.

The map image printed with Mr. Ruediger's piece is the intellectual property of Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative and should be credited as such. The *Applegater's* photo policy, on page 5 of the spring issue, requires proper attribution.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns and for your continued work to provide quality information to Applegate residents.

Sincerely,
The CWPP Team

Amelia Liberatore
aliberatore@sofrc.org

Community members in support of this letter:

Rich Fairbanks, Mark Hamlin, Annette Parsons, Jim Reiland, Lauri and David Dobbs, Mel Wann, Carey Chaput, Dr. Chris Adlam

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The *Applegater* is the only newsmagazine covering the entire Applegate Valley. With a circulation of 13,000 and a readership of more than 20,000, the *Applegater* covers Jacksonville, Ruch, Applegate, Williams, Murphy, Wilderville, Wonder, Jerome Prairie, and areas of Medford and Grants Pass.

For more information, contact:

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Next deadline: August 1

Cover Photo Credit

A Painted Lady nectars on flowers in a high mountain meadow of the Siskiyou Crest, by Linda Kappan.

...

Have a photo for the Summer 2026 *Applegater*? Email it in large format at 300 dpi to gater@applegater.org.

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 Annika Hodges at annika@applegater.org.

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ISSUE	DEADLINE
FALL (Sept - Nov) <i>Earth - Air</i>	August 1
WINTER (Dec - Feb).... <i>Holiday - Arts</i>	November 1
SPRING (March - May) ... <i>History - Heritage</i>	February 1
SUMMER (June - Aug) <i>Fire - Water</i>	May 1

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— Applegate Library — Spring into summer at the Applegate Library

BY CHRISTINE GRUBB



Find people, businesses, jobs, and more with AtoZ Databases—free with your JCLS library card. This powerful reference and research tool includes residential directories, business listings, job search resources, and mailing lists to help you connect with accurate and up-to-date information. Access AtoZ Databases at atozdatabases.com/search. Remote access to AtoZ Databases requires a JCLS card and a PIN.

Upcoming events

Yoga Nidra with Sound Healing, 18+ years. This is a perfect class for anyone feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or in need of a restorative pause. No prior experience is needed. Bring your body, your breath, and an openness to rest. Bring your own yoga mat or borrow one. 5-6 pm, Thursday, June 4.

Building Your Own Defensible Space, 12+ years. Why are Southern Oregon's forests increasingly vulnerable to megafires—and what can you do about it? Join Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative's fire education team for this hands-on, one-hour program where you'll explore the science behind wildfire behavior, discover how homes actually ignite, and take action by building and evaluating your own defensible space model. 11 am-noon, Friday, June 12.

Trees & Plants with John Jackson of Bugs-R-Us, 3+ years. Explore the green world around us as we learn about local trees and plants. Learn how trees and plants give back to us and more. 12:30-1:30 pm, Tuesday, June 16.

Roll into the Library: Board Game Day, 6+ years. Beat the heat and roll the dice at Board Game Day at the library! Bring your favorite game or try something new while meeting other game lovers in the community. 3-5 pm, Thursday, July 16.

Film Viewing: House of Threads, 18+ years. *House of Threads*, an original documentary short produced by Jackson County Library Services, tells the story of local homeowner Heather Paladini, her 120-year-old property, and her search for answers. If houses are historic artifacts, Heather's is a whole museum. 1-2 pm, Saturday, July 18.

Pollinator Pals Seed Science Workshop, 7-12 years. Join the Pollinator Pals team for a seed science workshop where we'll dissect beans under microscopes,

use dancing to prepare wildflower seeds, and learn all about how to make your own pollinator garden. 1-2 pm, Saturday, July 25.

Natural History of the Oregon Trail with John Jackson of Bugs-R-Us, 3+ years. This discussion will cover the basics of the Applegate Trail and the Oregon Trail, as well as the animals, plants, and geology encountered by the settlers. You will learn about game animals as well as predators. You will pet hides, horns, and feathers from the mammals and birds that we discuss. 1-2 pm, Tuesday, August 4.

Seamus O'Caellaigh Presents: Medieval Medicinal Plants, 18+ years. Modern minds look at plants and see pretty flowers and possibly a seasoning for their next dinner. A pre-modern mind saw treatments for pustules, pestilence, and pain. Come for the presentation, and leave with a salve. Seamus O'Caellaigh is the author of *Pustules, Pestilence, and Pain: Tudor Treatments and Ailments of Henry VIII*. 10:30 am-12:30 pm, Friday, August 14.

Creating a Family Tale, 18+ years. Starting with a photocopy of one of your old family photos, you will create a memento to treasure. Bring a family anecdote or two, and you have the basics for your own personal memory book. All materials, besides your photo, will be provided. 1-2:30 pm, Thursday, August 20 and 27.

Reminders

Veterans Outreach will be here from 10 am-3 pm the second Tuesday of every even month (6/9, 8/11, 10/13, and 12/8) for the rest of the year.

A Tech Ed Specialist will be here on Tuesdays from 10 am-12:30 pm on a first-come, first-served basis, or make an appointment at teched@jcls.org, or by phone at 541-734-3990.

The Applegate Library meeting room can be booked (with a full-service library card) for your meeting, program, or event (even when the library is closed) at jcls.libcal.com/reserve/ap-meeting.

Wi-Fi is available 24/7 in our parking lot and available inside during open hours.

Preschool Storytime is on Fridays from 11-11:30 am.

Christine Grubb
cgrubb@jcls.org
541-846-7346

Corrections

In the spring 2026 issue of the *Applegater*, several errors appeared. In the "Introducing..." column, the name Evelyn Byrne Williams was incorrectly printed as Evelyn Byrnes Williams. In the book review of *The Bill of Obligations* by Richard Haass, the author's last name was misspelled as Haas. Additionally, "The Siskiyou Mountain Advocate" column included a map without proper attribution; the map is the intellectual property of the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative and should have been credited as such. We regret these errors and extend our sincere apologies for the oversights.

— Ruch Library — Summer at Ruch Library

BY MEGAN PINDER

The programs and services listed below, as well as the Ruch Library's Seed Library, Wi-Fi, and cozy spaces, are free and accessible to every community member at the Ruch Library!

Talking About Values Across Political Divides, with Lowell Greathouse, 15+ years. How can we learn to share our values in ways that bring us together rather than push us further apart? 2-3:30 pm, Saturday, June 6. (See details on page 7.)

Building Your Own Defensible Space, 12+ years. Join a conversation with Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative's education team. 1-2 pm, Thursday, June 11.

Who Are "We the People"? with **Eliot Feenstra**, 15+ years. Reflect on what the Declaration of Independence means today, what it means to be American, and what it takes to work together for the benefit of all. 1-2 pm, Saturday, June 13.

Guerilla Gardening, 10-19 years. Learn the basics of guerrilla gardening with Jordan Land from the Grange Co-op and make your own native seed bombs. 1-2 pm, Tuesday, June 16.

A Special Storytime Program with The Children's Museum of Southern Oregon, 3+ years. Plant the "love of reading" seed with a special storytime, full of books, songs, play, and fun! 1-2 pm, Wednesday, June 17.

Sharing the Spirit of America. Join a nationwide simultaneous reading of the Declaration of Independence to mark the 250th anniversary of its first public reading. After the reading, there will be a sing-along and ice cream social. 2-4 pm, Wednesday, July 8.

From Doodling to Artistic Creations with Janis Mohr-Tipton, 13+ years. Experiment with transforming shapes into structured designs. 1-3 pm, Saturday, July 18.

Tea & Revolution: Women's Role in the War of Independence, 18+ years. Learn about women's crucial role in the outcome of the Revolutionary War. 4:30-6 pm, Thursday, July 23.

Cyanotype Printing, 12-19 years. Make your own artistic prints using the sun to preserve images of plants and flowers. Noon-1 pm, Wednesday, July 29.

Film Viewing: House of Threads, 18+ years. An original documentary short produced by Jackson County Library Services tells the intriguing story of a 120-year-old Applegate Valley property. 1-2 pm, Saturday, August 1.

Libby Overview, 18+ years. Learn how to effectively use the Libby system to access our digital library. 2:30-3:30 pm, Thursday, August 6.

The Magic of Microgreens. Join the Jackson County Master Gardeners for a family fun day learning how to grow your own microgreens! We will talk about seeds, taste-test microgreens, and set up containers for you to take home. 1-2 pm, Saturday, August 8.

Seamus O'Caellaigh Presents: Medieval Medicinal Plants, 18+ years. Explore treatments, medical texts, and the diagnostic techniques of Tudor England. Come for the presentation and leave with a self-made salve. Noon-2 pm, Saturday, August 15.

Death Café Conversation, 13+ years. Facilitated by Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance, this is an informal, respectful space to share stories, ask questions, and discuss the sometimes difficult topic of mortality in a way that brings connection and insight. 6-8 pm on the first Thursday of each month.

World Snack Tour, 10+ years. Discover a new country through music, trivia, games, and the best snacks and candies they have to offer. We provide the samples; you bring a spirit of adventure and curiosity about the world! 1-2 pm on fourth Saturdays.

Preschool Storytime, 3-5 years. Bring your preschoolers to enjoy stories, rhymes, songs, and fun at the library. 10:30-11 am, Tuesdays.

Community Resource Help. Need help with food, shelter, a medical provider, etc.? Meet with a member of our Community Resource Team by appointment or drop in. Noon-4 pm, Wednesdays.

Computer and Tech Help. Meet with a Technology Education Specialist by appointment or drop in. 10 am-12:30 pm, Tuesdays, and 2-4:30 pm, Thursdays.

Read Play Talk, 0-5 years. Discover how children learn through play and daily activities: singing, telling stories, creating art, and having fun! RPT is open to everyone—young children and their families and caregivers. 10:30 am-noon, Thursdays.

Community Yoga, 13+ years. Join us for an all-levels yoga class with Dr. Rachel Stricker. The Community Room will open at 8:45 am, and class will begin at 9 am. Registration required at jcls.org/events or by calling 541-899-7438. Bring your own mat. 9-10 am on the second and fourth Wednesdays.

Megan Pinder

Ruch Branch Manager

Jackson County Library Services

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mpinder@jcls.org

7919 Highway 238, Ruch

Nonprofit organizations in the Applegate Valley are welcome to submit news and event information to the *Applegater*. Email gater@applegater.org.

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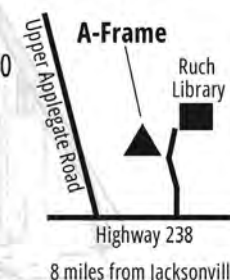
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With your help, we could do even more for the Ruch Library!

BY CYNTHIA CHENEY

The Friends of Ruch Library (FORL) has a variety of ways for you to enjoy helping out. Some things do not involve any meetings or even set times! For example, you might enjoy stocking one or two of our Little Free Libraries with new books once a month or so. That involves stopping by the Book Barn at the Ruch Library to pick out a box of likely books, then going to one of our Little Free Libraries to switch them out. FORL has four Little Free Library locations: Ruch Outdoor Community School, McKee Bridge, China Gulch, and Cantrall Buckley Park.

Or you might help by taking books to Goodwill. After donated books have cycled through our various sales locations and been on our outdoor “free” tables, eventually they must go on their way to make room for newer books.

Every Tuesday, volunteers sort new donations at the Book Barn—a great chance to get to know some of us and see our “operation”! We sort from noon to 2 pm until the hot weather starts, and then we switch to 9 to 11 am. Come by and give it a try. If you enjoy it, you can join us once or twice a month, or more often as you like.

Then there’s helping out at Book Barn sales once a month (October through June), noon to 4 pm on the first Saturday of the month.

We need some digital expertise, from helping with our Facebook page to creating flyers and newsletters. Or perhaps you have ideas for events? Check out our Events Committee by emailing Cynthia at the contact information listed below.

Your energy and ideas can help us support the library, including offering affordable books and enriching programs to the community. Volunteering is a really rewarding experience, too, and the Friends of Ruch Library may be the right fit for you!

Upcoming events at the Ruch Library

All events are free and open to the public

Talking About Values Across Political Divides, with Lowell Greathouse, author of *Rediscovering the Spirit: From Political Brokenness to Spiritual Wholeness*, in the library community room. How can we learn to share our values in ways that bring us together rather than push us further apart? Lowell Greathouse is a retired United Methodist minister who served congregations in rural, suburban, and urban settings in Oregon, Idaho, and England from 1986 to 2019. In addition, he worked with community-based programs at Catholic Social Services in San Francisco, Community Action in Washington County, and United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. Lowell was



FORL's Little Free Library at Cantrall Buckley Park.

born in Oregon and has family roots in the state that date back to the 1890s. 2-3:30 pm, Saturday, June 6.

Celebrating the Declaration of Independence at the library! July 8, 1776, was the first public reading of the Declaration (in Philadelphia). The time of our celebration was chosen to match a countrywide synchronous reading from Hawaii to Maine. At 3 pm, we’ll have a group read-aloud of the Declaration. From 3:30 to 4, enjoy ice cream and a sing-along with John Frohnmeier. These events will be in the Ruch Library Community Room, or outdoors if not too hot. Copies of the Declaration will be provided. 2-4 pm, Wednesday, July 8.



The A-Frame Bookstore, open 1-3 pm, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

Book sales. First-Saturday sales at the Book Barn (by donation, cash only) continue on June 6, noon-4 pm. After a summer pause due to the heat, book sales will resume on October 3. But the air-conditioned A-Frame Bookstore will be open all summer from 1 to 3 pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Books and puzzles are \$2, and children’s books are 50 cents.

Cynthia Cheney
cynthiachene01@gmail.com

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Josephine
Community Library

— Williams Library — Summer at Williams Library

BY SARAH MEYER

Williams Library events and programs are offered at no charge and are open to the public. Registration is not required, and a library card is not necessary to participate in library events and programs.

2026 Summer Reading Program

All ages are invited to join the free Josephine Community Library Summer Reading Program from June 13 to August 9. To join and earn prizes, register beginning June 1 online at josephinelibrary.org/summer-reading-program or at a branch in Grants Pass, Illinois Valley, Williams, or Wolf Creek.

Featured events

Visit josephinelibrary.org/calendar to learn about weekly special events at all library branches during the Summer Reading Program for all ages.

Summer Reading Program Kick-off party. Saturday, June 13, at two locations:

Williams branch, 1-2 pm: crafts, snacks, and Summer Reading Program registration.

Herb Pharm Picnic in the Garden, 10 am-2 pm: Storybook Walk and giveaways.

Bugs-R-Us. 10-11 am, Saturday, June 20.

Neighborhood Heroes Story Squad. Meet the Williams General Store owner at the Williams Branch. 11 am-noon, Friday, July 17.

Pollinator Pals. 10-11 am, Saturday, August 1.

Weekly crafts. Every Saturday during open hours.

Looking to support the library?

One of the best ways to help is simply to use it—every item you check out or suggest strengthens the library and helps shape a collection that reflects community interests. Explore the online catalog at josephinelibrary.org to discover a wide selection of books, magazines, ebooks, and audiobooks.

Can’t find what you’re looking for? Suggest a new purchase for the library collection. Start at josephinelibrary.org/catalog/suggest-a-purchase.

Declaration 250: Reading with Lois

Read together with former Oregon History Teacher of the Year Lois MacMillan as our community explores, “The American Revolution and the Fate of the World” by Richard Bell, in honor of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Book copies are available for checkout at the library and were provided through support from Oregon Humanities.

Join us Thursday, September 3, from 5:30-6:30 pm at the Grants Pass branch for a community book discussion.

For details, more information, and opportunities to explore 250 years of American ideals through books, archives, and resources that shaped the Declaration of Independence and continue to influence us, visit josephinelibrary.org. Then, from the Education/Research menu, select the Declaration 250 subject guide.

This program is made possible in part by a grant from Oregon Humanities.

Pacifica Gardens Park Pass

Grab a book and a park pass for a quiet afternoon of reading at Pacifica Gardens. The Pacifica Pass is one of several county and state park passes available for checkout with a library card through the Library of Things at Josephine Community Library. This scenic spot, once a recording studio and venue for musician Steve Miller in the 1970s and 1980s, offers a unique blend of rock history and nature.

Williams Library hours

Tuesday/Wednesday/Saturday, 1-6 pm
Friday, 11 am-6 pm

For more information about the Josephine Community Library Foundation or library building projects, visit jclfoundation.org or contact Executive Director Rebecca Stoltz at rstoltz@josephinelibrary.org or 541-476-0571 ext. 200.

Sarah Meyer
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THE STARRY SIDE

Summer starry sky

BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells.

Here's summer!—with its own beautiful night skies. My eyes always go up at night. Is it dark enough yet? What do I recognize? What don't I know about? That's my blessed curse!

I just love the night sky. It's like being with an old friend among its old friends, and I only know some. Been crazy like this all my life. Turn off that light! I need to see into that delicious dark paradise of the known and unknown.

In spring, we had my favorite, Cassiopea, above Polaris, the North Star. Now she's below Polaris, in the west, and swinging counterclockwise under the North Star to come up more and more easterly. My mountains and trees make her disappear!

But I can look at the huge Big Dipper, Ursa Major. He's just past the overhead point and moving east around Polaris. Follow the curve of the handle to bright Arcturus in Boötes,

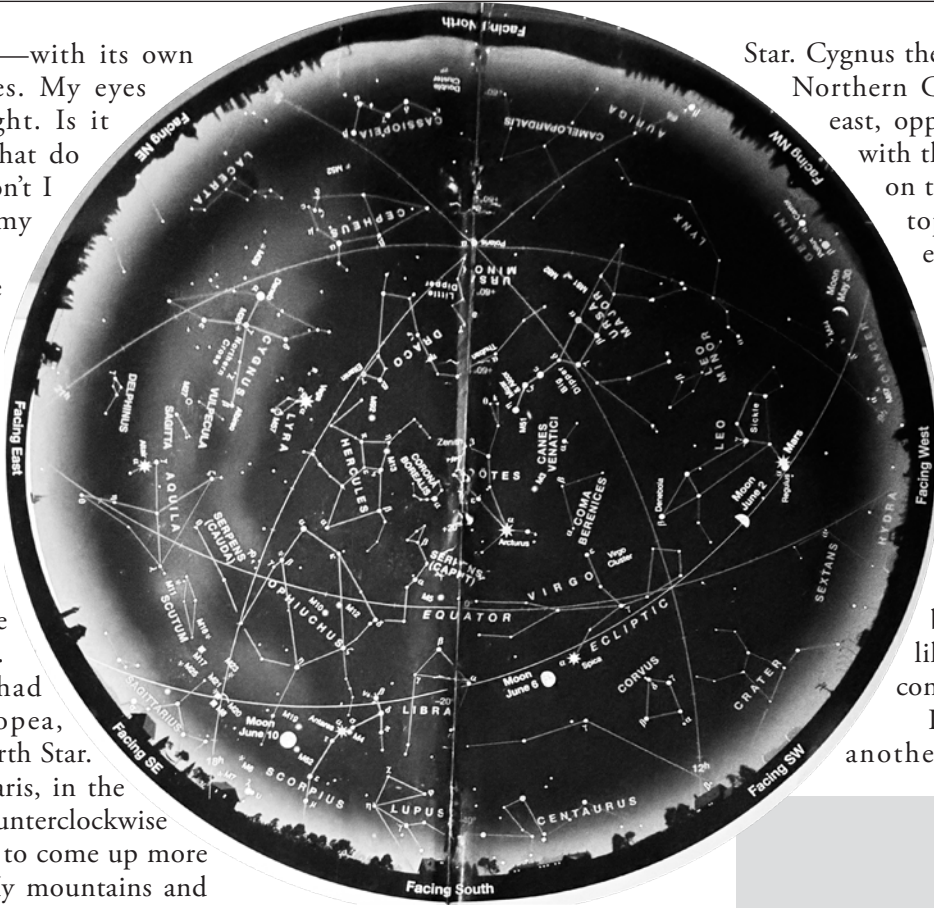


Image: Sky & Telescope (skyandtelescope.org).

the Herdsman, a large kite-shaped constellation that's always opposite my "W" (that's Cassiopeia) from the North

Star. Cygnus the Swan, also called the Northern Cross, is rising in the east, opposite the Big Dipper, with that bright star, Deneb, on the tail of the Swan (or top of the Cross). And even brighter is Vega, in the constellation Lyra, a little farther up towards the middle of the sky.

In the west is Leo the Lion. I love that great head of "hair" in his backward-question-mark shape and his body that looks to me like it's lying down very comfortably.

In the southwest is another constellation, not

quite a square but still four-sided—Corvus the Crow. Spica, the brightest star in the constellation Virgo, is a little further south. Straight up is a little "C," a crown of stars called Corona Borealis, another favorite of mine.

It's easy to stargaze in summer with all the warmth. Even though the winter nights are longer, they are so much colder! I'm a fan of the dark skies all seasons, but I spend more time with my head in the stars in summer, often with a chair that lets me lie back and relax, and maybe with some coffee or water to drink. And if there is a comet or a meteor shower, then it's just perfect.

Greeley Wells
greeley@greeley.me

— OF NOTE —

Venus is in the evening skies in June and August, quite bright these days.
Mars is reddish in the evening in June and in the mornings in July and August.
Jupiter is also up and bright in June, but only then. Darn it! It's been amazing for years now and so bright!

ESSAY

How to stay capable for Applegate living

BY GRANT THOMAS

I've been in the Applegate only a short time, but one thing I've already noticed is how much life here asks of your body—getting out in nature, working on the property, hauling firewood, doing long stints of deep squats in the garden—it's one of the main reasons my wife and I chose to make the Applegate our home. We both have active minds and bodies. Time to put 'em to work!

For me, that's where training comes in. Not in a "gym culture" way, just in a practical way that supports the life we want to live here.

My training philosophy is simple: I train to be a strong, mobile, capable

human for real life. I train so I can reliably show up for the stuff I want to do—sports, outdoor activities, hacky sack, dancing, gardening—and the stuff I need to do: take care of the property, be present for my family, and move through my day without feeling stiff, tired, or beat up.

Everyone has their own version of these want-to-dos and need-to-dos. It's a good life, but it can be a grind, especially on the body.

I learned that the hard way. I found myself in chronic pain at age 19 and spent years trying to "fix" my posture and back pain while also spending long

days at a desk. I trained too hard and too often and convinced myself that pushing through was the answer. I wanted to feel strong and capable, but I mostly just kept burning out.

Eventually, I had to take a different approach, building myself up instead of breaking myself down. These days, I train through a practice of bodyweight and minimalist movement that can be done anywhere, anytime. Not because I'm against gyms or equipment. I just like training that doesn't depend on perfect conditions. I like training that supports physical and mental well-being for the long term. That's what I think most people actually need—not more information, not more intensity... just training that's simple enough to repeat and challenging enough to improve over time.

The approach that I've found works best is simple, repeatable training

that helps you feel strong, mobile, and capable in the life you're actually living. Try following these principles:

First: Master your own bodyweight.

You don't need fancy equipment to get stronger. Being able to squat, hinge, walk, carry, balance, and get up and down off the ground with ease goes a long way.

Second: Consistency beats intensity.

A little bit, done regularly, will take you further than going all-out once in a while.

Third: Make it your own.

The best routine is the one that fits your life—your schedule, your energy, your needs. Train to support you and what you're building.

If you're thinking, "I should probably move more," that's a good enough reason to start.

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GARDENING FROM THE HEART

Don't miss this golden opportunity to grow anew

BY NOEL RUIZ

Golden water is my secret for lush starts, vibrant leaves, and happy container plants.

What is golden water? It's diluted urine as liquid fertilizer.

Golden water is everything chemical fertilizers wish they were, as it:

- Is made in my body, instead of being industrially produced.
- Offers full-spectrum minerals, not isolated compounds.
- Helps the environment, rather than harms it.
- Builds plant strength, not chemical dependence.
- Encourages co-creation, not dominion over.

A golden rule of nature: Every life form's waste stream is food for other beings. My urine contains concentrated minerals that plants crave. Since I eat a nutritious diet, why discard valuable unused minerals when nature intended them as food for others?

As a liquid, golden water is easily absorbed by plants, helping them grow stronger and healthier.

Your urine is safe to handle without precaution since it's practically sterile and won't transmit disease in the way humanure (composted human excrement) can.

It's true, concentrated amounts of urine can harm plants (most garden plants are not salt-tolerant), but repeated use of *diluted* urine offers amazing benefits that can be witnessed almost immediately.

As herbalists often say, "The dose is the difference between poison and medicine."

Consider my neighbor's story: Last summer, he grew a potted tomato plant and a cucumber vine on his patio, both of which were stunted, yellow, and barely growing. It was painful to witness their suffering, not to mention my neighbor's dismay.

He began feeding golden water to his container plants daily and was shocked to see hints of rebounding in several days. Within a few weeks, they were vibrant, green, vigorously growing, and productive. *His jaw dropped in awe.*

I had the same reaction when I first started golden-watering seedlings in our greenhouse. All the starts clearly benefited, and the fast-growing, heavy feeders like tomatoes, peppers, and squash especially enjoyed the boost.

Golden water is easy to make—collect your urine and dilute it with water. 1:10 is a ratio most gardeners quote as having little to no scent and being gentle enough for plants. I personally don't measure. My ratios are sometimes closer to 1:5, and while there is some light scent when less diluted, it still works great. And you can also dilute it more than 1:10 if you want—there's no hard rule!

I often use a sprayer to foliar feed (putting nutrients directly onto) plant leaves. Golden water also works amazingly as a soil drench in the root zone. In the summer, when my seedlings are in the

ground, I continue using golden water to feed container plants, heavy feeders, and fruit trees. I have golden water houseplants year-round.

Another fun story: A few years back, I shared my love for feeding pee to my plants on Instagram. I said, "As a man, it's easy to collect my urine in a bucket outside, but I don't expect women to jump on board." To my surprise, a fair number of female gardeners replied, proudly sharing they collect their urine as fertilizer too.

Well, one international friend went on to tell me about a product sold in Sweden—a watering can that doubles as a potty, designed for convenient golden watering. *Bravo!*

At least one local friend collects her overnight urine in a glass jug. She uses a pee funnel, popular with some female backpackers and travelers for convenient relief on the go.

Personally, I started feeding plants golden water for practical reasons (free, high-quality organic fertility), but I love the unintended benefits.

One of those benefits? I experience more reciprocity with plants. We humans breathe in plants' exhales, and we eat plants for nourishment. In turn, plants breathe in our out-breaths, and they eat us too.

We don't have to wait until we die and turn into compost or ash to reciprocate and nourish plants with our bodies. We can deepen our



Watering tomato starts with golden water. First, I spray the leaves, then drench the soil. Photo by Noel Ruiz.

symbiotic relationship right now, feeding each other while we are alive.

Miraculously, plants and humans were designed to nourish each other.

Every living human automatically generates daily doses of fertility that can be offered back. Knowing this fills me with more delight and gratitude for the magic of life.

Noel Ruiz

hello@homesteadculture.com

Noel offers seeds and writes about homesteading from the heart at homesteadculture.com.

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



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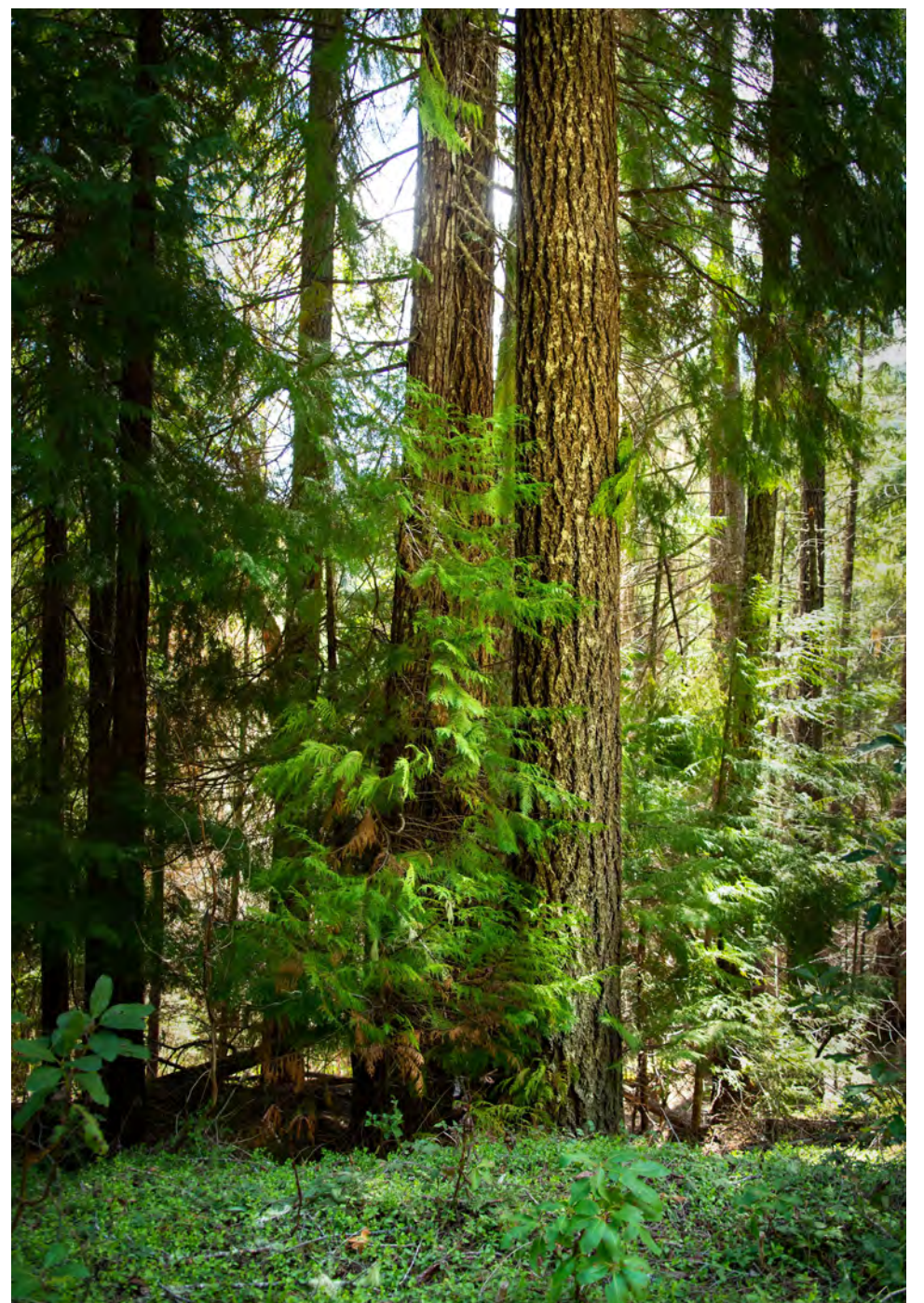
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Old-growth Douglas-fir trees in the Williams watershed. Photo by Michelle McAfee.



Building community through service in the Applegate Valley: Cantrall Buckley Park updates

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

Volunteering has always been one of the quiet strengths of the Applegate Valley, weaving together neighbors, organizations, and landscapes through shared purpose. In a rural environment like ours, where challenges can range from wildfire preparedness to trail maintenance, and from youth programs to habitat restoration, community service is more than a good deed. It builds resilience, confidence, and the ability to navigate the many situations that arise when people live close to the land and close to one another. Every hour of service strengthens not only the project at hand, but the community itself.

The 4th Annual Volunteer and Community Gathering, held on April 25, offered a powerful reminder of just how vibrant and committed our valley is. This year's event brought together seventeen organizations with full displays and representatives, along with four additional informational displays. The room was full of conversations, new connections, and the unmistakable energy that comes from people who care deeply about this place.

We were especially excited to welcome three new participants this year: Sanctuary One, the Buncom

Historical Society, and the Ruch Seed Savers & Seed Library. Their presence broadened the range of opportunities available to community members and highlighted the diversity of stewardship across the valley, ranging from animal care and heritage preservation to seed saving and local food resilience.

Children had their own corner of discovery and wonder, thanks to hands-on activities hosted by the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council (APWC) and the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative. Microscopes allowed young scientists to explore natural specimens up close, while life-sized displays helped them connect with the plants, insects, and wildlife that make the Applegate such a rich ecological home. These activities weren't just fun—they planted the seeds of future stewardship.

One of the most memorable moments of the day was the "We the Community" spiral story activity. Participants were invited to write a phrase describing what the Applegate Valley means to them. Each contribution became part of a growing spiral, a visual and emotional reminder that our sense of place is built from many voices, many histories, and many hopes.

Events like this do not happen without the generosity and collaboration of many partners. A huge thank-you goes out to everyone who attended, to the organizational representatives who spent the afternoon engaging with the public, and to our sponsors who made the gathering possible. Applegate Fire District graciously hosted us in their welcoming space. A Greater Applegate provided refreshments that kept conversations flowing. And APWC supported the event with planning, coordination, and on-the-ground assistance. The result was a gathering that truly reflected the spirit of the valley.

Cantrall Buckley Park: A season of activity and care

While the community gathering celebrated volunteerism valley-wide, Cantrall Buckley Park has been a focal point of hands-on stewardship this spring. Applegate Outdoor School filled the park with learning and exploration throughout the season, and summer camp is just around the corner. At the same time, the park continues to navigate a period of transition as staff and volunteers work to manage dying conifers and deciduous trees, maintain trails, and care for new plantings.

This year, volunteers are especially needed to help nurture young plants through the dry months ahead. Watering, mulching, and light maintenance are essential tasks that protect the investments made in habitat restoration and park enhancement. A few people signed up during the community gathering, but we need a larger team so that the work can be shared and no one person carries too much of the load. Even a small commitment—an hour here or there—makes a meaningful difference.



Community Together - Sharing Thoughts

"This Rural Place We Call Home"

My heart sings with the birds each morning
in our beautiful Mountain Canyon,
Blue sky and sunshine warm my heart,
The laughter and joy that vibrates from children
finding their special place in our community,
Grateful for the opportunity to grow in this beautiful place,
For the love of People, Animals, and Earth...
better together,
Yes, Beautiful people in a beautiful place,
I feel welcome!
I feel Joy for the views and habitat surrounding our homes,
I feel grounded to the Earth and small community
where I can truly connect with others,
Nature is our mother and I cherish the opportunities
to love and nurture her and our community,
Community is what holds society together,
my home for over 30 years, like no other place I have ever lived,
This is the place our hearts have been searching for!
This valley, its meadows and its mountains feed my soul,
A place of wild beauty where my heart sings!

4th Annual Community & Volunteers Gathering
Saturday April 25th, 2026

The spiral is where each contributor wrote their phrase about what this community and rural place mean to them.

Opportunities to get involved are posted at applegatepartnership.org/upcoming-events, on social media, and on flyers throughout the community. Anyone interested in helping can reach out directly to Janis, Chair of the Cantrall Buckley Enhancement Committee, at janis.agapark@gmail.com or to Caleb at calebg@applegatepartnership.org.

Volunteering is one of the most powerful ways we build community in the Applegate Valley. Whether you join a restoration project, support a local nonprofit, help at the park, or simply show up to learn and connect, you are part of the ongoing story of this place. Together, we strengthen the valley that is our home.

Janis Mohr-Tipton
Chair, Cantrall Buckley
Enhancement Committee
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Pipe Fork Forest, still waiting to be preserved

BY CHAS ROGERS

Pipe Fork is a little-known stream system that flows from Grayback Mountain, one of the tallest peaks in the Applegate region, into the Williams Valley.

Not a giant stream, Pipe Fork Creek forms the headwaters of East Fork Williams Creek. From springs on the steep sides of Grayback, it flows year-round through a steep, narrow canyon. Its beauty is a surprise to those who go there and hike the difficult trails that overgrow each year and tangle the feet of hikers as they climb the steep walls. Huge bigleaf maple trees and Pacific yews grace the canyon, as well as giant Douglas firs, canyon oaks, twisted western red cedars, incense cedars, and stately, tall Port Orford cedars.

Who knows how long this forest has been growing in this environment, forgotten over time? Trees grow slowly and fill the walls with shadows, while ferns cover the rocks near the falls. Giant bigleaf maples hover over the waters, and Port Orford cedars tower over the canyon. Each species of native wildlife that travels through here encounters natural forest growth with its spongy mossy forest floor.

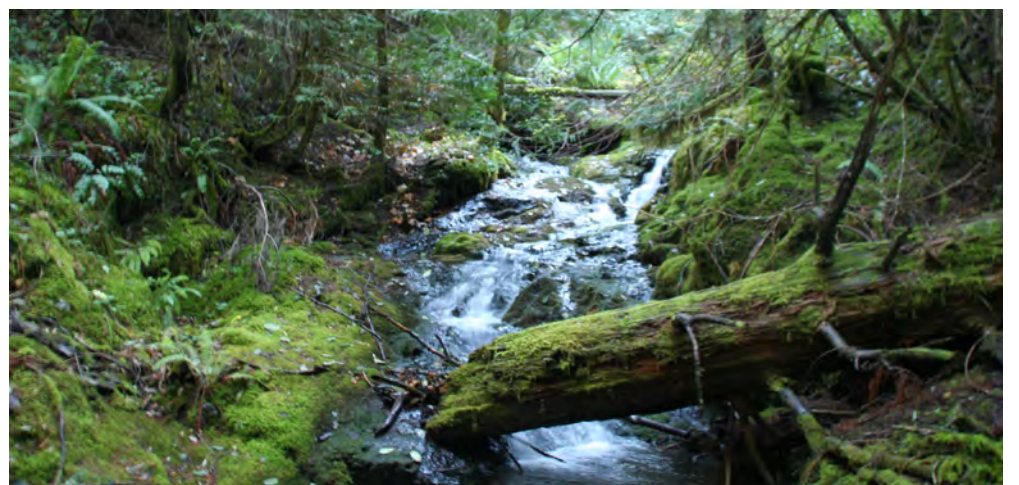
The Pipe Fork was discovered by the early settlers. Gold miners used it to sluice soil from the hillsides for gold beds. Chinese laborers built a ditch to carry water to the Layton gold mine in

Williams; the ditch went down to a metal pipe called an inverted siphon to flow into the Layton Ditch across the canyon. Today, that ditch makes a great 13-mile hiking trail overlooking Williams Valley.

Pipe Fork is a unique, hidden place in the Klamath-Siskiyou region. Here we walk through the canyon to view the forest, to find a legacy tree or a place that satisfies our curiosity, a tree or outcrop that stands defiant. The jumble of logs and the smell of decay permeate the landscape while the life force stretches to the light. The forest comes alive in its struggle to survive while tall and straight Port Orford cedar trees shade the land. Cool air and water flow downstream and bathe the forest ecosystem that feeds the many lives of the Pipe Fork.

Pipe Fork, designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern by the BLM, is also nominated for inclusion under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. With its wide variety of trees and undergrowth, it stands out as a unique ecosystem in southern Oregon. Tucked away in a secluded valley, it supports the survival of sensitive forests and varieties of wildlife—fishers and martens, spotted owls, elk, bears, and many other animals—that depend on the landscape for refugia.

This area should be saved for



Pipe Fork Creek flows through mossy glens of downed wood. Photo by Chas Rogers.

generations to come. Yet forces are at work to destroy this landscape and turn it into a future disaster. The Josephine County Commissioners, who control this land, could decide to clear-cut portions of the steep walls and sloped canyon. The County Forestry Department holds the balance between preserving this forest and giving it up to the logging interests.

Members of the Williams community are working diligently to save this area for the future. We are seeking to help the Conservation Fund, a nonprofit that wants to keep it intact and purchase the land. A logical choice for the commissioners would be to set up an Intent to Sell document that recognizes the Yellowbook Appraisal

value designated for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This grant funding was previously awarded to the Pipe Fork in 2024 by the US Congress to make it a Research Natural Area for Port Orford Cedar and a Recreational Natural Area Reserve for hiking trails.

What better way to preserve something for the future that will live beyond our imagination than to make Pipe Fork a jewel in our landscape for generations?

Please contact Josephine County offices and urge them to protect this land for its clean water that feeds salmon-bearing streams and preserve it for generations to come.

Chas Rogers
chasrogers360@gmail.com

INTRODUCING...

The Applegate Library's Susie Beckham moves to Ohio in her retirement

BY DIANA COOGLE

Many patrons of the Applegate Library feel that the library has lost its glow since the associate librarian, Susie Beckham, retired on May 1.

They miss the home-baked cookies she brought in too.

"People would come into the library and ask if Susie was here," says Kat Gore,



Ann Nguyễn, Christine Grubb, and Susie Beckham pose with their Peep Diorama, featured in the annual JCLS competition.

also a library associate at the Applegate Library. "I would say, 'No, but Christine Grubb [branch manager] and I are here. Can we help you?' They would just say, 'No, thanks,' and go away to come back when Susie was here."

Susie knew the Applegate community so well that she would often come across a book or a movie she wanted to recommend to a particular person. "Here," she would say. "I set this book aside for you." She also built what she calls "a real bond" with the other staff at the Applegate Library, Kat and Christine.

"Susie set the bar high," Christine says, "[she was] always doing something more than the job called for: going to the library during nonwork hours to open the door for folks who had locked themselves out of the meeting room; giving rides to a patron whose car died in the library parking lot or to one who couldn't get to the library on a particular day; reading to kids whenever they asked, even if it wasn't story time; providing sustenance in the form of baked goods, seasonal decorations, flowers, and genuine smiles to all who entered this building."

Besides bringing in treats and checking out books, Susie ran the library's



Susie at the Applegate School Carnival.

story time, kept the bulletin board up to date, and scheduled programs.

Immediately after her well-attended farewell party on her last day at the library, Susie moved to Ohio to be with her daughter and four young grandchildren.

"As happy as I am about this next great adventure for her, I'm just so sorry to see her go," says library patron Lynn Towns. "Her big smile and gracious greeting made her more like a well-informed hostess than a librarian."

Before coming to the Applegate Library, Susie worked at Les Schwab. When she retired from that job, she thought about where she could volunteer: church, school, or the library. The library won. "I always loved books and libraries," she says.

Her volunteer days at the Applegate Library soon turned into a position as a part-time library associate with twenty hours of work a week.

See **SUSIE BECKHAM**, page 13.

Where community grows

BY TRACY HARDING

In many rural households, producing and preserving some of what we eat is part of everyday life. Even so, few of us are completely self-reliant. Farmers markets help fill those gaps by connecting us with nearby producers while playing an important role in keeping small farms and the local economy strong. Beyond food, markets bring people together. Research from Dacher Keltner of the University of California, Berkeley, suggests that spaces of connection strengthen our well-being and longevity. Farmers markets offer a place where community, health, and local economy meet.

Three markets in our region are creating shared spaces where livelihoods and relationships grow—welcoming farmers, food and beverage makers, crafters, musicians, families, and, at one market, even dogs. All the markets are handicap accessible and have designated parking. By accepting food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the bonus of Double Up Food Bucks (DUFEB), the Williams and Applegate markets make it possible to bring more customers to local farms, while the matching program allows every dollar to go twice as far on fresh produce purchases.

Williams Farmers Market

May-October
Mondays, 5-7:30 pm
Sugarloaf Community Association,
206 Tetherow Road, Williams
SNAP and DUFEB
Service dogs only

Applegate Evening Market

May 20-September 30
Wednesdays, 5-8 pm
The Lindsay Lodge, 15100
Hwy 238, Applegate
SNAP and DUFEB
Service dogs only

Sunday Summer Market

June 21-September 27
Sundays, 12-4 pm
Troon Vineyard & Farm, 1475
Kubli Road, North Applegate

The Williams market is set on private land that is open to the community every day from dawn to dusk, with a stage, playground, soccer field, and a community building. The market was started by the community, for the community. The outdoor market is run by volunteers, and it partners with the Williams Branch Library, Williams Grange, A Greater Applegate, and Rogue Herbalism Collective to offer special events and activities. The first Monday of each month, with the addition of live music and food trucks, sees a boost in both vendors and attendees. New this season, the SCA has extended power for vendors and lighting for the shorter days.

Williams Farmers Market manager, Breonna, provides a sweet summary: "Our market is a patchwork of personalities. It's colorful, quirky, and charmingly unconventional, just like the people who gather there each week. Even the veggies show up in all their eclectic shapes and shades, as if they, too, know they belong to something special."

This is the Applegate Evening Market's sixth season and its third at the Lindsay Lodge and Restaurant. Market manager, Jaimy Wilkinson, has grown the market



Applegate Evening Market. Photo by Jaimy Wilkinson.

to include more than 30 vendors at peak season! The Lindsay Lodge lawn, along the Applegate River, has a new stage, picnic tables, and plenty of space for blankets and running around. Local nonprofits like A Greater Applegate, Jackson County Library Services, and Wild Oak Preschool will continue to provide resources and, in some cases, children's activities. Applegate Evening Concerts is scheduling the music. The chef demonstrations are moving inside the Lodge so that it will be easier for people to see and hear.

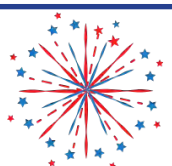
Jaimy is committed to seeing the market grow as a community space where the buying and selling process creates a level of socialization that transforms farmers markets from just another place to buy food to an engine for community life that goes beyond market hours. "Wednesday night regulars have made it part of their week," she notes, "and visitors are genuinely enchanted."

The Troon Sunday Summer Market

also features local farmers, artisans, and garden-to-guest lunches by Chef Carl Krause. At this weekend option, folks can sip a glass of wine in the garden while perusing local goods and enjoying live music. Market manager Natalie Tinker says, "I love our market because it's the perfect opportunity to slow down, enjoy a peaceful day in the tasting room garden, and connect with the incredible local farmers and makers. My favorite part is forming relationships with several of our consistent, weekly vendors." If you are a local farmer or artisan interested in participating, they have a limited number of vendor spots open. Contact natalie@troonvineyard.com for a vendor application.

In rural areas, where gathering spaces are few, local markets play a hugely important role in bringing people together. See you at the market!

Tracy Harding
Coordinator, A Greater Applegate Food and Farm Network



Happy Independence Day



OPINION

How the BLM promotes logging with euphemisms and greenwashing

BY MARTY PAULE

To justify industrial logging on our public lands, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) uses language that attempts to gloss over the environmental destruction left in the wake of its projects. Using a mixture of glib assurances about the beneficial outcome of their timber sales and a repertoire of euphemistic phrases, they aim to convince us that (a) BLM knows what it's doing, and (b) its management of forest health is based on science and land stewardship.

BLM just announced plans to log a billion board feet of forest in southwest Oregon, taking us back to harvest levels of the early 1960s. Expect a barrage of deceptive language.

For example, consider the language BLM uses to describe logging projects where a forlorn handful of trees per acre may remain. "Group selection logging," "regenerative harvest," and "variable retention harvest" are all attempts to rebrand what are essentially clearcuts.

BLM uses "active forest management" and "stewardship" as umbrella terms to cast a positive light on projects it claims will reduce fire risks and tree diseases. In reality, too many BLM projects achieve exactly the opposite by encouraging the rapid growth of ladder fuels after logging.

BLM describes commercial thinning projects, purportedly about removing overgrowth and snags, as "forest restoration." But in reality, many of these projects include significant logging in healthy, mature forests.

"Ecosystem health" and "forest health" are often invoked to justify heavy logging in healthy forests that contain snags, downed wood, and beetle-killed trees. The terms imply that the existence of dead and dying trees in

the forest is unhealthy, as opposed to being part of natural forest cycles.

The agency often uses the terms "wildfire mitigation" and "fuel reduction" to play on our legitimate fear of wildfires. But too often these terms are used to justify logging far away from homes, in deep forests full of commercially valuable trees.

Salvage logging: BLM uses this term to describe its current SOS and Doug Fir Mortality projects—another euphemism, since most of the logging is actually occurring in green, mature stands. By its own admission, BLM says it's necessary to underwrite salvage logging by generating income from commercially valuable, living timber. And to add insult to injury, BLM is looking the other way while local contractors sell off large quantities of oak and madrone—species not permitted in the SOS contracts.

The phrase "designation by prescription" suggests a carefully designed project. It actually means that BLM leaves the decisions of which trees to remove up to the logger, setting up an obvious conflict of interest. With no commercial value, dead trees offer no incentives to BLM contractors.

Having waded through many BLM documents that justify industrial logging, I find that the terminology often sounds more like that of an environmental organization than that of an agency determined to log the remaining forests of the Applegate Valley. Feel free to use your own language to let the BLM office in Medford know what you think about the agency's deforestation programs.

Marty Paule

Applegate Siskiyou Alliance
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BLM calls this Group Selection Logging. Part of the Sterling Sweeper Timber Sale—what was once a clearcut has since grown back into dense brush and stands of highly flammable young trees. Photo by Luke Ruediger.

Fighting fire with facts

What the science actually says about managing wildfires

BY RICH FAIRBANKS

I live in the Little Applegate. I use fire to manage my own land. I worked in fire management for many years. I have grown frustrated with the misinformation around fire. Since I follow the research pretty closely, I thought I would share the best available science on a topic that concerns Westerners.

We have solid science and decades of experience managing western wildfires. Yet fire policy is becoming as politically charged as the spotted-owl timber wars of the 1980s and 90s—ideology crowding out evidence at exactly the moment when getting this right matters most. So here, briefly, is what peer-reviewed research actually tells us.

Fire seasons are getting hotter and drier throughout the West. Since records began in 1895, July maximum temperatures in Medford have risen by two degrees. Two degrees sounds small—we just nudge the thermostat—but for a forest, it is a powerful drying force. Of the 20 largest wildfires in California's recorded history, 13 have occurred since 2002. The 2014 National Climate Assessment projected that by the 2080s, the area burned in the Northwest annually could quadruple. More fires, and more intense fires, are coming regardless of what we do today.

What doesn't help: large-scale salvage logging. After the 1987 Silver Fire, burned areas were logged and replanted. When the 2002 Biscuit Fire returned, those replanted plantations burned more severely than areas left alone—young conifers are not fire-resistant forests, but neatly arranged future fuel. Legislation that "streamlines" Forest Service rules also misses the mark: only 31 percent of the 2000 fire season's burn area was on National Forest land. Wildfires don't read ownership maps. And since fires thrive on small-diameter material—needles, twigs, branches under three inches—removing large trees actually substitutes fire-resistant timber for flammable brush.

What does help: thinning and prescribed burning. At least a dozen

studies confirm that selectively removing smaller trees, managing surface fuels, and retaining the oldest and largest trees significantly slow wildfire spread and reduce severity. Thousands of southwest Oregon landowners already practice this method—thin, pile, burn—to create defensible space. It works. So does reintroducing low-severity prescribed fire. Research shows that after a controlled burn, subsequent wildfires spread more slowly and damage vegetation far less, even under severe conditions. Roughly 50-60 percent of the Rogue Basin is mixed-conifer forests—all of it a candidate for this approach.

Building codes and zoning matter enormously, too. Southern California and southern France share the same Mediterranean vegetation and the same seasonal dry winds. France loses fewer than ten structures per year to wildfire; California lost 8,400 in one recent fire season. The difference is policy; France enforces strict zoning and fire-resistant building codes in high-risk zones. Screens on soffit vents and metal roofing—simple, affordable changes—make a measurable difference in whether a home survives.

The evidence points clearly in one direction—thin the understory, conduct prescribed burns, update building codes, and create real defensible space. These are not partisan positions. They are the findings of decades of peer-reviewed research. We cannot apply 20th-century solutions to 21st-century fire. The people living in fire country deserve a policy based on what actually works.

[Full citations available on request. Research sources include Abatzoglou & Williams (Univ. of Idaho); Cal Fire / NY Times 12-6-17; Miller et al., Ecosystems DOI 10.1007/s10021-008-9201-9; 2014 National Climate Assessment; Thompson et al., PNAS doi 10.1073/pnas.0700229104; Pacific Biodiversity Institute; Agee & Skinner, Forest Ecology and Management (2005); Brodie et al., Fire Ecology 20:17 (2024); Kocher & Butsic, Land 6(2):24 (2017).]

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THROUGH THE LEPIDOPTERAN LENS

Johnson's Hairstreak: Old-growth obligate

BY LINDA KAPPEN

Johnson's Hairstreak, *Callophrys johnsoni*, is a butterfly of the Lycaenidae family. Johnson's Hairstreaks are 1.5 inches. On the dorsal hindwing (DHW), both sexes are brown with two short tails that are white-tipped. The ventral hindwing (VHW) colors range from cocoa to chocolate brown and burnished chestnut with a few brown spots on the lower submarginal VHW. A thin white median line runs through the upper and lower VHW, with the lower hindwing line being more flattened in comparison to the zig-zagged line on the Thicket Hairstreak. The edges of the wings have a creamy to whitish fringe.

The host plant for the Johnson's Hairstreak is Western Dwarf Mistletoe, *Arceuthobium tsugense*. This mistletoe grows on old-growth western hemlocks, ponderosa pines, and some species of fir trees. Eggs are laid singly on the mistletoe, and the larvae overwinter. The Johnson's Hairstreak is single-brooded in the Pacific Northwest.

The Johnson's Hairstreak habitats are cool, moist old-growth conifer forests that have older forest trees surrounding old-growth stands. The habitat is similar to that of the Spotted Owl and other old-growth species of concern. Johnson's Hairstreak is dependent on old-growth forests in our Siskiyou and Klamath mountains, the coast



Johnson's Hairstreak at Oregon Caves National Monument. Photo by Linda Kappen

range, and, for distinct populations, the Blue Mountains of northeast Oregon and western Idaho. These types of habitats are critical to the survival of the Johnson's Hairstreak. Careful forest management of large areas around these habitats needs to be taken into serious consideration in preservation. This includes all understory plants, flowers, or bushes.

The Johnson's Hairstreak will spend much of its time in the forest canopy. Flying down from the canopy, they receive nutrients from spring-fed mud and nectar from understory plants. Some nectar plants are dogbane, pussytoes, wild strawberry, Oregon Grape, *Ceanothus velutinus* (commonly

known as Snowbrush *Ceanothus*), other *ceanothus* species, manzanitas, vine maple, and others.

Johnson's Hairstreak can be seen in flight from June through July. The Johnson's Hairstreak is classified as a species of concern in Oregon, as endangered in British Columbia, as a candidate for endangerment in Washington. Major threats to the Johnson's Hairstreak are logging, pesticide use, mistletoe management, windstorms, and wildfire. Hybridization and competition for habitat with the Thicket Hairstreak, which also uses the mistletoe, are of great concern as well. Limited logging for many acres around older forest stands and old-

growth stands would provide larger habitat areas for both species.

I have seen Johnson's Hairstreak only at Oregon Caves National Monument and Preserve on our yearly butterfly survey with the OCNM. Some researcher friends I know have seen them at Cascade Siskiyou National Monument and surrounding forested areas, Klamath County forests, forests surrounding the Oregon Caves National Monument, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Lassen National Forest, and Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest.

One fun fact is that the Thicket Hairstreak *Callophrys spinetorum* uses mistletoes in mature forests, as the Johnson's Hairstreak does. However, the Thicket Hairstreak can be two-brooded. Larvae of both species overwinter.

Much of the preferred habitat has been logged in many places. It will be a challenge here as more public lands are threatened with clearcut logging, on older successional forests, and old-growth logging. Hopefully, we will be able, as a public, to demand that our forests' health be taken seriously.

Linda Kappen
humbugkapps@hotmail.com



Linda Kappen.

Our amazing founder

BY JANEEN SATHRE

Some of you may know my mother because you have lived in the Applegate Valley a long time, as has she. She was the force behind the foundation of the McKee Bridge Historical Society (MBHS) in 1999, the reason we can still enjoy the oldest—well, tied for oldest—surviving covered bridge in Oregon. You may know Evelyn through some of the community organizations that make the Applegate Valley a wonderful place to live, such as Upper Applegate Grange #839. Maybe you know her because you own some of her artwork, or you have seen it displayed in its many forms in Jackson County libraries or at different fundraisers where she donated her work and her energy to raise money for a worthy cause. Maybe you have read her book, *Back in Time*, or enjoyed her stories in the *Applegater*. Maybe you just know her name because she will be celebrating her 100th birthday in June this year!

What you might not know is that my mother is still very active in the community and has chosen to celebrate her 100 years by helping two of her "closest-to-her-heart" organizations



Evelyn Byrne Williams working on the pattern on March 31. Photo by Dan Sathre.

by working in one of her favorite art mediums, fabric. She is designing a large wall hanging to be created for Grange #839, with the help of MBHS members.

Evelyn was inducted as a member of Grange #839 in 1940 and was active until the Oregon State Grange pulled the charter in 2011. And she is currently a member of the revitalized Grange—that's 71 years of commitment.

The wall hanging will depict Applegate Lake and the stunning Red Buttes. The quilt requires many different layers of artwork from the concept, drawing, and pattern to the choice of fabrics, layout, and

sewing them all together. Thank you to the many helping hands of members of MBHS and Grange #839. This is a truly unique project that I can't wait to see in its finished form on display in the Grange Hall.

Please join MBHS and Grange #839 at the celebration of Evelyn's 100th birthday—June 20, 2-4 pm at 3901 Upper Applegate Road—and enjoy cake, ice cream, and an exhibit of Evelyn's artistry and community service. What might you give as a gift? A donation to McKee Bridge Historical Society, the Upper Applegate Grange, and/or the *Applegater*! If you would like to help make the quilt, send a note to mckeebridge1917@gmail.com.

Loveyou, Evelyn Byrne Williams (Mom).
Janeen Sathre
Advisor to the MBHS Board
mckeebridge1917@gmail.com
www.mckeebridge.org



Applegate Lake inspiration photo. Photo by Val Vilbig.

■ SUSIE BECKHAM

Continued from page 11.

Work? Maybe. Susie loved her job. "I loved being with the public," she says, but it wasn't just "the public." It was the Applegate family. "I have worked some at the Jacksonville and Ruch libraries," she says. "That's similar, but this is Applegate." Enough said.

Susie's own family has been in the Applegate since 1909, when her father's parents moved from Sawyer's Bar, in the Klamath Mountains, to the ranch on Brown Road, where her father was born in 1918, where Susie and her two siblings grew up, and where she has lived since 2005, when she and her husband moved there from Portland. (Her brother and sister have been living on the property as well.) It has long been a working ranch, with cattle, ducks, chickens—all the storybook features of a ranch.

Although it was emotionally difficult for Susie to sell the property, she recognized that the storybook aspect is fine for onlookers, but that in reality it was getting more and more difficult for her to run the ranch—caring for the cattle, irrigating the land, and seeing to all the daily and seasonal tasks. Then, just as she was beginning to think seriously about joining her daughter and grandchildren in the Midwest, she was approached by Jack and Allie DuFour, from the East Coast, who said they heard she might be interested in selling her place. The DuFours, with their two little boys, had found the Applegate on a map and thought it looked like the best place in the country to live, so they moved here. When she met them, Susie knew at once that they were the right people to take care of her land. The sale was made, and Susie began the long process of leaving a place where she had so many ties.

Perhaps Christine sums up Susie's importance to the Applegate best: "She is the most gracious person ever! She embodies neighborliness."

Diana Coogle
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BIRD EXPLORER

First graders find their spark birds in the Applegate Valley

BY HEATHER PALADINI

In the birding world, a spark bird is the one that ignites a lifelong curiosity—the bird that makes you stop, look closer, and realize just how fascinating the animal kingdom truly is.

Three years ago, for first-grade students at Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS), a pile of feathers on a nature walk sparked that moment of curiosity. That moment then flamed into a full-fledged bird project, one that now includes field observation, writing and research, visual art, and even the publication of a student-authored book, *Birds of the Applegate Valley*.

“Birds,” says first-grade teacher Jennifer Brown, who was with those students when they found the feathers, “have a way of threading themselves through nearly everything.” Birds often appear as a natural point of connection for students as they write, paint, make outdoor observations, or learn new concepts.

Many new birders of any age find themselves following these and other creative pursuits as they learn their birds. Brown, who received her first pair of binoculars just this past winter, describes herself as an amateur birder, learning alongside her students. That shared sense of discovery has become

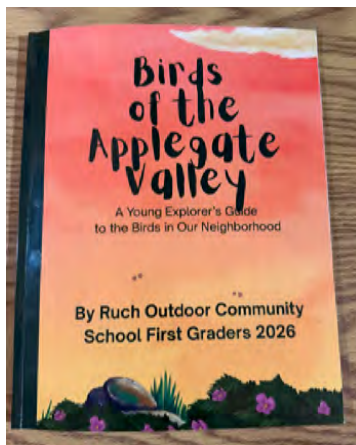
part of the classroom culture: teacher and students together noticing the birds, naming them, and wondering about them.

If the Applegate’s birds of spring and summer fascinate you—their songs and twitters, their brilliant colors as they flash through the landscape, their varying sizes and beaks

and life habits—think for a moment how exciting it was for the first-grade students to choose their own spark birds this year. With the help of the ROCS art teacher, Katie Walker, they created artistic representations of their birds. These birds were then installed in a three-dimensional art

exhibit, shown perched atop real branches in a stunning and colorful display at the Ruch Art and Wellness Fair last April. Emphasizing the importance of these birds to the students’ learning was a backdrop featuring a photo of each student’s spark bird and something the student had learned about it, handwritten.

It is exciting to see those young people maintaining their enthusiasm for birds as they grow in their education. Brown describes students returning again and again to share bird sightings, stories, and questions, as if



A display of students' spark birds. Photo by Heather Paladini.

the classroom has extended beyond its physical boundaries. One student, she recalls, announced his intention to become a falconer. Two years later, he still stops by to share what he has learned about falcons.

As many birders can testify, once a spark bird has ignited interest, the pursuit can take many forms, as it has at ROCS: a maintained bird bath still in its earliest iteration, a window feeder tended by students, and, in the future, Brown hopes, a student-led community project to build a sustainable water feature on the school grounds. Each project builds on the last, slowly expanding what it means to care for and observe birds in a shared environment.

The culmination of this year’s bird studies and projects was *Birds of the*

Applegate Valley, a student-published book available for \$8 through the Book Patch, an on-demand publishing company. Brown plans to direct proceeds toward future student-led bird projects.

In a valley rich with birdlife and seasonal movement, this classroom project becomes one more quiet thread in the larger flyway story, where feathers on a trail can open into years of inquiry and where learning itself begins to take flight.

Heather Paladini
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Birds of the Applegate Valley is available through The Book Patch at tinyurl.com/applegatebirds. Purchasing a copy helps support next year's student-led bird project.

Farewell to the AVHS Museum

JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

The Applegate Valley Historical Society (AVHS) museum was successfully disassembled on Saturday, April 11. The roof was cut in half and lifted off the building onto a flatbed trailer. Then, the hand-hewn logs were taken off the building piece by piece and loaded onto the trailer. (See photo on page 17.) Finally, the dismantled building was moved to a weather-protected facility.

Many of you have commented on the open space in our Applegate neighborhood where the museum had stood since the 1990s.

The AVHS lost the court case about our legal right to use the land (see the article in the winter issue). It was a hard

lesson about the importance of precise recordkeeping for a nonprofit. Since the land donated to us is no longer ours, we are planning to move the museum to a new location. We continue to seek funds to help pay the costs of all this upheaval. Our attorney’s fee is over \$22,000, and we are making small payments at this time. Thank you to those who have offered donations; every single dollar helps preserve and set this historic building on a safe piece of ground for everyone to enjoy.

Many thanks to Joshua Morrison for spearheading and planning the deconstruction and moving project—volunteering his time, organizing a crew of five plus equipment, and figuring out

how to mark the logs for dismantling, storing, and then reconstructing in the future. Due to Morrison’s precise planning, the building was dismantled in half a day.

Also, thanks to the AVHS lunch crew of four, who provided a great meal on the day of deconstruction, with a big thanks to Larry Hogan for creating sumptuous BBQ burgers to go with great side dishes.

AVHS is researching locations for a new home for the building, starting with several local offers that have already come to us. We look forward to evaluating potential locations for the 1860s hand-hewn building.

Watch for programs and gatherings in the summer months. If you become a member of AVHS, you will receive a newsletter each month to keep you informed. The working-and-planning group meets at 10 am on the first Saturday of each month at the Applegate Library. You are welcome to join us. We welcome ideas, suggestions, support, and questions. You can contact



Removing one log at a time. Photo by Barbara Niedermeyer.



Stacking the logs. Getting closer with the crew of 6. Photo by Barbara Niedermeyer.

Barbara Niedermeyer at bnkoalsrkool@gmail.com or Janis Mohr-Tipton at the email address below.

Thank you to all who have supported us and helped us maintain a positive outlook as we search for the future home of our AVHS museum.

Janis Mohr-Tipton
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Mastication harms native plant and bird habitat and increases flammable invasive plants

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

For many Applegate residents, the wildflowers, birds, butterflies, and wildlife that inhabit their land bring joy to their lives. There are many ways to reduce fuel for fire safety near homes and communities, but some fuel-reduction methods have more negative impacts on native plants and wildlife than others do. Some fuel-reduction methods can enhance native plant communities, while others can do irreparable harm, like mastication.

Masticators come in various sizes, from attachments on excavators or skid steers to smaller remote-controlled units. They drive through forests or chaparral and grind, shred, or flail trees and shrubs into mulch. The machinery doesn't remove fuels; it just reorganizes vertical fuels into horizontal fuels on the ground. Masticators save money because they can work faster than hand crews, but the impacts and results are not the same as those from hand crews on foot with chainsaws.

Mastication of forests and shrub communities with machines can be detrimental to native plant habitats, especially understory wildflowers and grasses. The tread of masticators, even with rubber tread, churns up and often compacts the soil and damages or kills plants. As the machines drive over and churn up the soil, they kill ground-nesting bees, including bumble bees, or pupae of butterflies buried under the soil surface, along with many other species that live within the soil biome.

Mastication can alter plant composition and set the stage for a conversion of native plants to nonnative plants in a way that can often never be undone, affecting many



Remote-controlled masticator tread tracks damage soils and chaparral bird habitat on private land in the Little Applegate in fall 2025. All native vegetation was masticated and turned into wood chips in the bare area in the photo. Photo by Marion Hadden.

species that once relied on that habitat.

In a study titled *Decade-Long Plant Community Responses to Shrubland Fuel Hazard Reduction*, the authors found that “the number of non-native plants, including non-native annual grasses, was higher after mastication treatments compared to fire treatments after 10 years.” The authors of the study found that the native plant community that existed prior to mastication was damaged by the machine work and that an explosion of nonnative plants colonized the disturbed soil after mastication.

The increase of nonnative grasses, like cheatgrass, following mastication can actually counteract any gains in fire safety that might be achieved from removing trees and shrubs because nonnative annual grasses are highly flammable and are fueling fast-moving fires across the West. The study's authors explained, “Non-native annual grasses increase

fuel continuity between natural areas and homes, increase how quickly fire spreads, and lengthen the fire season by drying earlier than native species. Thus, non-native annual grass invasion and persistence in chaparral is detrimental to people and biodiversity in the WUI [Wildland Urban Interface].”

The conversion of native plant communities, they argue, is actually increasing fire frequency due to highly flammable and abundant nonnative annual grasses. This is a concern across the West right now as cheatgrass and ripgut brome are spreading quickly, especially in areas that have experienced soil disturbance.

The authors also concluded that mastication increased buckbrush populations ten years after treatment compared to control areas because of the solar heat intensified by sparse shrub cover, which favors buckbrush seed germination.

Another study, *Understory Vegetation Response to Mechanical Mastication and Other Fuels Treatments in a Ponderosa Pine Forest*, reached similar conclusions: “Some potential drawbacks to this treatment include an increase of non-native species and stimulation of shrub seed germination, which could alter ecosystem functions and compromise fire hazard reduction in the long-term.”

Naturalists joke when you're in Nevada, “Don't look down,” because the native plants have been overrun by noxious weeds from livestock grazing, and it's best to just look up at the scenic mountains instead of looking down at unsightly weeds. Increasingly, the same can also be true in the Applegate in areas where masticators have been. You don't want to look down and see cheatgrass, medusahead, or ripgut brome where shooting stars, fawn lilies, and paintbrush once grew.

Mastication negatively affects birds, too. A study titled *Chaparral Bird Community Responses to Prescribed Fire and Shrub Removal in Three Management Seasons* found that although bird species diversity and abundance rebounded after one-time use of prescribed fires, most birds never returned to masticated sites. Mastication reduced the number of bird species by about 50 percent and reduced the total number of birds by about 60 percent.

Better noncommercial fuel-reduction methods exist that don't have the same negative ecological impacts. Prescribed fire and hand crews do a better job than machines.

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Wildfire-risk reduction: A balancing act

BY NATHAN GEHRES

For many of us who built our homes and livelihoods in the Applegate, the threat of uncharacteristically severe wildfire has increasingly eroded our financial security and peace of mind. Fire exclusion and other land-management decisions over the past 150 years, as well as local population growth, have heightened wildfire risk and ballooned the number of residents exposed to that risk. The resources available to mitigate wildfire hazards are limited. Therefore,

planning and prioritization are key to using resources efficiently and effectively.

There is some debate around which activities would be most effective in reducing the wildfire risk in the Applegate, specifically, landscape fuels reduction versus home hardening. In an ideal world, there would be an “all of the above” option that would allow for unlimited investment in every method of reducing wildfire risk, but unfortunately, that's not the world we live in. In my opinion, the goal of wildfire protection projects should be to do the most good for the most people, especially as the majority of these projects are funded by tax dollars.

First, let's consider the value of home hardening. Elevated wildfire risk has resulted in homeowners' insurance being more difficult and expensive to secure for many Applegate residents, creating anxiety around what the future of home ownership will look like locally. Home equity is extremely important for most landowners' financial well-being. In addition to the material value, homes have sentimental value that can't be quantified.



Pictured is a FAE RCU 75 rubber-tracked, remote-controlled masticator used by BurnBot on Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council (APWC) fuels reduction projects in the Upper Applegate. Photo by Nathan Gehres, APWC.

Understandably, many homeowners would like assistance hardening their homes to survive a wildfire. Some solutions can be accomplished relatively cheaply and easily, such as installing one-eighth-inch diameter metal mesh over soffits and vents to block embers, using strips of that same mesh as gutter guards, removing bark mulch, and replacing deck boards adjacent to the house's exterior wall with metal grates. Other

solutions are much more expensive, such as installing a metal roof, double-paned windows, or fiber cement siding.

As a grant writer and project manager, I hesitate to use tax dollars for capital improvements on private homes, even to reduce wildfire risk. After all, just because a home can survive a wildfire doesn't mean it will be a safe refuge for sheltering in place: superheated gases, **See WILDFIRE-RISK REDUCTION, page 17.**



The Fire Behavior Triangle depicts the three factors that influence wildfire behavior. Created by Bella Witherspoon, Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative.

THE SISKIYOU MOUNTAIN ADVOCATE

Liquidating the assets of the Applegate Valley on BLM lands

BY LUKE RUEDIGER

In some ways, my column in the *Applegater* has become a quarterly update on BLM logging projects either proposed or implemented in our watershed, along with their mounting environmental impacts. Trust me, this is not by design. I would rather be writing about wildflowers, rare conifer species, biodiversity, old-growth forests, hiking trails, and the importance of the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion. Yet, the region I have loved my entire life is more threatened than it has been in many decades as the BLM attempts to log off our natural heritage, our viewsheds, our watersheds, our beautiful forests, and our favorite recreation areas.

Forests on the eastern face of Ben Johnson Mountain in the Apple Saws Timber Sale, and on the western face of Woodrat Mountain in the Holcomb Hollow Timber Sale, are being heavily impacted by the BLM's Strategic Operations for Safety (SOS) logging project. This project has permanently damaged the skyline of Ruch, as it has logged green forests and left deep yarding scars on the slopes above Cantrall Buckley Park. Similar impacts are occurring on the face of Woodrat Mountain near the area's world-famous paragliding sites. Further operations are slated for the community's beloved East Applegate Ridge Trail and areas above Sterling Creek.

Yet, the SOS Project is unfortunately just the beginning, as the agency has already proposed another 8,000 acres of similar logging in the Douglas Fir Mortality Complex logging project. This project would log virtually all remaining mature forests, along with trees affected by recent beetle mortality, on Sterling Creek, in the Little Applegate River canyon, on

lower Yale Creek, Grouse Creek, and in the Upper Applegate Valley above East Side Road and McKee Bridge.

Additionally, the BLM is proposing to revise the current Resource Management Plans for western Oregon and intends to quadruple timber production and increase clearcut logging to levels not seen since the 1980s. Nationally, the BLM has also proposed two new Categorical Exclusions (CEs) that, together, would rubber-stamp virtually any logging project they choose to implement without environmental analysis, public comment, or public disclosure of environmental impacts.

These CEs would allow the BLM to authorize logging projects on up to 5,000 acres, or 7.8 square miles at a time. They would also allow the agency to build up to five miles of new permanent road and up to 12.5 miles of "temporary" road per project. The BLM could then use these Categorical Exclusions an unlimited number of times, and on an unlimited number of acres, logging living, green trees and forests, as well as forests affected by fire, beetle, or drought-induced mortality.

Under a CE, the agency claims its project will have "no significant impacts on the human environment," which would require a more detailed analysis and public involvement process. Yet recent projects implemented in the Applegate Valley under the current CE for salvage logging, which limits logging to 250 acres and 0.5 miles of new "temporary" road per project, have created significant, long-lasting



Applegate residents on an Applegate Siskiyou Alliance field trip to the BLM's Apple Saws Timber Sale above Cantrall-Buckley Park.

impacts. These include clearcut logging scars, extensive living-tree removal, new road construction, the implementation of unauthorized yarding techniques, and the triggering of major landslides. The CE also included the conversion of whole Riparian Reserve Zones into skid trails where stream corridors were bulldozed, filled with debris, and denuded of all vegetation. The agency is now proposing projects 20 times the size of these recent, highly damaging Applegate Valley timber sales, and it proposes doing so with less transparency, less accountability, and less public involvement than at any time in recent history.

During the confirmation hearings for Secretary of the Interior Doug

Burgham, he clarified his views on our public lands as financial "assets," referring to the resources on public lands as "America's balance sheet."

Clearly, the agency views the forests of the Applegate as part of that balance sheet, and the Medford District BLM has begun logging at a scale and intensity not seen in decades, quickly liquidating the "assets" of our region. This increase in industrial logging has real impacts on the environment, on fire risks, and on economies like ours in the Applegate. Those impacts are not being adequately considered by high-level BLM bureaucrats in D.C. or local land managers at the Medford District BLM.

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Catch it early: Two invasive plants to know along the Applegate

BY LUKE WIMMER

Two invasive plants in the mustard family are spreading through riparian areas along the Applegate River, and the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council is asking the community to help us track any known populations.

Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) has a long history with humans. It was the primary source of blue dye for centuries, used to wrap Egyptian mummies, traded across



Isatis tinctoria: Dyer's Woad. Photo by Bob Case.

medieval Europe, and worn into battle by Celtic warriors. That same hardiness that made it a reliable crop is what makes it a formidable weed outside its native range.

The plant is a biennial, forming a low rosette of blue-green leaves in its first year and bolting to 2-4 feet in its second, with clusters of small, bright yellow flowers in spring. Seeds develop in distinctive dark, teardrop-shaped pods. It thrives in disturbed soils along streambanks and produces hundreds of seeds per plant. Large infestations have already taken hold along the Rogue and Klamath Rivers, and the Applegate shares many of the same conditions.

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) has an interesting backstory of its own. European settlers brought it to North America intentionally as a food plant. The leaves are edible and taste like garlic, and the plant was

used medicinally for centuries. It has since become one of the most aggressive woodland invasives in North America, spreading rapidly in shaded riparian areas and releasing chemicals into the soil that disrupt the mycorrhizal networks that native trees depend on. It's identifiable by its small white flowers, heart-shaped leaves with toothed edges, and the distinct garlic smell when leaves are crushed.

Garlic mustard has been found along Cheney Creek and the lower few miles of the Applegate for some time, but recent sightings upstream near Ruch suggest it may be moving further into the watershed. Like dyer's woad, it's much easier to eradicate before it gets established.

The Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council has been surveying and hand-pulling dyer's woad in riparian areas since 2016. Thanks to grant funding from the Oregon Department of Agriculture, we're expanding that work along 21 miles of the Applegate River from Williams Creek to the confluence with the Rogue. We're partnering with the Rogue Aquatic Invasives Network (RAIN), the Applegate Paddlers Club, and Ruch Outdoor Community



Garlic Mustard in flower.
Photo by Kyle Strauss.

School (ROCS) to cover as much ground as possible. All removal is done by hand, with no herbicides.

If you spot either of these plants along the river, on a trail, or on your property, please let us know. Tracking where these plants are showing up is just as important as removing them, and community sightings help us stay ahead of new infestations.

Contact me at Luke@apwc.info or visit www.applegatepartnership.org.

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Planning Ahead for a Dry Year: Is Your Well Ready for Summer?

This winter has been unusually dry, and with the lack of snowpack across the region, many experts are predicting that water tables may be lower than normal this year.

For homeowners who rely on wells, that could mean reduced well production just when water demand is at its highest — during the heat of summer.

If you've ever wondered whether your well will keep up with irrigation, animals, gardening, or increased household use, now is the time to start thinking ahead.

One option many homeowners are turning to is a water holding tank system. Holding tanks store water produced by your well so it's available when you need it most. These systems can store anywhere from 1,200 to 2,500 gallons of water, helping ensure your family has a reliable supply even during periods of heavy use.

At Quinn's Well Pump & Filtration Service, we install dependable holding tank systems designed specifically for each property. Options include above-ground holding tanks as well as buried concrete tanks, with multiple sizes available depending on your home's water needs.

A properly designed storage system can help protect your home from seasonal shortages while providing consistent and reliable water throughout the summer months.

Rather than waiting until the heat of summer when demand is highest, homeowners are encouraged to plan ahead and evaluate their well systems now.

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in non-emergencies, and we strongly encourage families to contact us the moment a hospital admission occurs to help avoid costly mistakes and ensure the best possible outcome.

Jamie Callahan is a respected advocate and leader in senior care across Southern Oregon. As Founder and CEO of Team Senior, she built the organization on a commitment to honest guidance, personalized support, and doing what is right for families—every time.

Her work has also helped shape the industry. Jamie drafted the original legislation that lead to Oregon House Bill 2661 (2016–2017), promoting transparency and accountability in senior referral services. Her advocacy continues to focus on protecting seniors and ensuring families have access to trustworthy, ethical support.

Today, Jamie leads a team of dedicated professionals who bring both expertise and heart to every family they serve.

Please always call the main line at Team Senior if you are unsure of who to call. Our team is adding two additional people in the next 6 weeks, so this will evolve: (541) 295-8230



Linda Griessner brings over 12 years of experience in senior living, including leadership roles as an Executive Director and opening a Memory Care community. What truly sets Linda apart is her ability to act quickly in times of crisis. She is often at the hospital bedside with families,

helping them make urgent decisions with clarity and confidence—guidance that can protect both the health of their loved one and their financial well-being. Families appreciate her calm presence, honesty, and ability to find real solutions when time matters most.

(408) 656-7001 / Medford proper / RRMC, Doctors Offices and Skilled Nursing Facilities



Veronica Noble is known for her exceptional organization, timeliness, and follow-through. Families and professionals alike consistently praise her for making complex situations feel manageable. With a background spanning senior living and medical offices, she brings both

knowledge and heart to her work. Veronica is deeply committed to making sure every family receives not just answers, but the full level of advocacy they deserve—ensuring nothing falls through the cracks.

(541) 941-6066 / All Providence businesses & The VA / Medford



Cherie Linnemeyer serves seniors and families in Roseburg and Josephine County with a warm, relationship-focused approach. With over six years of experience in senior advocacy, she is known for truly listening and helping families feel at ease during difficult transitions. Whether she

is connecting someone to benefits, care resources, or safe living options, Cherie's goal is always the same: to make sure every person feels heard, respected, and supported.

(541) 761-3542 / Grants Pass & Roseburg

Lori Camacho brings energy, positivity, and a deep passion for serving seniors and veterans. As Executive Director of Club Sixty, she is widely respected for creating a strong sense of community and connection. Within Team Senior, Lori plays a key supporting role—often working behind the scenes and alongside the team to help “wrap around” families with the care and resources they need. Her heart for service and team-first mindset make her an invaluable part of the mission.

Together, Team Senior provides compassionate, knowledgeable guidance during some of life's most important transitions.

Call the main line (541) 295-8230

Club Sixty is a senior social club in Grants Pass where everything is FREE and paid for by Team Senior. Club Sixty offers Tai Chi, Chair Yoga, Games, Line Dancing and more. If you are calling for information about Club Sixty – please call Lori directly at (541) 441-1426 or visit our website at www.clubsixty.org

How We Can Help You

Navigating senior care can feel overwhelming—but you don't have to do it alone. Team Senior helps families throughout Southern Oregon identify the right care solutions based on individual needs, preferences, and financial considerations.

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Our role is to listen, educate, and advocate—helping you make informed decisions with confidence. Our services come at no cost to families.

Why Expertise Matters

After more than a decade serving families under the Team Senior name, one thing is clear: no one should navigate long-term care decisions alone.

Even as professionals, we are learning every day. The landscape changes quickly, and missing just one detail can lead to costly or unsafe outcomes. Many organizations only share information that benefits them—not always what is best for you.

Having a trusted, experienced team ensures you receive honest, unbiased guidance focused entirely on your needs. At Team Senior, we stand beside you every step of the way—bringing clarity, advocacy, and peace of mind when it matters most.

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Photo by Michelle McAfee

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WILDFIRE-RISK REDUCTION

Continued from page 15.

small particulates, and a lack of oxygen are still serious dangers.

So, how do we identify strategic treatments, and how do these treatments impact your home? We look at the science of fire behavior and how fires move across the landscape.

Historically, Indigenous burning practices and natural fires rejuvenated the landscape at least once a decade, but more than a century of wildfire exclusion has resulted in unnatural amounts of fuels and overstocked, unhealthy forests. Science demonstrates that we need to restore regular patterns of fire, which we can mimic with prescribed fire. But first, we need to reduce that excess accumulation of fuels on the landscape and around homes in order to safely return good fire to the land.

Context matters to the community. We don't intend to reduce fuel loading on every acre. Local scientific research demonstrates that 70 percent of wildfire risk can be mitigated by treating 40 percent of the landscape when those treatments are done strategically.

Fire behavior is determined by three components: weather (beyond our influence), topography (our beloved mountains and valleys), and fuels. Fires can be driven by strong winds; they can run up steep slopes and intensify when fuels are too dense. Treatments in the wildland-urban interface will lessen the likelihood that wildfire will transfer between properties and will help protect egress and ingress routes for the evacuation of residents and safe staging of firefighting personnel.

Another important consideration for fuel reduction in the Applegate is firefighter safety. Too many snags pose threats to hand crews and limit the options for fighting a fire. The 2024 Upper Applegate Fire grew larger while crews were unable to access the fire due to these hazards.

Fuels-reduction work also provides social and economic benefits: Year-round employment opportunities for firefighters keep their skills sharp, allow crews to stay together, and maintain our local workforce of talented folks.

When determining how to allocate our limited tax dollars for reducing the risk of wildfire, it's important to keep in mind that we can protect more lives, of residents and firefighters, by reducing landscape fuels than we can through hardening individual homes.

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THE GRAPES OF CATH

Ancient roots and modern innovation

BY CATHY A. RODGERS

The pioneering spirit of historic Applegate, where settlers carved new paths while honoring the rhythms of the land, lives on today in its vineyards. Two wineries—Quady North and Troon—demonstrate how the future of wine may lie in both cutting-edge sustainability and ancient winemaking traditions. Here, innovation and history are not opposing forces—they coexist.

For Quady North, land stewardship has long been a central mission. They are now taking sustainability even further by addressing one of the industry's highest environmental costs, the glass bottle. Glass bottles account for a significant portion of wine's carbon footprint, largely due to the energy required to manufacture and transport them. Quady North was southern Oregon's first winery to partner with Revino, a company leading the reusable-bottle trend by replacing traditional single-use bottles with durable glass bottles designed to be collected, cleaned, and reused multiple times. By eliminating the need to constantly manufacture new bottles, energy consumption and transportation emissions are drastically reduced.

Quady North began collecting bottles in 2024 and now serves as a Revino Collection Hub, accepting returns from customers and other wineries. They offer a \$1 credit toward future wine purchases for every bottle returned. "If we truly believe in stewardship, we have to look at every part of the process," says owner Herb Quady. "It's not enough to farm biodynamically if the packaging and distribution still carry a heavy environmental footprint." The reusable bottle program represents a forward-thinking approach to an industry that has historically relied on disposable packaging.

For Quady, innovation is not about chasing trends—it's about aligning every decision with the health of the land. The wineries Troon, Dwell, and Schultz are also participating in the recycling program.

While these wineries are looking toward the future of sustainable packaging, Troon Vineyard is simultaneously reaching into the past. Under the guidance of winemaker Nate Wall, Troon has embraced amphora winemaking—one of the oldest fermentation methods in the history of wine. Amphorae are large clay vessels that have been used for millennia in ancient Mediterranean winemaking cultures.

Unlike oak barrels, amphorae allow a slow and natural exchange of oxygen



through their porous clay walls. The result is often wines with remarkable texture and complexity. "These vessels have been used for thousands of years for a reason," Nate says. "They create wines with incredible energy and texture that still stay true to the fruit." Aging in oak barrels does something to wine like what using spices does to your cooking, whereas amphorae are neutral-tasting vessels, "letting the vineyard speak more clearly," Nate says, "and allowing fermentation to unfold in a natural, undisguised way."



Riley, Troon Intern, checks the wine in the amorph process. Photo by Nate Wall.

For Nate, who is deeply committed to regenerative farming, the method fits perfectly with Troon's philosophy. As the vineyard is farmed with a focus on soil health and biodiversity, the winery itself seeks to work with nature rather than control it. By building a healthy farm ecosystem through biodynamic regenerative practices—using bird boxes, raptor perches, and pollinator habitats—Troon Winery has created a habitat in which the wildlife has returned and the land is "abuzz" with the symphony of nature thriving. Amphora winemaking fits right in.

Despite the different approaches of Quady North and Troon—one pioneering new sustainability technologies and the other reviving ancient winemaking techniques—the two wineries share a common commitment to the land. Both practice biodynamic farming and view their farms as living ecosystems rather than production facilities. Cover crops, biodiversity, and soil health are essential parts of their work, helping to create resilient and expressive vineyards. The goal is not simply to grow grapes, but to nurture a thriving landscape that can sustain itself for generations.

The story of wine in the Applegate is still unfolding, but its direction is clear. By combining the wisdom of ancient practices with new sustainability initiatives, wineries like Troon and Quady North are redefining what modern winemaking can be. Their efforts demonstrate that progress does not mean abandoning tradition, nor does honoring the past require resisting innovation. In the Applegate, the old and the new work together, just as they always have. In that balance, the region continues its pioneering legacy, crafting wines that reflect both the land and the evolving vision of those who care for it.

Cathy Rodgers
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Grief and gratitude; fire and water

BY HAYRIYA HEIDI A. HANSEN

Gratitude and grief, life and death, white and black, the yin and the yang of this existence—daily, we move through emotions and feelings. In our lives, we have ample opportunities to be curious, to acknowledge, process, and resolve these conscious and unconscious sensations. We also have abundant chances to numb, deaden, ghost, and avoid the depth of our beings. How do you choose to respond or react?

Psychologists generally agree on five core emotions—joy, sadness, anger, fear, and disgust—which are caused by chemicals in our brains releasing a quick, often as little as a six-second, psychological reaction to stimuli. In contrast, feelings are subjective and conscious. Around 135 words can express our feelings, which are slower to develop and much longer-lasting than the five main emotions.

Both emotions and feelings are amplified during a medical or life-altering crisis. The effects can linger for days, weeks, months, and even years, resulting in a feeling of being stuck. Persistent grief, sadness, or anger, lack of motivation, trouble sleeping, and an inability to concentrate are some signs of unresolved grief. Sometimes the best action is to seek help, whether from a personal counselor or by joining a grief group. The Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance (SOLADA) can support you in finding a grief group; there are many in our region. While staying stuck is an option, the intense, persistent sadness can impair your health, dissolve friendships, and threaten family relations. Seeking support can help you join the living once again. After all, you are still alive; one day, your own death will come. So be here now!

Some people need deeper one-on-one assistance. Others, feeling the lasting effects of the death of a loved one or perhaps contemplating their own death, or who are just curious about any aspect related to dying, might appreciate talking openly with others who are willing to discuss the taboo subject of death. Those folks are encouraged to attend one of SOLADA's five monthly death cafes offered throughout Jackson and Josephine Counties. Again, death cafes are not designed as bereavement or therapy sessions. They increase awareness of death in a supportive, nonjudgmental environment to help people make the

most of their finite lives. Reducing fear by normalizing the conversation around death opens the space for sharing fears, stories, and questions. Please join one of our monthly offerings in Grants Pass, Williams, Ruch, Medford, or Ashland. Visit solada.org for more specific information.

The Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance was pleased to serve more than 120 local folks at our four-month-long Community Death Care Workshop series, which was offered in three southern Oregon locations. Participants were appreciative of the program ("Wonderful program, superior information"; "Excellent; clear and complete"; "Loved all the info; presenters were excellent, compassionate and articulate"; "Questions answered in a timely and respectful manner"...). And all were grateful for the amazing collaborators who came forward. SOLADA offers many thanks to Senior Advocate Solutions, The Forest Conservation Burial Ground, Bristol Hospice, Cascades of Grants Pass, End-of-Life Choices Oregon, Hull and Hull Funeral Directors, and Litwiller-Simonsen Funeral Home for sharing information and expertise about their work in our communities. Also, big thanks to the venues that allowed us to host our events at their facilities: Peace House in Ashland, Center for Spiritual Living in Grants Pass, and Pacifica, A Garden in the Siskiyou, in Williams.

Like fire and water, the themes of this issue of the Applegater, grief and gratitude are part of our lives. Grief and gratitude are embedded in our bones. The Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance will continue with our mission to promote positive death literacy in word and action. We believe that by consciously living (and consciously dying), we can increase our capacity to serve and care for each other and for our planet. In this way, witnessing each other and our planet more fully, we allow the feelings and emotions of grief and gratitude to move. Not being stuck, we are more fully alive and present.

We look forward to seeing each of you at one of our events.

Wishing you and yours all the richness of this precious life.

Hayriya Heidi A. Hansen
(541) 787-7490
soladaoregon@gmail.com



Nate Wall making wine using the traditional amorphae clay vessel. Photo by Cathy Rodgers.



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Got News?

The *Applegater* welcomes your 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 write-up and photos to gater@applegater.org. Thanks! See you in the *Applegater*...

••• BIZBITS •••

BY DIANA COOGLE

Born Again Antiques & Things and Pacific Wonderland Herbs, neighboring businesses in the Sunshine Plaza in Ruch, report that this year they installed an inside doorway portal so customers can easily go from one business to the other. This way, as one customer put it, you can browse new-to-you old things, then, in a few steps, find something to make you new!

Debbie Sheppard, Born Again Antiques & Things
 Tuesday-Saturday, 11-4
 bornagaininoregon@gmail.com

Christian Marks, Pacific Wonderland
 Tuesday-Friday, 11-4
 pacificwonderlandherbs@gmail.com

Diana Coogle
 diana@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.

CHAIR'S REPORT

BY DIANA COOGLE

The *Applegater* is developing a new logo! Alyssa Prophet, of Prophet Solutions and our Jackson County ad rep, designed it. The board, of course, had to approve it, and there were, of course, differences of opinion about which design was best, so it's still, of course, in progress. But we're close enough to agreement that we can promise to show it to you in the fall issue.

AND—we have, or will have soon, a new website, which Alyssa is also designing. It should be ready for you to visit by the time you receive this issue or shortly thereafter.

When our longtime and generous webmaster, Joe Lavine, told us he wanted to retire from that job (see article on page 1), we thought it was a good time just to revamp the whole thing. We are excited about the new site, which has the same address: applegater.org. We hope you'll visit it soon and often. For those of you who love us because we're a print source and haven't caved in to the digital age, don't worry. Print will always be our first emphasis.

We can't say emphatically enough how much we appreciate Joe's work to keep our website up-to-date and workable for so many years—ever since he developed it in the first place, decades ago.

While I'm handing out kudos, I'll give special and heartfelt recognition, again, to our treasurer, Roger Wirth, who has spent hours and hours and hours straightening out the tangled mess of our finances and financial records and establishing a workable process for handling ad sales. Along those lines, thanks to Alyssa Prophet, too, who helped create that process.

And then there is the thank-you to our volunteers—writers, contributors, photographers, columnists, distributors, and others, without whom there would be no *Applegater*. Last year's volunteer thank-you party got waylaid (organizational problems), but we are pursuing it again with renewed energy, so volunteers, stay tuned. We appreciate you and want to recognize your contributions to the *Applegater* in this way.

Thanks to you all for reading the *Applegater*.

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



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY ANNIKA HODGES

There's something a little miraculous about a paper like the *Applegater*.

It isn't just the stories we print, or the photos we run; it's the people behind it all—the voices that show up, again and again, with something to say. Thoughtful, opinionated, curious, and deeply rooted in this valley. That's the real heartbeat of this paper.

What makes the *Applegater* special is that it doesn't sound like one person. It sounds like many. It sounds like neighbors. Like someone you might run into at the store or sit next to at a community meeting or recognize only by the way they write about the valley in spring. Each voice carries its own texture, its own history, its own way of seeing.

That only works if those voices are real.

We're living in a moment where it's easier than ever to generate words. Quick, polished, and often indistinguishable at first glance. But ease isn't the same as connection. And polish isn't the same as truth. The *Applegater* has never been about perfection—it's about perspective. It's about the particular way you notice something, the story only you can tell, the phrasing that feels like you and no one else.

So this is a small, sincere ask: when you write for us, write as yourself, not with AI. Keep the quirks, the edges, and the humanity intact. Let your voice come through in all its specificity. That's what makes this paper worth reading. That's what makes it ours.

Thank you, as always, for being part of this community—for reading, for contributing, and for showing up. The *Applegater* is what it is because of you.

Annika Hodges
Applegater Editor in Chief
annika@applegater.org

For Opinion piece and Letter to the Editor requirements, please visit applegater.org/submitting/#articles.



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Applegate Valley Business Network news

BY JEFF HAAS

One of the core missions of A Greater Applegate is to support local businesses and contribute to the prosperity of Applegate Valley residents. This year, we are in the process of creating an Economic Vitality Plan for the Applegate. An EVP can be a key part of grant applications or proposals to secure funds and resources to support local businesses. We are currently meeting with working groups defined by industry and have already completed meetings with groups representing the Applegate Valley vintners, the food and farm businesses, tourism-related businesses, and artists and craftspeople. The meetings are lively group discussions—how are things going for businesses in the Applegate? What are the opportunities, and what are the challenges?

What can we do locally to help one another, and what resources do we need to bring in from elsewhere?

The next round of meetings will focus on businesses that have stores, offices, or brick-and-mortar locations in the five “village hubs”: Ruch, Applegate, Williams, Murphy, and Wilderville. We are holding meetings in each of the village hubs in June and inviting business owners and managers to discuss the realities, joys, and challenges of running a business in an Applegate setting. And, most importantly, what types of support or assistance are needed to make their businesses more successful? Invitations were sent out by email in mid-May. If you fit the description and didn’t receive an invitation, contact Business Network

Manager Jeff Haas at jeff@agreaterapplegate.org. Here’s a list of the dates. Locations and times were detailed in the invitations:

- Wilderville—Monday, June 1
- Ruch—Tuesday, June 2
- Murphy—Monday, June 8
- Williams—Tuesday, June 9
- Applegate—Wednesday, June 10

The synergy that exists between different industries has been a recurring theme in the focus-group meetings we have already conducted. Discussions have explored how Applegate-based businesses can work together to create win/win results. Applegate wineries often invite local artists to display and sell their work, and many use locally grown produce in the food they serve at tasting rooms. Many participants of the vintners group mentioned the importance of events that they hold at their wineries, and there was a group realization that confirming reservations for events or tastings gives the wineries opportunities to let their visitors know about other attractions of the Applegate. Owners of vacation rentals have that same opportunity, and AGA supplies them with maps, brochures, and information to share with their guests.

Another common theme is working together to reach goals. The vintners do this with their joint marketing efforts through the Applegate Valley Vintners Association. The artists’ group bands together for events that bring art into the larger community and support local artists as well. The food and farm community comes together around the Applegate Evening Market, and farmers are finding new ways to work together to distribute and sell Applegate produce.

There’s another win/win we can all participate in—choosing goods and services provided by businesses in the Applegate. If you want to continue to have a local coffee shop, grocery store, contractor, etc., then choose to patronize those businesses. Money spent locally can continue to circulate in the Applegate and support local businesses and residents alike. When a gift is needed, there are a lot of great choices right in our community, including gift certificates from local businesses.

The Applegate Valley Business Network is the AGA’s ongoing vehicle for this work. Members of the Network are featured in the online Business Directory at applegateconnect.org/directory and can use the Applegate Valley logo to let residents know that they are a member and that they serve the Applegate. We are currently working to make the Directory a more comprehensive guide that both residents and visitors can use to find goods and services. We need some help in getting local trade professionals and service providers into the Directory. If you have a local builder, plumber, handyman, landscaper, or electrician that you rely on, or a cleaning service, bookkeeper, tax pro—anyone who provides a service for your home or business—please send us their name, business name, and contact information, and we will follow up to get them into the Directory. Send this information to jeff@agreaterapplegate.org, drop by the AGA office in Ruch, or write us at PO Box 335, Jacksonville, OR 97530.


Jeff Haas


jeff@agreaterapplegate.org



A recent EVP Gathering. Photo by Greg Askins, ADV Media.

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- Ask about scholarships and work/trade opportunities
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Enrolling Now!

Fall Enrollment is opening June 1! Schedule your meet-and-greet today!

Fall learning themes include: Apples, pumpkins, harvest; rocks, minerals, dinosaurs; trees, moss, lichen; and all things Autumn!

My contact information
Heather Paladini, Program Director
text or call 336-937-2882
email wildoakpreschool@gmail.com
www.wildoakpreschool.com

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CONVERSATIONS WITH THE LAND

Waking the Snake

BY GAY BRADSHAW

Editor's note: The author feels that all animal and nature capitalizations are integral to the spirit of her writing. We have respected her stylistic choice and retained these capitalizations throughout the piece.

If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water. —Loren Eiseley

We need to wake up the Snake! This is the clarion call of Dr. Anne Poelina. She is Yimardoowarra Marnin, a Nyikina Warrwa woman from the Martuwarra, Western Australia, and an international leader with doctorates in law and philosophy. “Waking the snake” is the urgent call to wake up collective human consciousness—to discard the clawing extractive mindset that has polluted, distorted, dammed, and damned so many Rivers and replace it with the primacy of Nature’s Consciousness. These are the values and ethics of the Land and Waters responsible for creating the beauty and riches upon which all of us living in the Applegate and Rogue valleys depend.

The Martuwarra joins a global movement vesting epistemic and legal authority in bodies of water. Rivers around the world—including the Ganges River in India, the Atrato River in Colombia, and the Whanganui River in Aotearoa (New Zealand)—have been declared to possess legal standing superseding the rights, powers, and duties of humans. “Martuwarra River,” maintains Poelina, “owns me. So, I have a duty of care and a fiduciary duty to protect this River’s right to life. . . . The First Law of the Martuwarra recognizes the River as the Rainbow Serpent: a living ancestral being from source to sea.” These laws of personhood extend the scope of a River beyond the material. The 2017 Aotearoa Te Awa Tupua Act, for example, “embraces the spiritual aspects of the River and includes the indivisible River system, from the mountains to the sea and all its tributaries and ecosystems.” Personhood rights position Rivers as decision-makers.

While these implications may startle some, the Rights of Rivers movement is



Richard Bell, Unsplash.

commonsensical. Rivers like the Applegate and the Rogue are vital arteries whose health is essential for human health and survival. They know how and what to do just like the Insects, Fish, and other Animals and Plants populating these mountains and valleys. A nonhuman world existed well before the ancestors of *Homo not so sapiens* wiggled from Water to Land. As Poelina maintains, Rivers contain the essential

wisdom that can guide humanity through the climate crisis. So let’s start a liberation and legal movement for the Rights of the Applegate and Rogue Rivers, in gratitude for all they have given and do give us, and in recognition that they know a lot more than we do.

Gay Bradshaw
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kerulos.org

Protect the line: Supporting Applegate firefighters

2026 Fire and Vine Benefit Dinner

BY LIZA CROSSE

On September 12, 2026, at 5 pm, join us at Red Lily Vineyards for the 2026 Fire & Vine Benefit Dinner. This annual community event brings together great food, local wine, and lively auctions, both silent and live—including the crowd favorite, the cake auction—all in support of a critical mission: protecting the firefighters who protect the Applegate Valley.

The evening will be hosted by local favorite Jason Straube, serving as both master of ceremonies and auctioneer.

All funds raised this year will support the “Protect the Line” campaign, focused on purchasing new wildland-fire Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Applegate Fire District firefighters.

This popular event has sold out in past years, and tickets must be purchased in advance.

Why this campaign matters

Applegate Fire District continues to invest in staffing, equipment, and fire prevention programs while maintaining

a high level of emergency response service. However, some essential needs remain unmet.

One of the most pressing needs is for updated wildland PPE—specialized gear designed to protect firefighters operating in wildland fire environments. With increasing wildfire activity across our region, this equipment is more important than ever.

Much of the District’s current wildland PPE has exceeded its intended service life and no longer meets modern safety standards. At this time, there is no capacity within the District’s operating budget to fully replace this equipment.

To address this need, the goal of this campaign is to purchase 40 new sets of wildland PPE, ensuring that firefighters across all seven stations are properly equipped for safe and effective response.

Each set costs approximately \$1,200 and includes a wildland jacket and pants, along with a line pack that carries water, tools, and a required fire shelter.

We are pleased to report that the District has secured a \$6,000 grant toward this effort. The remaining campaign goal is \$42,000.

How you can help

Community support plays a vital role in maintaining the safety and readiness of our firefighters. Contributions of any amount are appreciated and will go directly toward the purchase of this essential equipment.

Supporters may also choose to participate through event sponsorships:



Chief Level Sponsor—\$1,000:

Includes four tickets to the Fire & Vine Dinner & Auction, two Applegate Fire District challenge coins, and recognition in event materials (the *Applegater* and the *Fireside Newsletter*) and on the Friends website.

Captain Level Sponsor—\$500:

Includes two event tickets, one challenge coin, and recognition in event materials (the *Applegater* and the *Fireside Newsletter*) and on the Friends website.

Individual tickets are available for \$50 per person and include dinner, a glass of wine, and access to the auction.

Limited sponsorships are available. After August 1, 2026, any tickets associated with unsold sponsorships will be released and made available to individual ticket buyers.

Because this event sells out each year, early participation is encouraged.

Get tickets and learn more

Tickets and sponsorships are available now. Scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/FireVine2026 to access the event page and complete your purchase.

Join us for an evening of community, connection, and purpose—and help us protect the line.

Special thanks to our leading sponsors!

Fire Chief

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Captain

Babette and Steve Rapp
Tim and Liza Crosse
Mike and Liv Schneider
Troon Vineyard and Farm
Liza Crosse
lizacrosse@comcast.net



Wildland firefighter mopping up a fire.
Photo by Lt. Dave Blakely, Deputy Chief of Operations, Applegate Fire District.

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NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

Where kindness grows: Animals changing Applegate School

BY RENEE GOURLEY

Over the past few years, something truly special has been growing at the Applegate School—something a little softer, a little quieter, and full of heart. What began as a simple act of kindness has turned into a meaningful part of our school community.

Several stray cats found their way onto campus, and instead of being turned away, they were welcomed with care, patience, and compassion. With the help of staff and students, these once-frightened animals were gently rehabilitated—fed regularly, given safe spaces, and slowly taught to trust again.

The very first of these cats, lovingly named Boots, quickly captured the hearts of everyone at the school. After spending time being cared for and growing more comfortable around people, Boots was adopted by a staff member last year and now has a safe, permanent home. Today, another cat named Motor continues that legacy on campus, reminding students daily of the importance of kindness and care for animals in need.

As time went on, the cats became more than just visitors. They became part of the school family. Students learned responsibility by helping care for them, and many formed bonds that were both comforting and memorable. For some students, especially those who struggle with stress or emotions, simply sitting quietly with one of the cats made a noticeable difference.

This sense of care and connection grew even stronger when a staff member brought in a baby lamb named Ranger that had been rejected by its mother. Ranger needed food, warmth, and constant attention, and once again, the school community stepped up. Again, students were able to witness firsthand what it means to nurture and care for a living being. Ranger quickly became a beloved member of the campus, often drawing smiles and curiosity from students of all ages.



Kindergarten and first-grade students practice reading with Ranger, the lamb. Photo by Karen Hirschmugl (K/1 teacher).



Sixth-grade students take a break in class to show kindness to Ranger, the lamb. Photo courtesy of Renee Gourley (middle school teacher).

The impact of these animals has been incredible, especially when it comes to student behavior and focus. For some, the animals provided a sense of comfort and safety that helped them better manage their emotions throughout the day. Teachers noticed that students who spent time around the animals often returned to class calmer, more centered, and ready to learn.

One of the most heartwarming sights has been watching younger students sit with the cats or Ranger, quietly reading books aloud. These moments are filled with patience, confidence-building, and joy. The animals, of course, are the perfect listeners—never interrupting, never judging, and always listening. For students who may have felt nervous about reading out loud, this was a powerful and positive experience.

In addition to caring for cats and a lamb, our kindergarten and first-grade classrooms take part in another beloved tradition each year—hatching chicken eggs. Students eagerly watch the process from start to finish, learning about life cycles, responsibility, and care. Once the chicks have grown, many of them go home with school families, continuing the cycle of care and connection beyond the classroom walls.

What started as a few stray animals in need has turned into a living example of kindness, empathy, and community. These animals have not only found a safe place to heal, but they have also helped students grow in ways that go far beyond the classroom. The calming presence of these animals created moments of peace in otherwise busy school days.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Jacksonville Veterinary Hospital for their generous donation of neutering services, helping us care for and protect our school's beloved animals.

Renee Gourley
renee.gourley@threerivers.k12.or.us

A busy season for environmental education in the Applegate

BY CHARLOTTE HYDE

The Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council's (APWC) Education Program has its hands full this spring and summer with Applegate Outdoor School and Applegate Outdoor Summer Camp.

Now in its fourth year, Applegate Outdoor School (AOS) leads fifth- and sixth-graders in four-day sessions of place-based, hands-on learning at Cantrall Buckley Park. This spring, we have strengthened our partnership with the Medford School District by serving Oakdale Middle School for the second time and Hedrick Middle School for the third. We served 580 sixth-graders from these two schools throughout April and May.

This season has moved forward despite unexpected challenges. As detailed in the last *Applegater* issue, a steep cut to the statewide Outdoor School budget has increased financial pressure on our program and that of other Outdoor School providers across the state. We are honored to have received a \$6,000 award from the Carpenter Foundation to ease some of this strain.

Another setback occurred closer to home during our training week. One of our lead field instructors, Setthaphone Mayxonesing, was involved in a severe traffic collision on Highway 238 and sustained several broken bones. She is now on her way to recovery, but will not be able to return to AOS or summer camp this year. Setthaphone has worked for APWC as a seasonal employee since 2023, and her absence this season has been strongly felt.

Despite these setbacks, AOS has been abundant with joy, learning, and connection to nature. The AOS curriculum, which includes forestry, soil science, water quality, macroinvertebrate sampling, and fire ecology, puts scientific learning into students' own hands. However, the value of Outdoor School extends well beyond academic outcomes. In an age when youth are increasingly alienated from the natural world, giving them the opportunity to wade in the river, sample a tree core, build soil sculptures, or simply sit and listen to the sounds of nature helps reconnect students to the world around them.

A successful season of AOS is the outcome of months of dedication from our program staff, seasonal field instructors, and community partners. We deeply appreciate Jackson County Parks for allowing us to use their park and Black Barn Kitchen for providing delicious lunches every day of programming.

As spring turns to summer, AOS will give way to Applegate Outdoor Summer Camp (AOSC). AOSC is open to children between the ages of 5 and 11 and also takes place at Cantrall Buckley Park. We are offering six weeks of programming throughout the summer. Each week of camp will feature games, crafts, scientific explorations, and presentations based on a theme. This year, AOSC is supported by Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District,

the Pacific Power Foundation, and Rooted In Hope.

Bugs, Birds & Beyond (June 15-19) will feature bug hunting, birding, animal crafts, and a live insect presentation from Bugs-R-Us. **Outdoor Adventurers** (June 22-26) will offer navigation, treasure hunting, shelter building, and a presentation from Jackson County Search and Rescue. **Crafty Kids** (July 6-10) will include salt-dough sculptures, bookmaking, macrame, finger knitting, and a workshop from local fiber artist Shannon Rodine. **Friends of the Forest** (July 13-17) will involve plant identification, leaf art, native shrub plantings, and a guest visit from the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative. **Backyard Biologists** (July 20-24) will incorporate phenology, animal adaptations, insect life cycle art, and a live reptile and amphibian presentation from Bugs-R-Us. Finally, **Nature Investigators** (August 3-7) will encompass water quality testing, track and scat identification, and a guest visit from Pollinator Project Rogue Valley.

We are excited to be piloting a Counselor-In-Training (CIT) program for youth ages 13-17 alongside AOSC. Participants will have the opportunity to build confidence, develop leadership and teamwork skills, and learn how to mentor campers. The CIT program is tuition-free, and CITs will receive a gift certificate at the end of each week.

The Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council is committed to facilitating impactful outdoor learning opportunities for the youth of the Applegate Valley and beyond. We are grateful for the community's continued support of our Education Program. More information about AOSC, including FAQs, registration, and the CIT program, can be found on our website at applegatepartnership.org/summer-camp.

Any additional questions, including inquiries about scholarships, can be directed to charlotte@apwc.info.

Charlotte Hyde
charlotte@apwc.info



An Oakdale Middle School 6th grader collects macroinvertebrates in the Applegate River at Cantrall Buckley Park.

Visit us online at applegater.org.

Wellington Wildlands Council: Endings and beginnings

BY JEANETTE LETOURNEUX, LIZA CROSSE, AUDREY ELDRIDGE, BARBARA HOLIDAY

We have news to share with *Applegater* readers about the conclusion of Wellington Wildlands Council (WWC) as a nonprofit organization and the beginning of an exciting, multiyear scientific study we are a part of.

First, we wish to thank all of you who have supported WWC over the years. We are truly grateful for every member of this caring community who has stood with us to safeguard the biodiversity of our beautiful Applegate Valley.

Together, we have been able to achieve many positive outcomes, including:

- raising community awareness of the beauty and economic value of our intact wildlands
- stopping or helping to limit damaging Bureau of Land Management (BLM) timber sales in our region
- bringing Applegate Valley and Wellington Wildlands (WW) to the attention of our legislators, encouraging them to designate a Wild and Scenic stream in WW
- serving as founding members of the dynamic and powerful Siskiyou Crest Festival and helping bring it to life
- proposing and coordinating an Applegate Valley economic study with A Greater Applegate
- collaborating with many nonprofits, particularly Siskiyou Upland Trails Association (SUTA) and Applegate Trails Association (ATA), as well as Applegate Siskiyou Alliance (ASA), the environmental advocacy group that has been an amazing mentor and partner.

There are still ongoing threats to the Wellington Wildlands from BLM timber sales, and there are unfinished projects, such as the Wellington Mine Trail. For more information, visit the ASA website at applegatesiskiyoualliance.org.

Thank you to Greeley Wells, Stuart Heaslet, and David and Barbara Callahan

We extend our immense appreciation to Greeley Wells, the filmmaker of the

gorgeous and impactful *Saving Wellington*, which sparked this movement and fostered our community spirit and love for Wellington Wildlands, and to ASA and ATA for their support in producing it. Watch the film on YouTube at youtu.be/jm_U-qP9g8I?si=fir1B9CJZN34HyjD. Or go to YouTube.com and search for “Saving Wellington Wildlands.”

Stuart Heaslet was a driving force in setting up the WWC as a nonprofit and contributing his creative and brilliant ideas. Of course, there would be no WWC without the vision and leadership of the late David Callahan and his wife, Barbara, whose combined devotion to the well-being of the habitats, wildlife, and economy of our valley has been an ongoing blessing to us all. The success of the incredibly popular East Applegate Ridge Trail and the wonderful long-term plans for the Siskiyou Skyline Trail (SST) are due in large part to the contributions of the Callahans, with SUTA and ATA committed to carrying on and expanding this visionary project. See the ATA website at applegatetrails.org for information on this great enterprise.

While the WWC will no longer be an official nonprofit, we will continue to actively support protections for all our wildlands and wildlife and collaborate with the many great nonprofits in our region. One reason



for the disbanding of the WWC is that Liza and Jeanette have been deeply involved with and channeling their energy to the Siskiyou Crest Coalition (SCC). If you are looking to make a meaningful donation, consider that

all of the aforementioned organizations have consistently contributed to our quality of life in the Applegate Valley.

Siskiyou Crest Moth Project

Liza and Jeanette are also key members of the newly formed Siskiyou Crest Moth Project (SCMP). The lead lepidopterist, Dana Ross, is from Oregon State University, and Applegate Valley butterfly and moth expert, Linda Kappen, is also fully involved. Moth Nights that Dana, SCC, and other volunteers held last summer kicked off the SCMP. Many of the photos included

on our beautiful website are from those events. The project will start with seven study sites in 2026. We hope to see some of you at upcoming free, collaborative Moth Nights, where there will be much to learn and the chance to make amazing discoveries together! To learn more, visit siskiyoucrestcoalition.org/siskiyou-crest-moth-project.

As we close one chapter in our efforts to safeguard the many gifts of our beloved valley and region, we open another in our ongoing work to protect our public lands and the natural beauty they hold—for ourselves and future generations. Thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do to support these vital missions.

Jeanette LeTourneux
jetlet10@gmail.com
Liza Crosse
Audrey Eldridge
Barbara Holiday



A beautiful, day-flying Mendocino silk moth, pictured with two of its main host plants, madrone and manzanita. Photo by Linda Kappen.

The southern Oregon secret

BY JULIE RAEFIELD

Most locals would say that we are especially lucky to call southern Oregon home. The reasons behind that luck are numerous: spectacular natural beauty, abundant flora and fauna, a lively

historic district, delicious restaurants, a close-knit population adjacent to the amenities of a larger city, a flourishing culture of music and arts, and wineries to rival the best in the world.

All that being true, the hidden secret of our uniqueness is our people and their willingness to recognize goodwill in one another. That openness to seeing each other as equals in community has led to some amazing results. A couple of key examples come to mind.

A Greater Applegate—what an amazing team of people working together across differing viewpoints to sustain key community-building priorities for the Applegate Valley. They focus on engaging ideas, from all perspectives, on land stewardship, economic vitality, environmental health, wildfire preparedness, safety, equity, and healthy social connections. They believe in and support, through

action and hard work, “enhancing the Applegate Valley’s economic outlook, social capacity, and ecological balance for the community at large” now and for upcoming generations.

Sanctuary One—which, since 2008, has united folks across “divides” to successfully protect and maintain a place of refuge for abused, neglected, and abandoned animals of all sorts. Through their community engagement, the Sanctuary “helps people of all ages experience nature’s power to heal,” ensuring that volunteers, visitors, and staff personally experience the mission of the organization. What a lovely vision!

Though there are more Applegate-specific examples, I want to share some thoughts about a place many Applegaters visit regularly—the Jacksonville Community Center (JCC). The brainchild of a small group of committed seniors and others who worked together over 20 years, this beautiful, flourishing center for civic life is a local gem. From the myriad differing perspectives of our founders and those who currently support JCC, one vision is being realized every day:

to sustain a center of community life where people of all ages can learn, create, share, engage in dialogue, remember, and celebrate together. Over 10,000 people enjoyed the resources and programs of JCC last year alone.

This summer, in addition to the ongoing wellness, arts, history, music, and youth programs, JCC will be offering four special summer camps for youth, including the opportunity to hike local trails. What a great way to get kids connected to this same sense of learning together to treasure our beautiful region! Please visit jacksonvillecommunitycenter.org for more details.

In this time of polarization and the tendency to define ourselves in opposition to others, isn’t it wonderful to know that so many people in our region choose instead to define themselves by how they can be *united*? We need only stop to reflect on these three short examples to see how powerful and positive this little “secret” can be. Psst... pass it on!

Julie RaeField
JCC Executive Director
jraefield@jacksonvillecommunitycenter.org



Summer camps for kids at Jacksonville Community Center offer a chance to build community and treasure our natural environment. Photo by JCC Staff.

Look who's reading the Gater!

Take us with you on your next trip. Then send your favorite "Reading the Gater" photo (must include the physical paper) to gater@applegater.org or mail to *Applegater*, PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530.



Photos, left to right:

- Diana Coogle** skis with the *Applegater* in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.
- Connie Bishop** reading the *Applegater* in Casablanca, Morocco
- Jennifer Strange and Terry Moore** staying current with the *gater* at the Orson Wells garden at the Medina in Essaouira, Morocco

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

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