Applegater



Photo by Linda Kappen

WINTER 2026
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Applegate Valley Community Newsmagazine
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Celebrating ~32~ Years

ATA seeks funding to build BLM-approved 5-Mile East ART expansion

BY NORM YOUNG

With approval from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in hand, the Applegate Trails Association (ATA) has submitted a grant proposal to fund and build roughly five miles of new single-track on the East Applegate Ridge Trail (East ART). Because the expansion has already completed BLM environmental review, securing these grant funds is the final step needed to begin full construction. Designed to expand overall trail capacity by 60 percent, the shovel-ready project will soften the steep grade climbing out of the western trailhead on Highway 238 and introduce scenic loop options accessible from both the eastern and western trailheads. The additions will turn traditional out-and-back hikes into varied "lollipop" loops that unlock fresh ridgeline vistas and diverse terrain.

What is the Applegate Trails Association?

Founded by community residents as an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Applegate Trails Association originally designed the East ART, worked with BLM toward its approval within the NEPA process, and then funded and managed its construction in 2017. The ATA has maintained the trail throughout the seasons, often with the support of community volunteers, and has made various improvements, such as adding the vault toilet at the Sterling Creek trailhead and two additional benches for enjoying the scenic vistas.

The ATA mapped the proposed extensions to the East ART in collaboration with the BLM and then supported BLM during the NEPA process that followed. The ATA views the East ART enhancements as relatively "low-hanging fruit" to tackle before proposing the more ambitious Central and North ART, though these other sections of the ART have already been mapped and reviewed at a preliminary level with BLM's recreation planner.

Trading the old logging road for Scenic Singletrack

Since opening, the 5.6-mile East ART has become one of the valley's most popular year-round destinations, following the ridgelines above the Poorman and Bishop Creek drainages. Currently, the initial climb out of the Highway 238 parking lot follows a steep old logging road that approaches a 20 percent grade in places. The approved expansion not only softens that grade for a gentler, more welcoming ascent but also moves trail users off the old roadbed and onto a 1.3-mile winding singletrack through scenic oak woodlands.

Introducing the Crest View Trail and new loop options

Beyond the improved western entry, the approved project adds over three miles of new trail along the upper ridgeline, anchored by the newly designated Crest View Trail. Connecting these segments creates multiple loop routes that distribute foot traffic across a wider footprint.

See ATA SEEKS FUNDING, page 2.

The Siskiyou Crest Moth Project has found its wings

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

The first year of the Siskiyou Crest Moth Project (SCMP) has been a huge success, and the project has found its wings. A whopping 516 moth species have been identified so far, but many of the smaller, more difficult-to-differentiate micromoths have yet to be identified, so that number will continue to grow.

Moths were studied at seven different sampling sites across the Siskiyou Crest: Colestin Valley, Mt. Ashland, Observation Gap, Humbug Creek, Elliott Creek, Oregon Caves, and Takilma. Three of these sites are in the Applegate River watershed, and the Applegate will likely have additional moth sampling sites next year as well. Many Applegate residents are very engaged in the project, volunteer their time for moth nights, and help organize its activities.

When possible, only a couple of specimens per species at each moth sampling site are collected in vials for identification and inclusion in the Oregon State Arthropod Collection (OSAC) at OSU. Some species are hard to tell apart on site, while others are obviously different from the rest.

See SISKIYOU CREST MOTH, page 12.



Dana Ross, project lead for the Siskiyou Crest Moth Project. Photo by Suzie Savoie.

Farewell

BY GREELEY WELLS

Dear loyal *Applegater* readers,

After almost 30 years of telling you about the stars, planets, meteors—all the celestial bodies—in issue after issue of the *Applegater*, I am retiring. I turned 83 in September!

Thank you all for watching the sky and reading my column all these years. It's been a great pleasure and honor to share my passion with you.

Best wishes and wonderful star-filled nights for you all.

Greeley Wells
greeley@greeley.me

Pioneer history and ridge trails: Five Jacksonville and Applegate Valley groups to support this holiday season

BY JOHN DIDOMENICO

Jacksonville and the Applegate Valley share a deep sense of history and a love of the outdoors, and much of that is kept alive by volunteers. If you are looking for meaningful ways to give close to home this holiday season, these five local nonprofits welcome members, donors, and helping hands. Every detail below comes from the organizations' own websites.

Jacksonville History Center

Historic Jacksonville, Inc., in partnership with the City of Jacksonville and the Jacksonville Boosters Club, is transforming the town's 1881 Old City Hall into the Jacksonville History Center. More than 100 buildings in Jacksonville are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and the center helps explain the stories behind them.

The History Center is donation-funded and volunteer-run. Volunteers help at events, serve as docents during open hours, and even dress in period attire to lead immersive tours. Donate at jacksonvillemuseum.org.

Jacksonville Boosters Club

For more than 50 years, the Jacksonville Boosters Club has shared a belief that community is what we make it and that Jacksonville is worth preserving. Members are known for their volunteerism and work to protect the town's history and enhance its livability.

Membership is open to anyone interested in improving the City

See PIONEER HISTORY, page 8.

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ISSUE HOLIDAY - ARTS

OBITUARY

Lewis Linn Keller
July 19, 1938 - August 17, 2025

Lewis Linn Keller of Ruch, Oregon, passed away on August 17, 2025, after living a life of service. Lewis was born in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to Dr. O. C. Keller and Ella Eva Keller, two Nazarene ministers. His early years were spent with his parents as they moved from city to city and state to state, starting new churches and even building the buildings.

After graduating from Pasadena College High School, he was drafted into military service as a medic. He left the service after suffering a hearing loss and was unable to pursue his dream of becoming a Forest Service ranger and spending his years in the forest environment he loved.

In 1960, he married Mary Anne Joseph, and a son, Brian Scott Keller, was born in 1962. Lew and Mary Anne divorced eight years later.

His deafness led him to become a teacher of the deaf and ultimately the director of the Southern Oregon Regional Program for the Handicapped, which serves seven counties. He supported Dogs for the Deaf and was given an award for ten years of volunteer service.

In 1970, he married Janet Bohl Anderson, and in 1972, his son, Christopher Lewis Keller, was born. In 1978, they moved to Ruch in the Applegate Valley, and he became active as a volunteer with the Applegate Fire Department.

He joined Jacksonville Kiwanis and, while serving as president, oversaw the development of Doc Griffin Park in Jacksonville. He was awarded Kiwanian of the Year in 1988-89. He joined Jacksonville Rotary and, while serving as president, initiated the inclusion of women in Jacksonville Rotary. Several of the "good old boys" were not happy with that change, but there are now female Rotarians in Jacksonville.

He was a member of the Applegate Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD) #9 board and became president. As board president, he was instrumental in acquiring the property on which the headquarters for AVFD #9 now stands. The woman who owned the property would only sell if he would give her a ride on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle. His service with the fire department involved him at the state level. In November 2004, he was presented with the award—given by the president of the Oregon Fire District Directors Association—for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual to the Fire Service. He was given numerous awards for fire service, including induction into the Hall of Flame in 2006 for long-term dedication as a board member.

Lew loved the Applegate Valley and followed his passion for hiking and exploring the hills, streams, and rivers. He loved the trees, animals, and hunting, which later became hunting with his camera. His backyard became a source of joy with the deer, birds, squirrels, foxes, trees, and all of God's other living creatures.

In his last years, he walked all over his property daily, admiring the trees, mountains, and animals and thanking God for the opportunity for life in the Applegate Valley. He went to meet his Heavenly Father on August 17, 2025.

He is survived by his wife, Janet; his sons, Christopher and Brian; two grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Lew now rests in the Eagle Point National Veterans Cemetery in Eagle Point, Oregon, while his achievements are still enjoyed by all.

Janet Keller

■ ATA SEEKS FUNDING

Continued from page 1.

Instead of retracing their steps, visitors will be able to link open ridgelines, hillside meadows, and shaded forest corridors in a single outing—expanding trail options while reducing tread wear and soil compaction.

Join the December 13 volunteer work party

Community hands have always built and cared for ATA's trails, and locals can get an early start on the approved expansion this winter. On Saturday, December 13, ATA will host the first of several volunteer trail work parties to begin construction of short connection "stubs"—roughly 100 feet each—at the junctions where the new trails will tie into the existing East ART tread.

Volunteers of all experience levels are welcome to come out and lend a hand. To sign up or check the meeting times and trailhead meetup details for December 13, contact Geoff Weaver at chair@applegatetrails.org or 503-781-7888. To follow progress on the grant proposal, visit the Applegate Trails Association Facebook page.

Norm Young
norm@applegatetrails.org

What does JCC offer Applegaters?

BY JULIE RAEFIELD

What difference does Jacksonville Community Center (JCC) make to the Applegate Valley? You may ask yourself this question—especially when considering whether to include JCC in your annual charitable giving.

Well, we have some surprising numbers to help answer that question. In just 12 months, folks joined activities or events at JCC more than 11,488 times! Based on ticketing information provided by guests, about 20 percent of those visitors are from the Applegate.

Here are some more details. Through JCC programs, people learned about regional history, improved personal health, enjoyed free house concerts, gained new creative skills, undertook new culinary journeys, accessed local natural recreation, learned about regional resources, assisted elderly citizens in aging well, and engaged and empowered youth.

Between October 2025 and September 2026, our own small staff served 4,828 visitors at 265 events. In one of our greatest areas of impact, we offered 129 after-school and summer programs, with 1,364 youths attending and 925 related adults joining them.

Last year, an additional 6,620 visitors came to JCC via 329 affordable facility-rental events at the center. These included business retreats, weddings, celebrations of life, birthday parties, baby showers, studio instruction, and graduation parties. Applegate renters found JCC an affordable, welcoming place to hold their gatherings.

JCC also contributes to the economic health of our region by directing out-of-town visitors to the Applegate. JCC staff regularly give recommendations to visitors and tourists to head out to the Applegate to visit wineries and country stores and to enjoy the beautiful recreation areas they'll find there.

Supporting and celebrating with our neighbors, JCC hosts multiple free events for the community—the Lunar New Year event, Halloween promenade, the tree-lighting celebration, and the Christmas parade, among others. In collaboration with camps by Art Presence, we host youth summer camps, maximizing healthy, fun summer education for youth and families, including those from the Applegate. We have also happily featured the Applegate's own Mosaic World Chorus during our house concert series.

We'd love to have more presenters from the Applegate and to see more Applegate attendees at our programs. Whether you are a senior, teen, young adult, or family with young ones, you are welcome here. You can find information on our programs at jacksonvillecommunitycenter.org/programs/.

JCC provides our region with an abundance of healthy, creative, educational activities and positive opportunities to meet one another, learn together, support our local economies, and build a stronger extended community.

If you are looking for a strong impact from your charitable giving, we thank you for considering Jacksonville Community Center. You can find more information at jacksonvillecommunitycenter.org/donate.

Happy winter!

Julie Raefield, JCC
Executive Director
jraefield@jacksonvillecommunitycenter.org



Mosaic World Chorus recently performed at JCC as part of JCC's mission to bring arts, culture, history, health, and music to our region.

Give in November and December, and your donation will be doubled!

Donate now at applegater.org!

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The *Applegater* is on YouTube!

The *Applegater* has a new YouTube channel, and we'd love to feature videos from around the Applegate Valley! Have a community event, local story, creative project, or something else you'd like to share? We're looking for videos to help showcase the people, places, and happenings that make our valley special.

Visit youtube.com/@appl3gaternews to check out the channel. Interested in submitting a video? Email gater@applegater.org for more information. We'd love to hear from you!

YouTube /@appl3gaternews

Explore the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail and Jack-Ash

BY JOY ROGALLA



A beautiful view enjoyed during a work party along the Upper Bear Gulch Trail. Photo by Joy Rogalla.

The Siskiyou Upland Trails Association (SUTA) is an all-volunteer nonprofit formed 16 years ago with the mission to create and maintain a trail from Jacksonville to Ashland (appropriately named the Jack-Ash Trail) in the upland areas of the Siskiyous between the two towns. The historic Sterling Mine Ditch Trail (SMDT) forms a large loop in the middle of the Jack-Ash Trail and is currently the centerpiece of the system. These trails are located south of Jacksonville within the Anderson Butte Complex. SUTA coordinates with the Medford District BLM to develop and maintain these trails. We're happy to share that we currently have more than 40 miles of trails in the system that are open for hikers, runners, mountain bikers, and equestrians. These trails are accessible nearly year-round and offer stunning views of the Siskiyou Crest, Applegate Valley, Red Buttes Wilderness, and Rogue Valley. A bonus is that much of the SMDT is nearly level, a rarity here in the Siskiyous! The trails change character frequently as they contour around Anderson Butte. You will be in open, sunny meadows in one section and then quickly transition to a shady and forested gulch and back again. There are many historic features on the SMDT as well, including a tunnel, remnants of flumes, rock walls, and drill marks in the rock where dynamite was used. One of the largest madrone trees in the state is located along the ditch between the Bear Gulch and Tunnel Ridge Trailheads. The Hidden Creek trail, a hidden gem, is located across from the Grub Gulch trailhead and is a .7 mile loop with old-growth cedars, pines, and firs.

Since its inception, SUTA has reopened approximately 20 miles of the SMDT that had become overgrown and impassable, reopened or constructed four access trails, and constructed 6 miles of the Jack-Ash Trail from the top of Anderson Butte to Griffin Lane. We also constructed more than 11 miles of new trails that form loops or "lollipops" within the SMDT, as well as the new Poormans Creek Trail that is another lollipop trail off Griffin Lane heading north toward Jacksonville. All of these trails offer a chance to access areas of our public lands that are otherwise difficult or impossible to visit.

Wildflowers, birds, big views, and geologic features are all part of what you can see when you are on the trails. These trails have become popular with residents of the Applegate and Rogue valleys, as well as visitors to our region, and with 12 trailheads

See STERLING MINE DITCH TRAIL, page 8.

A growing season in review: 2026 in the Applegate Valley

BY TRACY HARDING

As the growing season winds down and winter settles into the Applegate Valley, we have an opportunity to look back at what we've accomplished, consider what we've learned, and begin planning for the year ahead.

For the Applegate Farm & Food Network, 2026 was a year of trying new things, strengthening connections, and finding ways to support the farms and food businesses that make this valley such a special place.

2026 was the pilot year for the Applegate Valley Made & Grown Mobile Market. The season began in May with two pre-season outings at the Lindsay Lodge, the home of the Applegate Evening Market, which opened on May 20 and ran through September. The mobile market made appearances at the monthly Talent Evening Market in July and August, and wrapped up the season in October at the Upper Applegate Grange's Apple Festival & Chili Cook-Off.

The Applegate Mobile Market is a cooperative vending opportunity featuring agricultural products grown and made by Applegate Valley producers. By bringing products from multiple farms and food businesses together in one place, the market creates additional opportunities for local producers to reach customers while increasing community access to locally produced food. The market operates from a trailer (affectionately known as Liz Trailer!), pulled by A Greater Applegate's Mobile Emergency Resilience Vehicle (MERV), donated and outfitted by the American Red Cross. Beyond supporting community markets and expanding access to local food, MERV serves as an emergency response resource, equipped to provide food, water, power, and a mobile kitchen when the community needs it.

The sixth season of the Applegate Evening Market wrapped up on September 30. A huge thank-you goes to the vendors, market managers, and coordinators who put so much time, energy, and love into creating the vibrant community gathering. The market manager, Jaimy Wilkinson, reflects, "It's pretty remarkable what Wednesday evenings in the Applegate have become. Each week, our farmers, food producers, artisans, musicians, nonprofits, and community organizations bring something different to the market, making it much more than a place to shop. In a valley where we're spread out across so many miles, having a regular place to gather, catch up with neighbors, discover what's happening locally, and support the people doing good work here is something worth celebrating. We're grateful to everyone who continues to make these evenings possible and are already looking forward to 2027!"



A Greater Applegate's Team—Tracy Harding, Nate Plante, and Jaimy Wilkinson—debut the Applegate Valley Made and Grown Mobile Market Trailer at the Talent Evening Market.

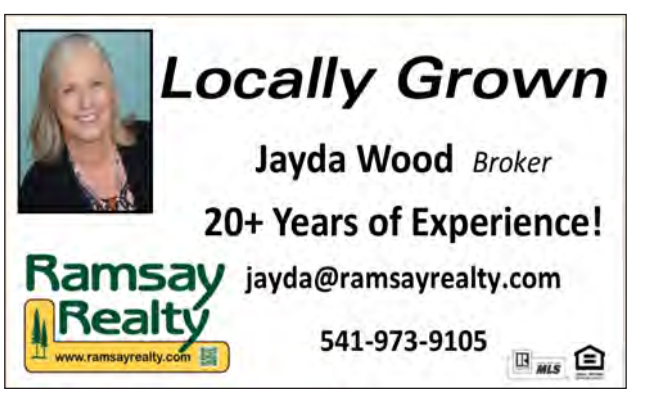
Behind our community-facing projects and programs, the Applegate Valley Farm & Food Network continued to strengthen the connections between our farms and markets beyond our valley. The Applegate Valley Aggregation Hub, located at Blue Fox Farm in Provolt, provided an opportunity for several farm businesses to coordinate their products and share transportation.

By aggregating products onto one truck for deliveries to Medford, Talent, and

See GROWING SEASON, page 19.







Poetry Corner

The Old Lady at the Bus Stop

By Mary Cina

I saw the bus coming
I tried so hard to run
but my legs would not obey,
and I knew that I was old.

I walked, then slowly, to the bus stop
never caring that it would be another hour
before the next bus came,
because at my age time no longer
had meaning and I knew that I was old.

Soon it began to rain,
a heavy soaking rain, and
then the sun came out, hot
and fierce, and dried me to the bone.
I should have worried that I might get ill—
I didn't and I knew that I was old.

Some teenage boys came to the bus stop,
they were unmindful of my presence as
they hurled obscenities at the cheerleaders
on their way to practice, and
I knew that I was old.

My legs grew tired and
I longed to sit with the other people
on the grass, but I could not
bend and sit, and
I knew that I was old.

The bus came, and
although I had been first,
I was jostled to the back, and
got on last, and I knew that I was old.

The bus was full and
I would have to stand all the way.
I felt weak, and sick, and giddy,
and I knew that I was old.

A little boy with freckles and
his two front teeth missing
stood up and pointed to his seat
for me……and I blessed him.

Mary Cina was a "reluctant" immigrant, coming to America in 1962 at the behest of her mother, landing in Boston during the time of the Kennedys' ascension to power. After traveling to New York to see the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building, she met her husband there, had children, and eventually lived in Florida for 50 years. She moved to Williams in 2024 and, at the age of 90, has found her final resting place here in the Applegate Valley.

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.

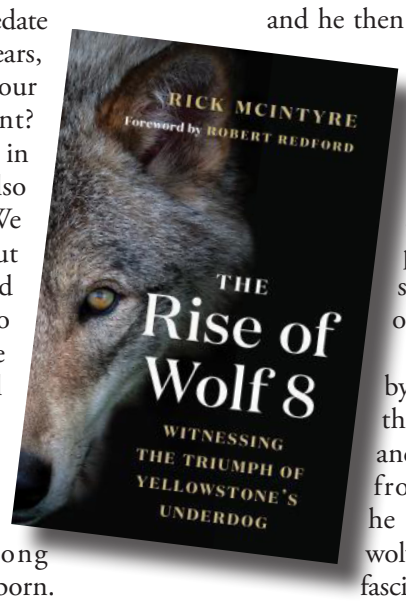
BOOK REVIEW

The Rise of Wolf 8

Witnessing the Triumph of Yellowstone's Underdog
by Rick McIntyre

BY PAUL TIPTON

Do you, as a human, consider yourself an apex predator? Some of you do, but some are saying, "What the …?" Well, what do you think about other mammals that might be able to predate on humans, such as bears, cougars, or wolves, in our terrestrial environment? (There are some critters in the ocean that might also make a meal of you.) We are apex predators, but wolves were considered to be so dangerous to humans from the time of European arrival on this continent that they were hunted and trapped almost to extinction throughout the United States long before you and I were born.



However, beginning in 1995, at Yellowstone National Park, 31 wolves from Alberta and British Columbia were reintroduced over a period of two years into an ecosystem that had deteriorated drastically due to the lack of wolf predation on elk, which had allowed alder and willow, a food source for elk, to be browsed too heavily in the riparian areas, affecting stream flows and causing flooding. Beavers had also been impacted due to a lack of food and dam-building material, but with the reintroduction of wolves, they returned. These wolves established new packs and new territories throughout the Yellowstone park and beyond. This is an amazing example of success with introducing animals that were on the "threatened and endangered" list back into their original territory.

The Rise of Wolf 8 is a testament to the dedication and perseverance of the author, Rick McIntyre, in recording his observations of wolves in the wild as they re-established innate pack structure in a previously unknown environment, where they exhibited the use of generational knowledge. I never got into television shows about romantic situations, but this book's observations of the social lives of wolves likely equal or surpass those shows, definitely for romantic drama. The storytelling is so compelling that it's hard to wait for the next event, and you keep reading. When the book was copyrighted in 2019, McIntyre had spent 42 years intensely studying and documenting his observations, with over 100,000 recorded sightings of wolves at that time. The man was up and on site before dawn to watch the wolves before they were even active, and he then moved around, following and watching them until after dark.

Another obsession of his was educating visitors to Yellowstone, setting up spotting scopes and giving presentations, and also sharing his knowledge with other wolf experts.

There are previous books by McIntyre in a series about the wolves of Yellowstone, and also more recent works from 2025 and 2026, as he continues to observe the wolves and tell their stories in fascinating prose.

While the main character of this story is one particular dominant male wolf, Wolf 8, who shaped the course of the life of his pack, it is also a social drama about the interactions of the different packs, with both the male and female dominant leaders portrayed as they interacted within their own packs, as well as with wolves in competing packs. As Robert Redford says in the foreword, "Through McIntyre's eyes we witness and learn about wolves as unique individuals living with breathtaking intensity—and it's impossible not to be awed by their loyalties to each other, keen intelligence, and will to survive."

Reading this book might bring you a greater awareness of the wild world around you, and since there have been verified sightings of both wolves and elk in the mountains and valleys around us, this is a story that resonates locally, especially with local ranchers who have lost cattle to wolf predation. And despite our "humanness," we are still part of the wild world around us, as either predator or prey. As we wander through that wild world, we need to be aware of whose territory we might be wandering through.

Paul W. Tipton
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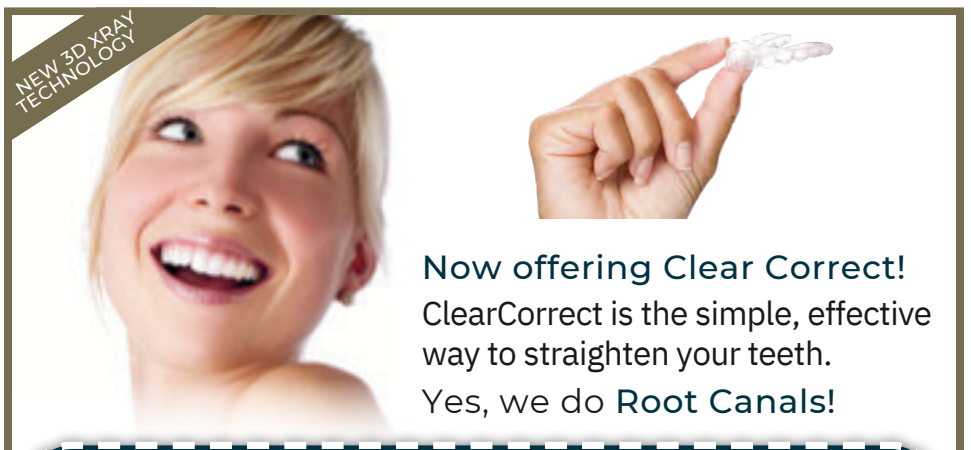

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Our Mission

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.

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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).

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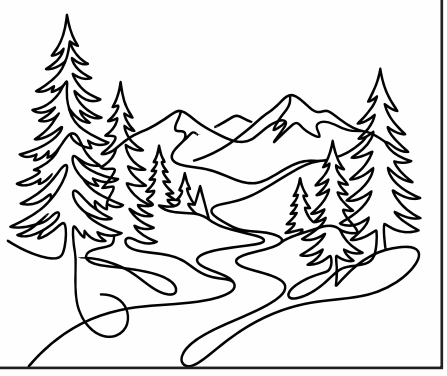

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The *Applegater* is the only newsmagazine covering the entire Applegate Valley. With a circulation of 13,000 and a readership of more than 20,000, the *Applegater* covers Jacksonville, Ruch, Applegate, Williams, Murphy, Wilderville, Wonder, Jerome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

For more information, contact:

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Next deadline: February 1

Cover Photo Credit

A snowy view at Applegate School, by Linda Kappan.

• • •

Have a photo for the Spring 2027 *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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Editorial Calendar

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

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— Applegate Library —

Winter at the Applegate Library

BY CHRISTINE GRUBB

Did you know that JCLS offers ScienceWorks Hands-On Museum passes? ScienceWorks Hands-On Museum is a vibrant hub for curiosity, creativity, and exploration located in Ashland. Designed for learners of all ages, ScienceWorks offers interactive exhibits, hands-on workshops, and engaging programs that bring the wonders of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) to life. Each family pass allows up to six people entry to the ScienceWorks museum. Library card holders are allowed up to four ScienceWorks family passes per year. More information can be found at jcls.libcal.com/passes.

Upcoming Events

Create a Holiday Amaryllis Centerpiece, 18+ years. Come to the Applegate Library to create an Amaryllis holiday centerpiece for you or your loved one. Bring your own vessel to plant your Amaryllis bulb or select one of ours. All supplies will be provided while supplies last. Hot cider and snacks will be provided. Registration required; limited seating. 2-3:30 pm, Saturday, December 12.

Make Your Own Magnetic Tic-Tac-Toe Game, 10+ years. Create a pocket-sized game that is perfect for road trips! In this program, kids will transform a metal tin (think Altoids tin) into a magnetic tic-tac-toe game they can take anywhere. Decorate your tin, make your own game pieces, and build a travel-ready game that stays together even when the car hits a bump. Whether you are headed across town or across the country, this crafty project is a great way to stay entertained on the road. 3-4 pm, Friday, December 18.

Holiday Classical Piano Concert and Sing-along, General Audience. Local pianist Debbie Lyons will play classical holiday carols and then lead us in a sing-along. Light refreshments will be served. 2:30-3:30 pm, Saturday, December 19.

Make Your Own Bird Masquerade Mask, 5+ years. Inspired by the helpful parrot Mango from *Mango, Abuela, and Me* by Meg Medina, kids will create their own colorful bird masquerade mask using paper plates, craft sticks, feathers, and other fun decorations.12:30-1:30 pm, Saturday, January 12.

Learn to be an Oregon Friendly Driver, 18+ years. The Oregon Friendly Driver Course helps participants better understand Oregon's traffic laws and roadway infrastructure while building greater awareness and respect for vulnerable road users, including people walking and biking. The course encourages greater awareness, courtesy, and respect among all road users, helping create safer, more welcoming communities. 11 am-noon, Tuesday, January 12.

Scandinavian Folk Music played on the Nyckelharpa, 3+ years. Local musician Avery, who raises pack goats and hikes the woods with them while playing his Swedish Nyckelharpa (keyed fiddle), will entertain us at the Applegate Library with Scandinavian folk songs. Light refreshments will be served. 2-3:30 pm, Friday, January 22.

"True Love" Cello Concert with Lisa Truelove, 3+ years. Local cellist Lisa Truelove (really, her real name!) will serenade the Applegate community with love songs and ballads. Free to attend and to be enjoyed by all ages! 2:30-3:30 pm, Thursday, February 11.

Make Your Own Tender Heart… Out of Felt!, 18+ years. Create a charming handmade felt heart perfect for decorating, gifting, or keeping as a sweet reminder of someone special. No advanced crafting experience is needed, but participants should be comfortable with basic hand sewing, as the project requires stitching by hand. All materials will be provided. 2-3 pm, Friday, February 12.

Valentine's Day Reading by the Applegate Poets, 12+ years. Come to enjoy poems of love and other Valentine's Day-themed poetry by the Applegate Poets and some great love poems from the ages. Valentine's Day-appropriate refreshments too! 2-4 pm, Sunday, February 14.

Reminders

A Tech Ed Specialist will be here on Tuesdays from 10 am-12:30 pm on a first-come, first-served basis, or you can make an appointment by email 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, practice, or event (even when the library is closed) by going to 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 Fridays from 11-11:30 am.

Veterans Outreach is here from 10 am-3 pm on the second Tuesday of every even month.

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

Valentine's Day poetry reading at the Applegate Library

BY DIANA COOGLE

"Roses are red; violets are blue. The days are cold, but I love you"—that old Valentine's Day drivel!

But Applegate Poets have more sophisticated love poetry to share on that special day for expressing love.

Swing by the Applegate Library between 2 and 4 pm on Valentine's Day. The Applegate Poets will sweeten your day with some heartwarming poetry, both their original poems and some of the best-loved love poetry from the ages. We'll be singing love for our spouses, partners, lovers, our children, our pets, our wild animal friends, or the earth itself.

We'll have Valentine-appropriate refreshments—heart-shaped cookies, maybe red velvet cake, etc.

We guarantee a heart-warming occasion!

Sunday, February 14, 2027

2-4 pm

Applegate Branch, Jackson County Library System

Sponsored by the Friends of the Applegate Library.

Diana Coogle
dicoog@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook! @applegater.newspaper

— Ruch Library —

Winter at Ruch Library

BY MEGAN PINDER

The programs and services listed below, as well as our Seed Library, Wi-Fi, and cozy spaces, are free and accessible to every community member, including those living outside of Jackson County. For Jackson County residents, library cards are also free!

Wreath Making, 18+ years. Holiday cheer begins at your doorstep with a handmade evergreen wreath! Registration required at jcls.org/events or by calling 899-7438. 3:30-5 pm, Wednesday, December 2, and 1-2:30 pm, Saturday, December 5.

Make Your Own Magnetic Tic-Tac-Toe Game, 10+ years. Transform a metal tin into a magnetic tic-tac-toe game. 1-2 pm, Saturday, December 19.

Make Your Own Bird Masquerade Mask, 5+ years. Create your own bird masquerade mask using paper plates, craft sticks, feathers, and more. 10:30-11:30 am, Tuesday, December 29.

Make Your Own Family Conversation Starter Box, all ages. Decorate a keepsake box and fill it with thoughtful question cards designed to spark stories, laughter, and conversations at home. 1-2 pm, Saturday, January 2.

Sound Healing and Relaxation, 12+ years. Experience a transformative sound session featuring an array of soothing elements like gongs, singing bowls, chimes, drums, and tuning forks. Registration required at jcls.org/events or by calling 899-7438. 1-2:15 pm, Saturday, January 9.

What Is AI and Should I Be Worried?, 13+ years. Explore the hot topic of AI with an expert. 1-2:30 pm, Saturday, January 16.

Author's Talk: Applegate Valley During the Great Depression, 18+ years. Marguerite Black came to Forest Creek to teach school in 1932. In her book, historian Laura Ahearn supplements her interpretation of Marguerite's diaries with the voices of three friends and contemporaries to examine life in the Applegate Valley during the 1930s. 11:15 am-12:15 pm, Saturday, January 23.

Build It! LEGO Challenge, 6+ years. Using a mystery bag of LEGO bricks, you'll build a creation inspired by the surprise theme. Your masterpiece will be featured in a library display, and every participant earns a chance to win a prize. 1:30-3 pm, Saturday, January 30.

Make Your Own Tender Heart… Out of Felt!, 18+years. Create a felt heart for decorating or gifting. No advanced crafting experience required, but participants should be comfortable with basic hand sewing. 1-2 pm, Saturday, February 6.

Forest Creek: 5.5 Miles of Jackson County Road & 140 Years of Development, all ages. Forest Creek has shaped 140 years of local life along its upper 5.5 miles. Join us for a trip back in time with Annice Black, daughter of local historians John and Marguerite Black, whose family lived on Forest Creek from 1900 to 2008. 1-2:30 pm, Saturday, February 13.

The Applegate Valley Resilience Hub Initiative, all ages. Learn about the community-led Resilience Hub Initiative and find out how to access emergency information, support services, and resources. 1-2:30 pm, Saturday, February 20.

Death Cafe 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. 4-5:30 pm on the first Thursday of every month.

World Snack Tour, 10+ years. Discover another country through music, trivia, 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 the fourth Saturday of every month.

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

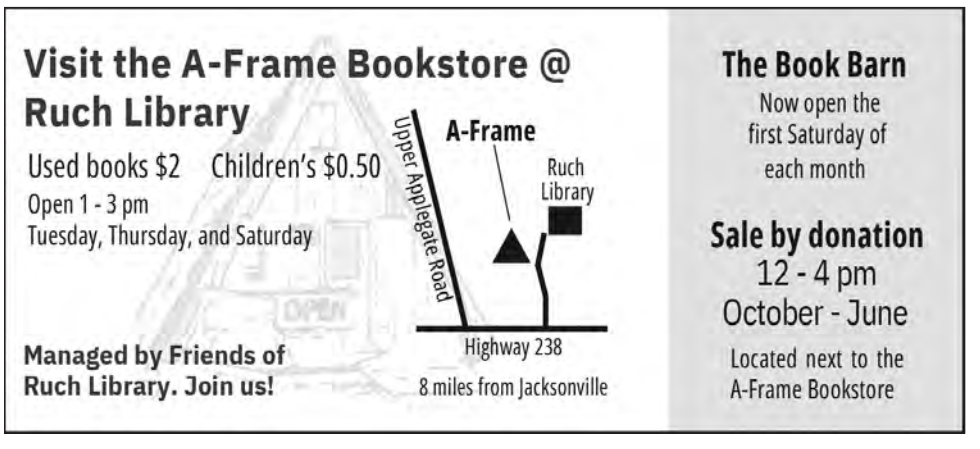
Community Resource Help, all ages. Need help with food, shelter, healthcare, etc.? Meet with a member of our Community Resource Team by appointment or drop in. Noon-4 pm, Wednesdays.

Computer and Tech Help, all ages. Meet with a Technology Education Specialist by appointment or drop in. 1:30-4 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-12 pm, Thursdays.

Community Yoga, 13+ years. Join us for an all-levels yoga class taught by an expert local instructor. Registration is required at jcls.org/events or by calling 899-7438. Bring your own mat. 9-10 am on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month.

Megan Pinder
Ruch Branch Manager
Jackson County Library Services
541-494-3284
mpinder@jcls.org



Fall Reflections on the Ruch Library Campus

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

Refreshing rain and cooler breezes have brought a wonderful relief from the hot days of summer. The brilliant fall colors welcomed customers to the reopening of the First Saturday Book Barn sales season, with runs from October 2026 to June 2027. Hours will be noon-4 pm.

Friends of Ruch Library (FORL) and the community support each other

FORL is grateful for the support of local community members and of folks coming from the Rogue Valley and Grants Pass. Saturday, October 3, brought over 61 visitors to the Book Barn, and over 35 people also shopped at the A-Frame Book Store during its open hours of 1-3 pm. "A celebratory vibe persisted and filled the old barn," said Barb Gilbrait, FORL board member and Book Barn greeter.

All of the people who help run the two stores are volunteer FORL members, board members, or community members. "I believe I speak for all of us who volunteer in the Book Barn when I say that the friends and neighbors, repeat customers, and first-time visitors all were clearly enjoying themselves on October 3," Barb said.

FORL benefits from book donations and the pay-by-donation system used at the Book Barn." Funds go directly toward supporting Ruch Library programs, providing free new books for children, maintaining the bookstore buildings, and contributing to upkeep and expansion of the community's "little library" locations and resupplying them with books.

How to get involved

This coming year will be an important one for getting involved. We know lots of people already have full plates, so we offer several options.

FORL wants to increase care for our current little libraries, adding more over time and coordinating with folks to provide locations in other areas. If a group of people in an area could take on this responsibility, they could get books from FORL and keep their little libraries supplied.

We can use more help sorting the many book donations that come to us. A volunteer could give us just two hours a month or help on occasion when we get large amounts of books that need to be put in the barn.

After a very long wait, we are finally beginning to plan an outdoor space with JCLS that will be shaded and safe for little ones. This would allow patrons to enjoy the outdoors while providing shaded seating inside the library. We will be asking for help with this project, including some fundraising. We have one anonymous donor who is helping to start the funding pool.

The project is in its initial phase, which involves evaluating the space during October, November, and December. It should be completed by the end of the 2027–2028 fiscal year. Watch for more information!

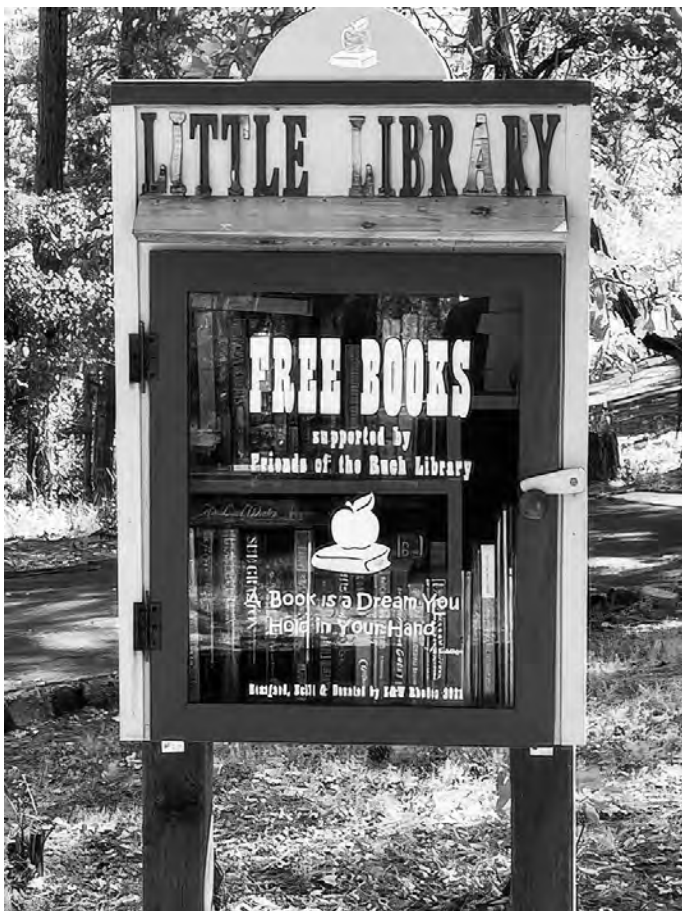
Janis Mohr-Tipton
FORL President
541-846-7501



Display at Ruch Library featured two bookstores, information about who the Friends are and their history, and the four little libraries they support: At China Gulch Road, Cantrall Buckley Park, Ruch Community Outdoor School, and McKee Bridge. Photo by Kat Gore.



Little Library at Ruch Outdoor Community School. Turn onto Upper Applegate Road from Highway 238. Turn into the school entrance; easy pull-off parking. Photo by Thalia Truesdell.



Little Library at Cantrall Buckley Park. From Highway 238, take Hamilton Road to Cantrall Road, one mile. Turn right, pass the fee station, take the first right into the parking lot. Photo by Thalia Truesdell.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Part-time Layout Editor
Applegater *Newsmagazine*

Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc., an established nonprofit organization in Applegate Valley, Oregon, seeks a layout editor for the *Applegater*, a 24-page quarterly newsmagazine that is printed and mailed to all residents of the Applegate Valley. Must have design abilities, be proficient in Adobe InDesign and Photoshop, and be able to meet hard deadlines. Excellent grammar and editing capabilities desired. Prior experience in newspaper/magazine layout for print preferred. Paid by the job as an independent contractor.

For more information about our organization and to view *Applegater* issues, visit applegater.org. Send resume to diana@applegater.org.

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ESSAY

Learning to live with this land

BY AMBER BISHOP

I was aghast to hear Smokey the Bear and "permaculture" called *colonizer* thinking. I just wanted to move to the country and grow my own food. But my education hadn't prepared me for the history and realities of living with this place.

Hailing from the coast, we landed on a beautiful south-facing hillside with Exclusive Farm Use zoning. There was a well, so we were golden, right!? 15 years later, I'm feeling every bit of our hard-won education. A hot, dry hillside is a different proposition from a green riverfront parcel. Summers are brutally hot, and keeping a garden watered is a challenge.

Smoke and evacuation notices are familiar now; in 2019, lightning struck our hillside. We've spent years removing dead and dying trees, cutting and hauling brush, and trying to fight fire with preemptive fire. Yet treated patches soon look untouched again, with new trees dying faster than we can remove them and brush sprouting quicker than it can be cleared. I've grown tired and discouraged. The bottleneck is tightening. The situation *must* be untangled, or it will all burn to the ground.

With my eye on the wooded north-facing slopes along Little Applegate Road, where I estimated that 70 percent of the trees were standing deadwood, our family joined community efforts to mitigate catastrophic wildfire. That's when we learned of the Resilient Landscapes Project through the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council.

Many forests and woodlands in the Rogue Basin were once actively managed. This land is not only fire-prone; it is also fire-adapted. Frequent, generally low-severity fire helped maintain open forests. Indigenous people used fire to open hunting grounds and encourage useful plants, including forage and basketry materials. By parceling out the land, putting up fences and homes, and suppressing fire for decades—no, over a century—Smokey the Bear became a sadly displaced creature.

Wary of the unknown effects of well-meaning interventions, we hesitated to sign on for machine treatment. But we lack the capacity to restore our land in this lifetime. Letting it *all* burn down doesn't solve anything, so we went for it.

This past week, Burnbot treated 11 acres, reducing excessive fuels. The crews prepared carefully, walked the land with us, and listened to our every concern throughout. We marked trees and shrubs in gray areas of the prescription; they cleared with care, leaving a mosaic of habitat and diversity.

It was a little shocking when they finished—we've never seen so much of our land! We now have better access to manage it selectively and plan the next phase: broadcast burning, when conditions and approvals allow.

We're grateful for the people tackling complicated histories, outdated policies, entrenched stigma, and cultural fears. We can recognize historical wrongs without abandoning active stewardship. We can accept that management involves risks without pretending doing nothing is risk-free.

Perhaps developing a permaculture culture means recognizing our place within the landscape and working with its natural cycles, rather than imagining ourselves apart from it. All of us—bears and humans alike—need safe, resilient forests.

Amber Bishop
dirtgardeners@gmail.com

■ PIONEER HISTORY

Continued from page 1

of Jacksonville, with annual dues of $25 for individuals and $50 for couples. New members, volunteers, and supporters are always welcome. Contact them at jacksonvilleboosters.org.

Friends of Jacksonville's Historic Cemetery

The Friends of Jacksonville's Historic Cemetery formed in 2008 as an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) focused on education and preservation. In 2025, its volunteers contributed 730 recorded hours of labor caring for the cemetery.

Volunteer roles include historical research, leading tour groups, marker restoration and cleaning, and grounds cleanup and maintenance. The group also offers an Adopt-A-Block program and accepts donations. Go to friendsjvillecemetery.org and click "Donate."

Applegate Trails Association

The Applegate Trails Association is a 501(c)(3) formed by community residents to develop hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails in the mountains and meadows of the Applegate Valley. It promotes, creates, and maintains the Applegate Ridge Trail and its connectors.

The association shares a vision for a 90-mile non-motorized trail stretching from Grants Pass toward the Pacific Crest Trail near the California border. It is funded by charitable donations. You can donate or sign up to volunteer at applegatetrails.org.

Applegate Valley Historical Society

The Applegate Valley Historical Society is a community- run nonprofit dedicated to sharing the story of the region. It also works to preserve the William Pernoll Grange Store built in 1866 and is today one of the oldest hand-hewn log structures in Jackson County.

The historic museum building, which used to sit at 15050 Highway 238, has been dismantled; the logs are all numbered and stored in a dry facility for restructuring. The society's board of directors is pursuing options for a permanent site locally in Jackson County.

AVHS welcomes members and supporters who want to help keep our valley's history alive. Membership is a simple way to support their efforts. Members receive a newsletter with Society news, special event opportunities, and the "Sharing Local History Circles" schedule throughout the year.

Annual membership rates: Individual $25, Two Persons $40, Family $50.

For membership applications, inquiries, donations, or information about upcoming events, contact Barbara Niedermeyer, AVHS Secretary/Treasurer, at 541-659-3984, or Janis Mohr-Tipton, AVHS President, at 541-441-1385.

Mail to: 3120 Thompson Creek Road, Applegate, OR 97530.

Email: applegatevalleyhs89@gmail.com

Website: applegatehistoricalsociety.org

John DiDomenico
john@thehypehero.com

■ STERLING MINE DITCH TRAIL

Continued from page 3.

to choose from, you have many options for loops, out-and-back, and through hikes, as well as rides if you arrange a shuttle.

The Jack-Ash Trail, in combination with the Applegate Ridge Trail maintained by the Applegate Trails Association (ATA), was named one of 15 Oregon State Parks Signature Trails. Much of this trail is still in the planning process, but once completed, it will be more than 90 miles long and will connect the Pacific Crest Trail to Grants Pass, with access trails into Ashland and Jacksonville along the way. SUTA and ATA named the Signature Trail the Siskiyou Skyline Trail (SST), so you may start hearing about that in the future. The BLM recently signed a decision for several miles of new trails, including a three-mile segment that will allow users to connect the Jack-Ash and East Applegate Ridge trails, a critical link for the SST. We hope to obtain grant funding to build this trail segment during 2027-2028.

We invite you to explore the trails, join us for a work party, join a team to work on a special project, or, if you'd like to get even more involved, you could join the SUTA board. You can visit sutaoregon.org for more information about SUTA and the trails, maps, updates, and other information. The trailheads are also available on Google Maps, and there is equestrian parking at many of the trailheads. Horse trailer parking is noted on the main SUTA system map you can find on the "Maps and Directions" tab of our website. We hold monthly work parties from November through April, so sign up for our email list on the website or connect with SUTA on Facebook to get more information.

Joy Rogalla
joyrogalla@gmail.com

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The *Applegater* is seeking a passionate community member to join our board of directors as secretary. 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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GARDENING FROM THE HEART

The top thing my garden is teaching me this winter

BY NOEL RUIZ



Plum twigs brought inside for early blossoms. Photo by Ann Nguyen.

Dear reader, I hope my letter finds you warm and safe this winter as you consider this question: Do you find your thoughts or body drifting out to the garden?

As I walk through the cold, dormant garden, last year's garden harvests and challenges slowly, slowly begin to compost beneath my feet.

Yesterday's garden memories and dreams of tomorrow's garden gather in this moment's basket.

This fall, our family experienced the death of two furry companions who were inextricably part of our garden activities: our old dog and young barn cat. It's a long story, but circumstances led to their deaths one day apart.

River, our 7-year-old son, took part in burying them, and we all learned more about death.

How will I internalize these deaths?

I am grateful that a garden is in our son's upbringing. Gardens have a knack for teaching us about life and death, don't they?

In an annual garden, one season paints a lifetime. Seedlings sprout, grow-grow-grow, then die. All in a handful of months.

A single season—less than a year. A wild mouse might live a bit longer, if blessed with longevity.

In one season, gardeners learn how death feeds new life in the compost pile. We learn this year's seeds become next year's plants. We learn unseen bacteria and fungi are necessary for every other being to live and thrive.

We learn that trees, the woodiest plants of all, live longer than one season. Many trees can easily outlive a human lifespan—some many times over.

Hello, old tree. What have you seen in your lifetime?

This winter I am learning from wise trees about sending my roots deep into the earth. I am learning from soil how to be human. I am listening to the garden so I can hear my heart.

My mind wonders why we may feel sad when we see a dead mammal—say, a deer strewn along the roadside—but when we pull a weed and toss it aside, there is often far less remorse.

My heart has an answer my mind isn't always ready to hear.

All life is equally beautiful and miraculous.

I can't deny how excited I am to see seedlings sprout in the spring. Any seemingly innocuous seed might spring a moment that kindles my love for life—a little seed in my heart, with a chance to grow into something more. All this from a simple moment in the garden.

In the fall, I often see the past season flash before my eyes as I harvest lessons of hindsight. Oh, how wise I feel in the fall!

This crop grew well; that one didn't. I spent lots of energy here and forgot that garden goal there. I tally my wins, lament my losses. And I think about next season. I think about what will be different the next time around the seasonal merry-go-round.

Yes, winter is a time for planning. Winter is a time for seed catalogs. It's a time to shore up our garden tools and fix broken infrastructure.

And winter is a time to rest, reflect, and dream. To dream into the soil with my roots and listen to the pulse of life echoing in my heart. This brief moment that I am alive. My brief time on Earth. My brief time as a gardener.

As brief as the plant that lives for one season. As brief as the field mouse. As brief as the centuries-old tree.

I am not the big, powerful, impressive human I often fool myself into believing. I am a soil microbe, in Mother Earth's garden.

I am as common as life, as precious as we all are.

I live in the constant flow of death and rebirth. The universal life-death pattern repeats on all scales from micro to macro, from an instant to an eon. Ever present in every garden.

I am the rawness of birth and the dankness of compost.

This winter I feel lucky to be alive. I feel lucky to be a gardener. I am lucky for the chance to share this letter with you.

This winter, I am gardening my heart's soil.

Noel Ruiz
hello@homesteadculture.com

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

See ADDITIONAL PHOTO, page 17.

Building stronger communications in Williams-Applegate

BY MICHELLE MCAFEE



WAARC members hanging out with Bonesy (NO7BNZ) at the Williams Fire Trunk or Treat event on Halloween. Photo by Michelle McAfee.

In November 2025, a motley crew of Williams and Applegate residents gathered at Fruitdale Grange to take their Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ham radio licensing exam. Hosted by the Southern Oregon Amateur Radio Club (SOARC), the exam brought together aspiring radio operators, with volunteer examiners generously sharing their time, knowledge, and encouragement.

This growing interest came from community members attending A Greater Applegate's Resilience Hub meetings, where conversations focused on emergency communications and response in the region. When A Greater Applegate made handheld ham radios available to participants, many folks were inspired to take the next step.

Concerned about how to reach people during an emergency if power failed and cell towers and internet service went down, Allison Cleveland and Ash Martell founded the Williams-Applegate Amateur Radio Club (WAARC) in January 2026. Their mission: build a community-based radio network for everyday communication and emergency response.

With support from the Williams Fire Department Support Team, WAARC found a home in the old firehouse next to the new station, where club members can use the radio setup, including a Motorola XTS Console assembled by SOARC treasurer Bob Billington and a Diamond quarter-wave antenna. The space is now affectionately known as the *Radio Shack*.

Since then, WAARC has been spreading the word. Earlier this year, public meetings in Williams and Applegate introduced the club and welcomed new members. Neighbors encouraged neighbors to get involved, train, and earn their FCC licenses. The club also connected with the community at the Williams Farmers Market, the Williams Fire Department Open House, and the Williams Fire Department Trunk or Treat on Halloween, where its newest member, Bonesy (amateur radio call sign NO7BNZ), made an appearance!

WAARC's growth wouldn't be possible without the encouragement of its partners and supporters, including Joe Stodola (AA7JS), Emergency Coordinator for Josephine County Emergency Communications (JCEC); Lee Merwin (KI7NBQ), Emergency Coordinator for Jackson County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (JC-ARES); SOARC; and A Greater Applegate.

Today, WAARC has 15 active members who volunteer time each week to keep equipment and people prepared for when communication matters most.

If you are a licensed ham radio operator, you can join WAARC's weekly net on Wednesdays at 7 pm via the JCEC repeater network or at 7:30 pm on the 146.46 MHz simplex frequency.

Curious about ham radio? Joe Stodola will be teaching a ham radio license preparation class at the Williams Library beginning February 6. Contact the Williams Library for class dates and times. The next in-person opportunity to take the technical license exam will be February 19, 2027, at the Fruitdale Grange in Grants Pass.

Have questions or just want to learn more? Visit waarc-oregon.org or come say hello at our first public meeting of 2027 on January 16 from 2-3 pm at the Williams Grange. Bring your curiosity, and we'll see you there!

Michelle McAfee
WAARC Member
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Winter updates from Cantrall Buckley Park

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

Hurrah, it finally feels like fall!

When the raindrops finally began to fall over the Applegate Valley, one could almost hear the collective sigh of relief drifting across the landscape. The drooping, wilting leaves of many tree species, still brilliantly colorful, seemed to come alive again. Cool, moisture-filled breezes brought welcome relief to people, wildlife, and plants, and Cantrall Buckley Park began returning to the vibrant green we all love to see.

Fall stewardship opportunities

As fall weather settles in, we are allowing the recent rains to soak deeply into the soil and root zones. Soon, volunteer stewardship opportunities will begin, so keep an eye out for local flyers and announcements on the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council (APWC) website under the theme:

"Springing into action with community stewards for Cantrall Buckley Park"

We hope this catches your attention! Volunteers of all ages are welcome, and families with children are encouraged to participate. Community stewardship is a wonderful way to connect with the park while helping prepare it for a healthy and vibrant spring.



Help needed for trail maintenance to improve public access and safety. Photo by Caleb Galloway.

Fall trail maintenance with Caleb Galloway

Now that fire restrictions have been lifted, we're turning our attention to repairing areas along and near the park's trail system that were affected by hazard tree removal.

Caleb Galloway, the APWC's Riparian Restoration Project Manager, is seeking a crew of four to five teenagers and adults to assist with clearing debris and leaves, trimming overgrowth, and repairing eroded sections of trail to ensure safe and enjoyable access throughout the park. Volunteers can participate on a schedule that works for them. To learn more or join a work crew, contact Caleb at Caleb@apwc.info.

As a thank-you, volunteers receive a complimentary day-use pass on the days they volunteer.



Fall colors were abundant at Cantrall Buckley Park. Photo by Caleb Galloway.

Annual 2027 Jackson County Parks Passes now available

Annual 2027 Jackson County Parks Passes are now available at a discounted rate and can be used immediately, according to Jill, Office Manager for Jackson County Parks.

After fewer than ten visits, the pass typically pays for itself while providing unlimited access to all Jackson County parks through the end of 2027. Simply keep the pass in your vehicle for convenient entry.

Jill also shared an important reminder: the pass belongs to the purchaser. If you carpool or ride in someone else's vehicle, be sure to retrieve your pass before leaving the park. Unfortunately, lost passes cannot be replaced by the county.

Where to purchase a pass

Ruch/Applegate

- Ruch Hardware
- Cantrall Buckley Park Host (cash or check only)

Medford

- Black Bird (also in Phoenix)
- REI
- Sportsman's Warehouse
- Jackson County Taxation Department
- Willie Boats
- Water World

Jackson County

- Jackson County Parks Department (in person or by phone at 541-774-8183)
- Jackson County Roads Department, White City
- Park hosts at all Jackson County parks

Ashland

- Bi-Mart

Help steward our community gem

Please consider helping steward this community gem when your schedule allows. Volunteer efforts this fall will help set the stage for a thriving, healthy park next spring.

Volunteer opportunities are flexible, with dates and times arranged to fit your availability. To learn more, contact Caleb at Calebg@apwc.info or me.

Janis Mohr-Tipton
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A Greater Applegate: 30 Years of community, connection, and resilience

BY MEGAN FEHRMAN

In this season of reflection and celebration, I want to share some of A Greater Applegate's—AGA's—history.

In 1993, residents formed the Applegate Valley Community Center to serve the community's cultural, economic, civic, recreational, and social needs. They envisioned a center that could host classes, workshops, meetings, cultural programs, services, and recreation for residents of all ages.

By 1996, the group incorporated as a nonprofit, the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation (GACDC, which eventually became AGA), and began fundraising. Their original office was in the same place as ours today. They built the library with a community room and supported a broad array of economic-vitality and community-livability projects before changing course to operate Cantrall Buckley County Park when it was in danger of closing in 1998. When Jackson County once again took over park management in 2017, GACDC, now AGA, began the Applegate Valley Visioning process. With the publication of the Vision in 2022, the organization recommitted to sustaining and enhancing the economic, social, and environmental vitality of our rural places and people.

Our mission and goals today are closer to the original intent of the organization than ever before. We are here to make local connections, strengthen rural resilience, support community-led action, and promote the economic and cultural vitality of the valley. Our projects and programs help foster a sense of place and a shared identity across our 500-square-mile watershed. We help residents and businesses solve problems, build skills, and network together to seize opportunities and fill in gaps. And we still want to build a community center….

In this, our 30th year, we see what can happen when the long, slow work of community building starts to pay off. Highlights include the group show of the Applegate Artists at the Langford Gallery in Phoenix and our Call to Artists for the development of the next public art piece—a mural in downtown Applegate. Resilience Hubs—information and resource stations that can pop up when needed due to a natural disaster or disruption—are now established in Williams and Ruch. One such hub was put into practice during the Woodrat Fire when the AGA office in Ruch became a connected and local space for up-to-date information, power, internet, and help during the evacuations. Read more about our Farm and Food work in "A growing season in review" on page 3 of this issue of the *Applegater*. We will debut an Economic Vitality plan in February 2027.

These are just a few examples of how AGA offers backbone coordination and collaboration for projects and programs that strengthen this community. It is good work, but it is also hard work, and getting harder. Many of the grants that we have relied on for years are disappearing. So we are turning to you, dear community. We want help sustaining what has been built for three decades because we believe it can continue to grow. We are asking for place-based investment to keep what we all love about our beautiful valley—local businesses and entrepreneurs, artists, farmers, forests, rivers, recreation, and our care for each other as we face challenges and emergencies.

The current board and staff of A Greater Applegate are standing on the shoulders of giants. To all of the community builders who have come before us—thank you. We understand the time and commitment it took to build a new library, develop the fire department, save the school and the park, and so much more. We can continue to do this kind of thing with our own version of rugged communitarianism and a rural spirit that has existed here long before us but depends on us now to carry it forward.

See A GREATER APPLEGATE, page 14.



INTRODUCING...

Ray Reussner: World-class classical guitarist

BY DIANA COOGLE



From the cover photo for Sound of the Guitar*, a Tyler Oliver and Ron May film of Ray Reussner playing his guitar at the Mission San Antonio.*

Ray Reussner smiled, leaned forward, and said, "I think God must have thought, 'Here's this farm boy from Kansas, a high school wrestler. What if, one day, he walked through a music store and heard a recording of Andres Segovia? I wonder what would happen.'"

What happened was an explosion of musical talent; a lifetime of a close relationship with Segovia, the world's premier classical guitarist; and a thread of luck that included a home in the Applegate.

"Sometimes," Ray says, from the perspective of his 80+ years, "I become fascinated by my life." He marvels at his luck.

There is the luck that led to Segovia, for instance: Ray hearing the recording, buying a guitar, and studying at the Kansas Conservatory of Music until he left for Spain, still a teenager, for a year of study with José Tomás, an assistant to Segovia. During that year, Ray played chess with Tomás after lessons and prepared a piece by Luis de Narváez to play at a Segovia master class.

When it was his turn to play at the master class, Ray was so nervous that his fingers finally crashed down on the strings in a disastrous burst of noise. He was mortified. But Segovia said, "Relax. Let's begin again," and played the piece along with Ray so that Ray was able to steady his fingers and come back to the music.

That was the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Segovia, playing the guitar for him, seeing him when he was on tour, arranging concerts for him, even, on one occasion, cooking for him. Over the years, Ray's feelings for Segovia grew from respect to affection, feelings warmly reciprocated by Segovia.

Ray also studied under John Williams at the Royal College of Music in London, the apex of music education. But it did not go well.

"Segovia felt 'right' in my bones," Ray says. "With John Williams, the DNA was wrong." He struggled through the mismatch for two of the program's three years before it was suggested that he not come back.

See RAY REUSSNER, page 20.

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OPINION

The Cedar Flat Management Project

BY SANDY OLKEN

Logging in our local forests—such as the 598-acre Cedar Flat Forest Management Project (CFFMP)—devastates wildlife habitat, local flora, and our watershed. Many people in our community oppose the environmental degradation of this logging operation.

Fortunately, several environmental groups, including the Williams Community Forest Project (WCFP), are actively monitoring the areas slated for management. The goals are to observe current conditions in the forest and what remains after logging and to determine whether the logging company, the Murphy Timber Company, accurately follows the various treatment plans the BLM has prescribed.

This includes leaving trees over 36 inches in diameter unharmed. Protecting old-growth forests is imperative for the recovery of the northern spotted owl, a key indicator species for the health of the forest. One of the CFFMP objectives is to "improve northern spotted owl habitat." Environmental groups are closely monitoring Unit 3-3 at Holcomb Peak. This site has many large, healthy, fire-resistant trees and is recognized as habitat for northern spotted owls. Holcomb Peak's old-growth stands fall under the BLM's designation for Late Successional Reserve land-use allocation, a designation intended to protect and foster mature and old-growth forest ecosystems. How cutting trees in this area will benefit spotted owl habitat is perplexing, but ongoing observation will help ensure that trees marked to remain standing do so.

The spread of *Phytophthora lateralis*, a deadly fungal disease that can be transported by logging trucks, is being closely watched. The Williams area contains the easternmost stands of Port Orford Cedar, a tree highly susceptible to this root rot. All efforts to preserve these special stands should be implemented. Framing logging activities that will affect healthy trees as a means of "improving forest resilience" is deeply concerning.

Most troubling is how these proposed operations directly threaten local watersheds, including West Fork, Rock Creek, and Glade Creek. Water samples taken before and after operations will measure the environmental impact imposed by logging. Water clarity and chemical makeup will be closely monitored as part of ongoing efforts to protect the watershed—especially for habitat of the threatened coho salmon.

It is well documented that cutting trees and building new roads increase stream sediment and erosion by removing soil-stabilizing trees. Eroded soil, especially from steep hillsides, slides into the creeks below, smothering fish-spawning gravel.

Diligent protection of the forests that sustain our water resources must take precedence in forest management. WCFP encourages you to monitor the forests and water in your area. Take water samples, look at what's slated for cutting and for leaving, and document your findings. Having solid evidence of logging's effects can help future forest managers make decisions that truly reflect the BLM's core mission "to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for present and future generations."

It's our responsibility to do whatever is within our power to ensure future generations receive the many gifts we are fortunate to enjoy from our beautiful southern Oregon forests.

To learn more about WCFP, visit williamscommunityforestproject.org.

Sandy Olken
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Community over convenience

Our community commitment to save Ruch Hardware

BY KATIE WALKER

If you live in the Ruch area, you probably know the Robinson family. Keel and Lauren Robinson have run Ruch Hardware since 2023, and you may also recognize them as employees at the Ruch Market. That's where I met Keel. One day, while he was ringing me up, we got to talking about the hardware store and how hard it had become to make ends meet. The reason he and Lauren are working at the market, he explained, is that the hardware store isn't bringing in enough income, even with the whole family taking turns working there without pay.

When I heard this, I thought, "We can't let this happen!" The hardware store and the family behind it are a pillar of our community. They provide our local schools, churches, and businesses with necessities, supply our animals with feed, and our homes with propane, to mention a few of their offerings. And beyond that, they are a wholesome and honest family that always lends a hand to their neighbors. I've sat with Lauren at the store many times to plan this effort, and there is not a customer she doesn't know by name, and even fewer that she doesn't hug! Their four children, Jimmy (17), Anthony (15), Kaelin (9), and Symphanie (5), also help keep the store running. Even while volunteering with the Mercy Flights Explorer Program, Jimmy and Anthony find time to help out. I've seen little Kaelin learning to ring up propane while Symphanie gives every doggie visitor a treat.

Shopping at big-box stores in Medford may seem cheaper now, but losing local businesses could cost us more in the long run. Once local competition disappears, large chains have greater control over prices. Now more than ever, it matters that we use our money to support the people and places we love, care for the things we value, and strengthen our community.

Ruch Hardware has been meeting our needs for about 20 years. It's time for us to come together to meet theirs. And this isn't just about one local family or one local business. Let's show that the Applegate Valley is a place where family-owned businesses don't just make enough to support their families, but thrive!

The good news is that it's already working. Since brainstorming ways to support the store with Lauren and Keel and promoting the effort through social media, we've seen the community respond, with more people making Ruch Hardware their first choice for their hardware needs. Sales are up, volunteers like mother and community member Kayla Logan are picking up shifts, and many generous donations have come in through our GoFundMe.

Locals have also stepped up in other ways. Megan Howell is developing an online ordering and subscription system, while Dustin Newkirk has redesigned the Ruch Hardware website. We hope that as more people choose Ruch Hardware for their needs, we can keep the store going for years to come.

We're excited to announce that this April we'll be hosting a Grand Reopening Fundraiser Event with live music, food, art, a silent auction, and activities for kids. We're inviting local vendors, artists, and musicians to help save Ruch Hardware! If you'd like to take part, please reach out to Katie Walker at ktwalker1990@gmail.com or Lauren Robinson at lauren@ruchhardware.com.

Katie Walker
ktwalker1990@gmail.com

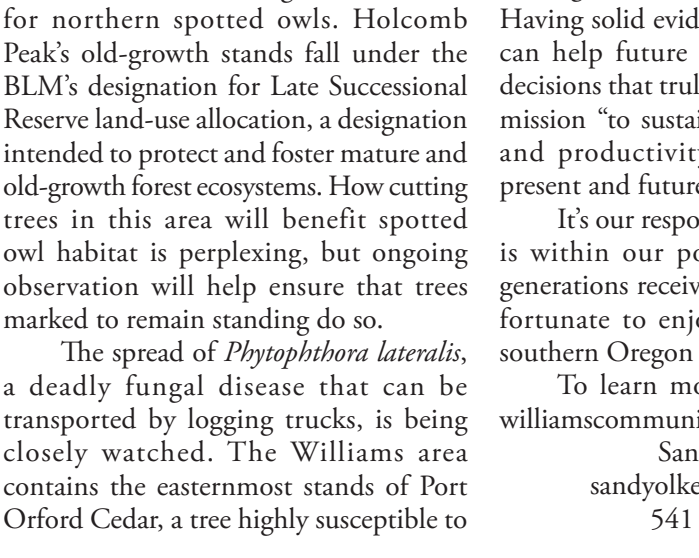
■ SISKIYOU CREST MOTH

Continued from page 1.

The vials of moths are kept in a cooler during the moth night and then put into a freezer until they are taken up to OSU for identification and accession into the Arthropod Collection.

Lepidopterist Dana Ross leads the project, with assistance from Paul Hammond, a research associate in the Department of Entomology at Oregon State University. Dana and Paul have spent countless hours in the lab identifying the moths, after which Dana has carefully pinned the samples to be displayed in cabinets at OSAC, which has approximately three million insect specimens and is the largest repository of Pacific Northwest insects in the world. According to OSAC, "The specimens we care for and the data associated with them are part of a global network of biodiversity research repositories that together form the foundations of how scientists empirically document, describe, and test our growing knowledge of Earth's biodiversity."

The SCMP has found an astounding diversity of moth species, from tiny micromoths to blunt-nosed snout moths, from plume moths with T-shaped bodies that make them look like model airplanes to colorful tiger moths, from elegant moths like Edwards' glassy wings to deceptive sallow moths that blend into their conifer host plants—and bumble-bee mimics like the snowberry clearwing moth, very large moths like the ceanothus silk moth, and multiple species of sphinx moths that feed at flowers like hummingbirds. We also found the SCMP's mascot moth, the rare Siskiyou hadena, whose range is centered on the Siskiyou Mountains.



White-lined sphinx moth at Observation Gap sampling site. Photo by Suzie Savoie.

As interest in this unique project has grown, a large number of people have volunteered to stay up late and get up early to help sample moths. They have been integral to the success of the project. This year, volunteers completed 186 shifts during 49 separate moth nights centered around the new moon for optimal darkness.



Siskiyou Crest Moth Project moth night on Elliott Creek. Photo by Suzie Savoie.

The moth-night setup consists of a white sheet secured to a frame and illuminated by a battery-powered blacklight.

Moth nights start at dusk and go until about 11 pm or midnight to capture as many species as late into the night as possible. Many moth species don't come out until very late at night, or closer to dawn, so volunteers get up between 4:30 and 5 am on a midsummer morning to sample moths on the sheets before the birds and yellowjackets find a morning snack.

Warm, still nights drew the most moths, but even cooler, windy nights had some show up. On some nights, dozens of the same species of moth came to the sheet, while on other nights the species were so varied it was hard to tell them apart. And moths weren't the only visitors to the sheets. Many other nocturnal insects are also attracted to the light, including beetles, flies, wasps, owl flies, and crane flies. Sometimes it felt like a bazillion insects had flown in. Sometimes the insects were so thick it was hard to find the moths among them.

Moths have deservedly garnered a lot more notice and praise recently for being as important for pollination as bees, for being vital components of the ecosystem, and for their nocturnal beauty.

Learn more and donate at siskiyoucrestcoalition.org/siskiyou-crest-moth-project/.

Suzie Savoie
Siskiyou Crest Moth Project volunteer
klamathsiskiyou@gmail.com

OPINION

Lone Wolf Timber Sale: The next phase in BLM's deforestation plan

BY ROSE GERSTNER

The Lone Wolf Timber Sale recently sold for $380,086 to Mineral Creek Logging and Hauling, a notoriously destructive logger in our area. Mineral Creek caused catastrophic landslides, debris flows, and bulldozing of seasonal streams while clearcutting forests in the Boaz Timber Sale in the Upper Applegate just a couple of years ago.

As part of the Bureau of Land Management's sprawling Douglas Fir Mortality Complex, this plan calls for logging 747 acres and building 2.4 miles of new permanent road—in watersheds already suffering from excessive logging and high-density road networks.



Community members protest the Lone Wolf Timber Sale Auction on September 24 at the Medford District BLM offices in Medford. Photo by Suzie Savoie.

The sale will log units above Griffin Lane, in the headwaters of Sterling Creek on Dutch Gulch, Grub Gulch, and Deming Gulch. In total, the BLM expects to log approximately 5.6 million board feet of timber. Mineral Creek is getting a bargain-basement deal while taxpayers bear the hefty costs of designing and administering the sale.

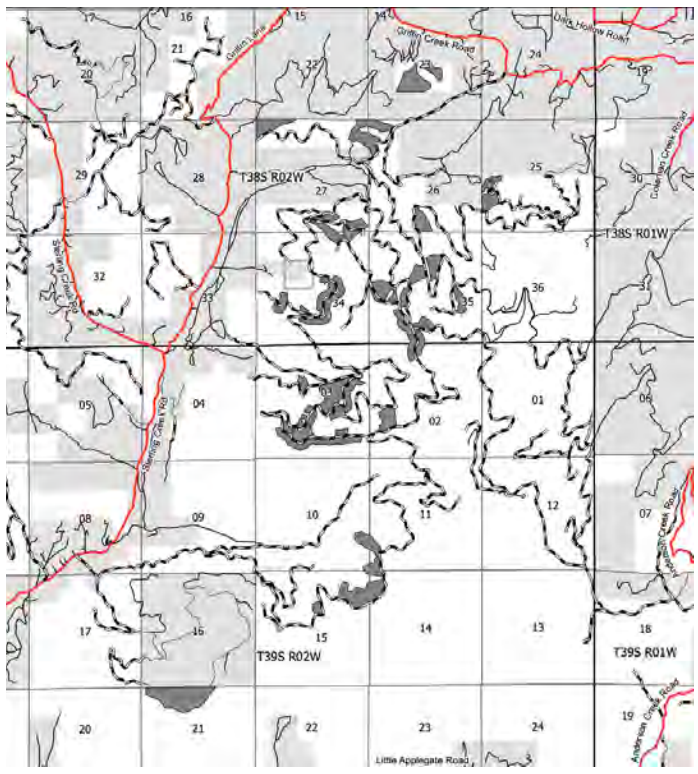
This public forest giveaway will permanently alter and degrade the forests, watershed, and environment of the Applegate Valley, sacrificing our forests for timber industry profits at the public's expense.

Like the current SOS Project, the Lone Wolf sale proposes more environmentally devastating "salvage" logging in stands of living, green trees and in stands with significant recent beetle mortality. In both habitat types, the result is often that very few trees per acre and virtually no canopy cover remain. Logging both green trees and standing dead snags deeply impacts the health of our forests.

This sale will threaten our fisheries, streams, and rivers by logging Riparian Reserves. New roads, new log landings, and extensive yarding will add sediment to local streams. Other recent BLM salvage logging projects have triggered large landslides and debris flows that filled seasonal streams with mud, debris, and sediment.

When Mineral Creek logged on Boaz Mountain, they bulldozed seasonal streams and converted stream channels into skid trails. These impacts on Riparian Reserves are severe, long-lasting, and totally avoidable, yet they have become routine on our BLM lands.

This sale will log healthy, functional forest habitats, including Late Successional Reserves, which protect and preserve older wildlife habitats. It will devastate mature and late-successional stands, including those that experienced little to no significant mortality during the previous drought and beetle-mortality events. By logging these survivors, the BLM is permanently degrading the forests of the future.



The Lone Wolf Timber Sale map from the Timber Sale Prospectus depicts the timber sale units in dark gray. Sterling Creek Road and Griffin Lane are on the left. Most of the Lone Wolf Timber Sale is east of these two roads on the western flanks of Anderson Butte. Photo by BLM.

This project is but one part of the BLM's massive deforestation agenda in the Applegate Valley. The Medford District BLM has unleashed a series of extreme logging projects that have converted previously forested landscapes into non-native annual grasslands or habitats packed with young, dense, even-aged vegetation with extremely high fire risks.

This Trump-era logging will change the Applegate River watershed forever. Future generations will experience a less vibrant, less beautiful, less abundant environment than we enjoy today. This rush to log our public lands is motivated by the greed of timber interests and the collusion of the Trump administration.

Collectively, the timber sales being implemented in the Applegate Valley represent an unprecedented threat to our entire community. Local and national public land managers demonstrate little concern for the health of our wildlands. Through its actions, the BLM seems unaware that human health and safety are inextricably woven into the health of our environment.

If you, too, oppose this environmentally risky level of logging by the BLM, please contact your elected representatives to let them know about your opposition.

Rose Gerstner
rosegerstner@gmail.com

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

New science highlights importance of the Siskiyou Crest and Applegate River watershed

BY DOMINICK A. DELLASELLA, PHD

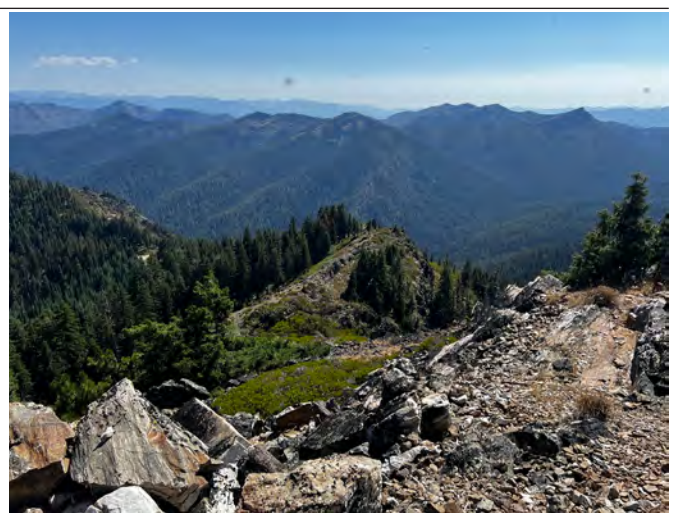
I recently led a team of scientists in publishing "An Ecoregion Conservation Assessment for the Klamath-Siskiyou Ecoregion and Proposed Siskiyou Crest Climate Refuge, Southwestern Oregon and Northern California, USA" in the peer-reviewed journal *Diversity*.

The Ecosystem Conservation Assessment (ECA) is an in-depth analysis of the irreplaceable values of the Siskiyou Crest and the broader Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains of southwestern Oregon and northwestern California, including the Applegate River watershed. For two years, our science team analyzed and created new data sets, including mature and old-growth forest ("older forests") locations, wildfire severity in relation to protected and managed areas, habitat and landscape connectivity for the spotted owl and Pacific fisher, and recent surveys on butterflies, moths, bees, and plants. We also examined projected climatic changes under different greenhouse gas emissions and logging levels in the region. Our study charts a new path toward more effective community wildfire protection and the preservation of older forests, roadless areas, and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics that can act as refugia for wildlife in an inhospitable and overheating landscape populated by extensive logging and roads.

Notably, the Applegate River watershed is the second largest watershed in the Siskiyou Crest subregion, which made up a large portion of our study area. We found that the Siskiyou Crest and the Applegate watershed contained a high concentration of older forests between 80 and 200 years old.

Importantly, we also found higher levels of older forests that have persisted in the Siskiyou Crest than in other portions of the Klamath-Siskiyou, including areas that experienced at least one fire between 1985 and 2023 but have retained their older forest characteristics as refugia. We also found that fire severity was highest in managed landscapes with lower protection levels, while roadless areas, Wilderness Areas, and Lands with Wilderness Characteristics burned at lower severity. Although fire has been less prevalent in the Applegate watershed, much of it has burned at low to moderate severity, allowing most trees to survive. Logged areas had higher levels of high-severity fire, in which most trees were killed.

Our analysis found that the Applegate River watershed contains a large Fisher Connectivity Conservation Priority Area that can facilitate dispersal across the Siskiyou Crest bioregion along with a significant concentration of suitable spotted owl habitat.



The Siskiyou Crest. Photo by D. DellaSala.

Climate change modeling showed refugia habitat in the Siskiyou Crest bioregion, especially at higher elevations and in older forest types. The Applegate River watershed contains some of the highest peaks in the Siskiyou Crest bioregion, steep north-facing slopes, deep protected canyons, large roadless areas, forests with a recent history of low- to moderate-severity fire, and older forest areas that buffer against the worst effects of climate change. Under high emissions, which the world is currently on, refugia attributes are likely to break down at the turn of the century due to overheating and more fires. Importantly, the "hang time" for maintaining biodiversity in a changing climate is longer on the Siskiyou Crest than in many other portions of the region.

Unfortunately, we also found that not nearly enough areas in the Siskiyou Crest are protected, and most areas, including public lands, are threatened with increased logging, mining, road construction, and climate stressors. This includes the Applegate watershed, where recent BLM logging has badly damaged local watersheds through extensive

See SISKIYOU CREST, page 18.

Williams Fire District: A community's trust, a commitment to deliver

BY CHRIS WOLFARD

On November 3, the Williams community made an important decision about the future of its fire district. With more than two-thirds of voters supporting the five-year operating levy, Williams Fire District now has an opportunity to build upon the progress made over the past several months.

My initial reaction to the election results was relief, followed closely by gratitude and a renewed sense of responsibility: relief that the hard work of so many dedicated people had paid off, gratitude for a community willing to invest in its fire district, and responsibility because that investment represents more than funding.



Williams Community members stop by for a station tour with Firefighter Devin Brennan. Please stop by any time! Our firefighters love meeting future junior cadets. Photo by Rachael Couch.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the Williams Rural Fire District Support Team, whose members devoted countless hours to community outreach, answering questions and encouraging participation in the election. Their dedication, along with the involvement of many community supporters, played an important role in the outcome.

I also want to recognize our Board of Directors, district employees, and volunteers for their continued commitment to serving the Williams community throughout this process.

The past several months have brought significant changes to Williams Fire District. Through the dedication of our personnel and partnerships with neighboring agencies, we have strengthened the organization and improved our emergency response capabilities. One of the most important accomplishments was establishing 24-hour staffing in July, providing around-the-clock coverage for our community.

The levy provides the financial foundation to maintain that staffing while building the organizational and financial stability needed for the future. Our priorities are straightforward: provide reliable emergency services, support our personnel and volunteers, and manage public funds responsibly. Our goal is not to build a bigger fire district, but a stronger, more sustainable one.

To everyone who participated in this process, whether through advocacy, attending meetings, asking hard questions, seeking information, or simply casting a ballot, thank you. Community involvement and a willingness to ask challenging questions are essential to good governance. We recognize that not everyone supported the levy, and we respect those differing perspectives. Our commitment to responsible financial management, transparency, and dependable emergency services extends equally to every resident.



Firefighter Cooper loves to come along to community events. Photo by Rachael Couch.

I would also encourage everyone to stay engaged. Attend public meetings, participate in community events, and continue asking questions and sharing your perspectives. Consider becoming involved with Williams Fire District as a volunteer firefighter or support team member. Just as importantly, look for opportunities to contribute to the many other organizations and activities that make Williams such a special place to live. A strong fire district is just one part of a strong community, and we all have a role in building both.

The election may be behind us, but our work is far from finished. The Williams community has placed its faith in our fire district, and we recognize the responsibility that comes with that trust. It is now our responsibility to demonstrate, through our actions, that the community's trust has been well placed.

Chris Wolfard
Fire Chief, Williams Fire District
cwolfard@applegatefd.com

■ A GREATER APPLEGATER

Continued from page 10.

Every thriving community is sustained by people who believe in the place they love. I am inviting you to be part of our future by joining the Applegate Love Club—help us turn 30 years of service into 31 years, and, hopefully, many more. By making a monthly or annual investment, you become a partner in turning ideas into action and keeping our rural community vital and resilient. Thank you for supporting AGA and, ultimately, a greater Applegate Valley. In the words of Wendell Berry, "If we keep faithful to our land and our people, both together, never apart, then we will always find the right work to do, and our long, necessary, difficult, happy effort will continue."

Megan Fehrman
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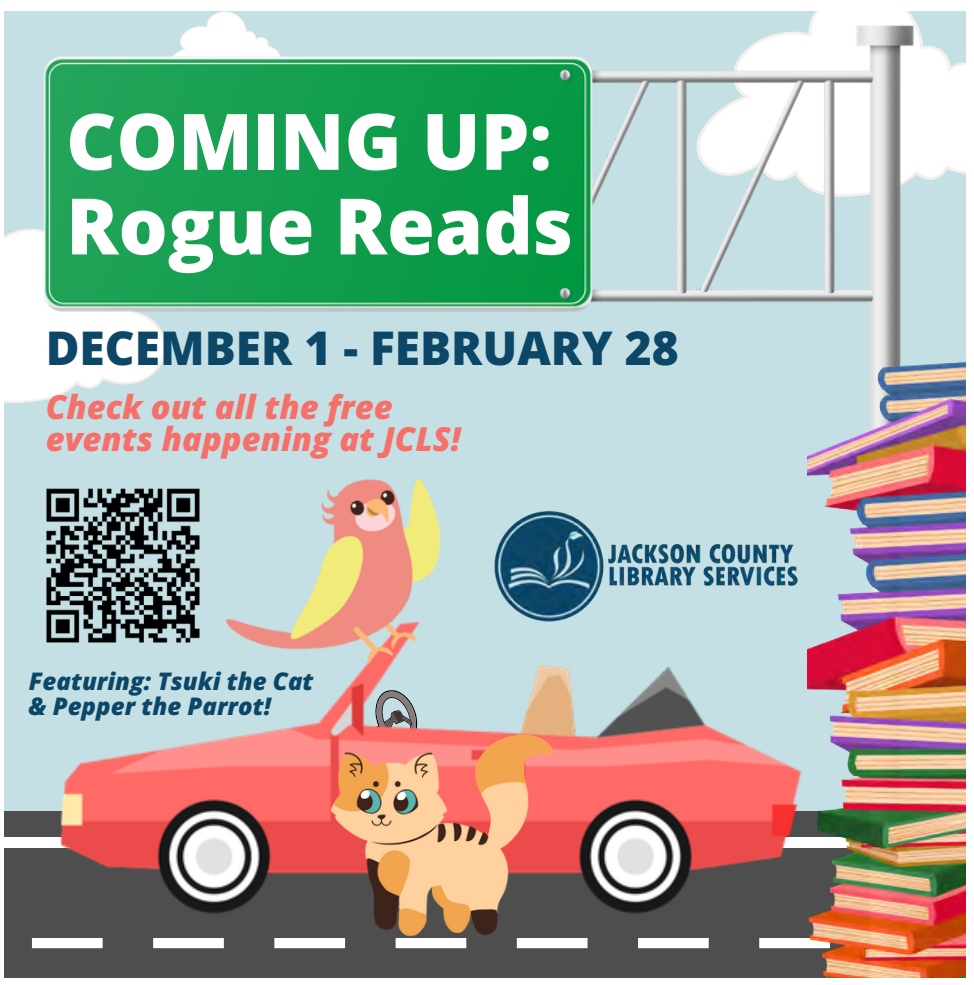

THROUGH THE LEPIDOPTERAN LENS

In the field with the Field Crescent *Phyciodes pulchella*

BY LINDA KAPPEN



Linda Kappen.

Field Crescent, *Phyciodes pulchella*, is a butterfly in the Nymphalidae family, with a wingspan of up to one inch.

Dorsally, the male is lightly banded with orange spots on a dark brown to black background. The larger female has a lighter brown background and more spots, with more strongly banded colors of orange and spots of light orange to cream. Both sexes have black dots encircled by orange on the submarginal area of the dorsal hindwing.

Ventrally, the male is orange to light orange, while the female's dorsal wings have more distinct brown markings against a cream background. The clubs (tips) of the Field Crescent's antennae are black or dark brown, but they're orange in other crescent butterfly species of the southern Oregon area.



A female Field Crescent. Photo by Linda Kappen.

Host plants for the Field Crescent are native asters. For nectar, these butterflies will use thistles, milkweeds, asters, pearly everlasting, and any other composite flowers of the Asteraceae family. They also seek mud or damp ground from seeps. The male Field Crescent will patrol areas of open meadows, roadside habitats, or gardens for females. The female will lay masses of eggs on the underside of leaves of host plants. In warmer climates, more than one brood may occur. The larvae overwinter, with adults eclosing (emerging from the pupal case) at different times throughout the flight season. Adults can be seen flying from spring in May to fall in September at lower to higher elevations.

The Field Crescent ranges across Western North America, from Mexico and California eastward to Arkansas, Arizona, and New Mexico. Local habitats are prairies, open lower-elevation meadows, mountain meadows, roadsides, and forests. This butterfly occurs from sea level to mountain summits.



The ventral view. Photo by Linda Kappen

When participating in various southern Oregon surveys, I have seen the Field Crescent in semi-moist meadows, Darlingtonia bogs, dry areas above riparian habitats, dirt roads, and open meadows at various elevations.

I was on a solo survey when I came across a mating pair of Field Crescents clearly displaying the wing patterns on the dorsal wings of the male and female of this butterfly. (See photo.) Seeing a mating pair is one of my favorite things to encounter in the field, whether it is the ventral or the dorsal view. You can enjoy looking for and spotting this beautiful little butterfly, the Field Crescent, throughout our summer months here in the Pacific Northwest.

Fun fact: the name *Phyciodes pulchella* comes from the Latin word *pulchella*, meaning "beautiful." *Phyciodes* is the genus, referring to a group of small butterflies that have cream and orange markings on black or brown base colors and crescent shapes on the underside of wings.

Linda Kappen
humbugkapps@hotmail.com



A mating pair, with the female above and the male below. Photo by Linda Kappen

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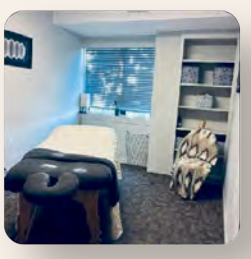



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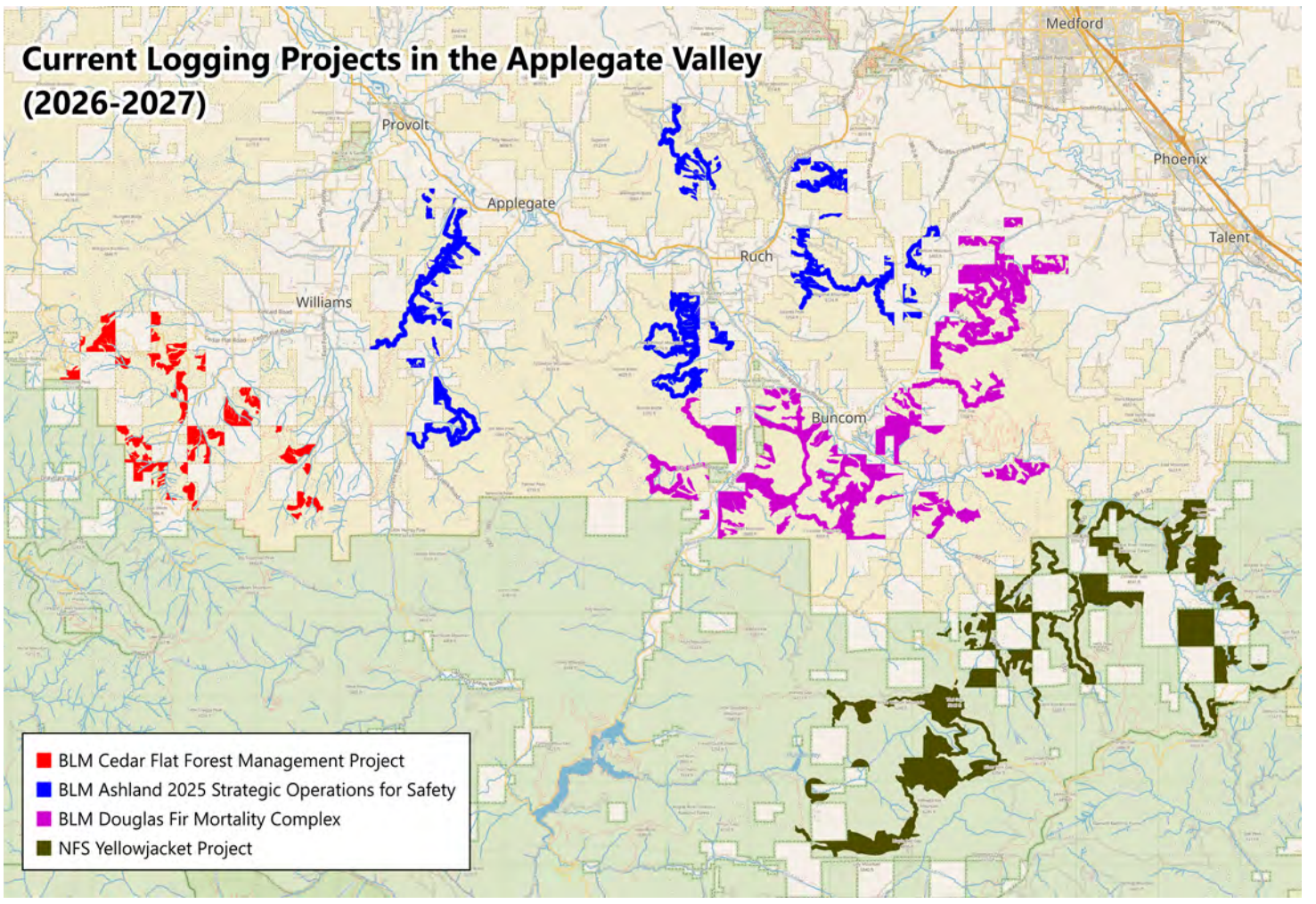
THE SISKIYOU MOUNTAIN ADVOCATE

The rhetoric and the reality of BLM logging and fire risk reduction in the Applegate Valley

BY LUKE RUEDIGER



Applegate Siskiyou Alliance 2026 logging poster.

Despite all the rhetoric about the Applegate Valley and its elevated fire risks, wildfires in the past few fire seasons have been relatively small, almost entirely human-caused, and relatively moderate in their intensity. Research shows that between 1985 and 2023, the Applegate Valley has burned less than most other major watersheds in the Siskiyou Crest region, and most of that fire has burned at low to moderate severity (Della Sala, 2026).

Recent fires have been concerning for residents living adjacent to or in the vicinity of the 2024 Upper Applegate, 2025 Upper Applegate, 2025 Deming Gulch, 2026 Woodrat, and 2026 Anderson Butte Fires. However, these fires had significant benefits to the health of surrounding habitats, native plant populations, pollinators, wildlife, and other species, while supporting long-term fire resilience and maintaining fire-adapted forests, woodlands, and chaparral habitats.

Scientific studies conducted in southwest Oregon and throughout the West have found lower-severity fire effects in unmanaged forests and in northern spotted owl habitats with abundant snags, downed trees, and closed canopy conditions (Lesmeister 2019, Lesmeister 2021, Zald 2018, Bradley 2016). Stands with abundant beetle-killed snags in the Applegate area have burned in the past few years, but not at elevated severity or with extreme rates of spread.

In a report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Medford District BLM found that in the 2024 Upper Applegate Fire, "the areas that were left unburned or that burned at a low severity largely corresponded with areas of northern spotted owl habitat," while the "areas that burned at moderate or high severity largely corresponded with areas modeled as non-habitat." This means the densest, oldest forests with the heaviest canopy burned at the lowest severity, just as they did in the 2017 Abney Fire at the headwaters of the Applegate River, and just as fires have in most recent wildfire events.

Over the course of the last few years, the BLM has been logging off whole hillsides in the Applegate in the name of fuel reduction and fire restoration and supposedly to mitigate beetle mortality. However, from a fire/fuel perspective, the BLM's claims that logging treatments will reduce fire risks are contrary to both real-world, on-the-ground wildfire outcomes and the best available science. In fact, even the BLM's own local analysis for the Clean Slate Timber Sale found that the creation of canopy gaps from logging would increase fire risks in both the short and long term: "For the first 1 to 5 years after harvest, these stands would remain a slash fuel type until the shrubs, grasses, and planted trees become established. After the establishment of regeneration, these stands would move into a brush fuel type. Brush fuel types are more volatile and are susceptible to high rates of fire-caused mortality. Stands could exhibit higher flame lengths, rates of spread, and fire intensity. Fires started within these stands could be difficult to initially attack and control. For 5 to 20 years following planting, the overall fire hazard would increase in these stands."

Plot-based, forest-monitoring data gathered by local volunteers in the BLM's recent Apple Saws Timber Sale above Ruch found that BLM's logging only retained 11 percent canopy cover on the eastern face of Ben Johnson Mountain. The logging removed 87 percent of the conifers and 77 percent of mature hardwood trees. Ironically, tree mortality rates are highest in BLM logging units, and the cumulative mortality from logging, where thousands of living, green trees have been removed, far exceeds the effects of recent beetle mortality in the Applegate Watershed.

The BLM has either authorized, proposed, or is currently implementing timber sales across the Applegate, from Williams to Thompson Creek, in the Upper Applegate Valley, the Little Applegate Valley, and all around Ruch. The result of this logging will be to decimate the forests of the Applegate, remove many mature fire-resistant trees, deposit slash across the forest floor, and make stands hotter, drier, and windier, while encouraging the regeneration of dense, even-aged, highly flammable young trees, shrubs, and stump-sprouting hardwoods that will increase fire risks.

The BLM's claim to be implementing fire risk reduction is a smokescreen for the most aggressive federal land logging projects and the most blatant timber grab in multiple decades in the Applegate Valley. The Applegate Siskiyou Alliance is seeing the forest for the trees and is committed to pushing back on false claims of fire risk reduction.

Luke Ruediger
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Working together in the Applegate community to save Applegate forests for everyone

BY MEADOWSWEET LEVI

Circles of Seedlings and Sustainable Earth Education Direct Stewardship (SEEDS) has community partnerships with Applegate Siskiyou Alliance, Save Applegate Forests for Everyone, Williams Community Forest Project, local schools, and children to save Applegate forests and protect them from damaging logging projects.

Our vision is to see local children and forests growing up together through sustainable forest stewardship, forest field trips, children's forest art, high school graduation credits for forest monitoring, educational children's hikes, and more.

In November, we launched a Forest Art Gallery along the East Applegate Ridge Trail to highlight both children's forest art—attached to trees along the trail—and the need to protect the forests along the trail from logging. This forest art installation will feature "forest flags" with artistic renderings of each child's thoughts about "What I Love About Forests."

We are all working together in the Applegate community to save Applegate forests for everyone!

Meadowsweet Levi
meadowsweetseed@yahoo.com



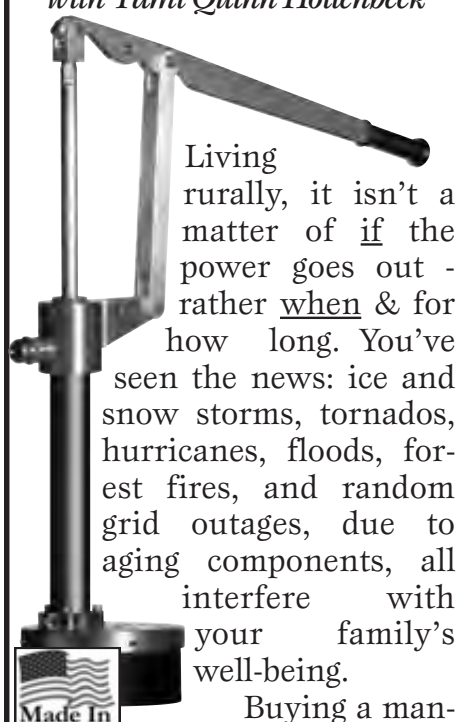
The Applegate Siskiyou Alliance's Yellowjacket Old Growth Unlogged Forest field trip with the Forest Service, Circles of Seedlings, Williams Community Forest, and the community. Photo by Meadowsweet Levi.

Visit us online at applegater.org.



Why Buy A Hand Pump?

with Tami Quinn Hollenbeck



Living rurally, it isn't a matter of <u>if</u> the power goes out - rather <u>when</u> & for how long. You've seen the news: ice and snow storms, tornados, hurricanes, floods, forest fires, and random grid outages, due to aging components, all interfere with your family's well-being.

Buying a manual pump is like insurance. Except instead of having to pay again every year, it's a one-time payment. Making a one-time payment for "insurance," that your family will have water in an emergency, should be a simple choice.

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The home internet gap facing students in Jackson County and the Applegate Valley

BY JUSTIN LINDHOLM

The Applegate Valley sits within Jackson County, where 2,146 children, about 4.7 percent of the county's kids, have no internet subscription at home. According to a CompareInternet analysis of the latest census data, that rate runs above Oregon's statewide figure of 3.5 percent, in a state that sits among the lower rates in the country.

Most of that gap is a connection problem, not a device one. Of those 2,146 children, 1,914 live in a home that has a computer but no way to get it online, and 232 have no computer at all. For most families, the hardware is already there. What is missing is service they can get or afford.

More and more of schoolwork now assumes a steady home connection. Homework gets turned in through an online portal, research starts with a search bar, and college and financial aid forms live entirely on the web. For a student without a reliable connection at home, that means finding a signal somewhere else—a library, a parking lot, a relative's house, or a parent's phone—and none of those hold up once the workload grows.

The gap is easy to miss. A student who falls behind because the connection dropped can look, on a report card, like a student who didn't try. That is part of why a county-level number is worth putting on the table.

It doesn't fall evenly across the county, and that is where a place like the Applegate Valley comes in. The gap tends to track household income and how rural a household is, so it runs higher in the outlying rural communities, the Applegate Valley among them, than a countywide figure suggests. For a family on a tight budget in an area where service is already thinner, the monthly internet bill is often the first thing to go.

Justin Lindholm
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Early-blooming snowdrops help turn the seasons. Photo by Ann Nguyen. (Additional Photo from Page 9, The top thing my garden is teaching me this winter.)

Got News?

The *Applegater* welcomes submissions!
We're your newspaper and want to share your news with readers throughout the Applegate Valley watershed's many neighborhoods.
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THE GRAPES OF CATH

Raise your glass

BY CATHY RODGERS



We give plenty of thought to the wine in our glass, but how often do we consider the glass itself? Whether you're enjoying a bold Applegate Valley red beside the river or an expressive white on the porch, your glass can influence the aromas you notice, the temperature of each sip, and the pleasure of the experience.

With such an inviting range of local wines, which glass should you choose? Start with its anatomy: bowl, rim, stem, and base. The bowl provides room to swirl; a tapered opening concentrates aromas near your nose; the stem helps keep warm hands away from the wine; and the base provides stability.

No glass can turn an ordinary wine into an extraordinary one, but a thoughtful pairing can help you appreciate what is already there. Fortunately, enjoying the valley's diversity does not require a cupboard overflowing with specialized stemware.

For bold reds such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Tempranillo, choose a generous bowl with an opening narrower than its widest point. The extra space allows room for swirling and encourages aromas to develop, while the tapered rim helps concentrate them. Explore the Bordeaux reds cultivated by Marcos and Heidi Martin at Crooked Barn, or savor a robust Tempranillo from Rachael Martin at Red Lily.

For lighter reds such as Pinot Noir, a Burgundy-style glass offers a broad bowl and tapered opening, giving delicate aromas room to emerge. Try the valley's Pinot Noir offerings at Schmidt and Schultz wineries, and notice how the fragrance changes after a gentle swirl.

White wines generally suit a smaller bowl and tapered rim. Smaller pours make it easier to enjoy the wine while chilled, and the shape brings fresh aromas into focus. Crisp, unoaked Chardonnays, such as those produced by LongSword, work well in this style. A richer, oak-aged Chardonnay may benefit from a broader bowl that allows its layered aromas to unfold.

The Rhône varieties deserve individual attention. Grenache and Syrah are reds; Viognier is white, and each offers a different experience. A medium-sized, tapered glass makes a useful starting point for exploring selections at Valley View. For Cowhorn's fuller Syrah, try a larger bowl to appreciate its fruit, spice, and savory notes. Aromatic Viognier can also reward a little extra room without requiring an oversized red-wine glass.

For rosé, choose a smaller, tapered glass and serve the wine chilled. Sparkling wine presents another choice: the familiar flute showcases streams of bubbles, while a tulip-shaped glass offers more room to enjoy the bouquet. Its narrower opening still helps retain effervescence. Quady North offers a sparkling option when your evening calls for a little celebration.

What about the rim? A thin, smooth edge can make sipping feel more comfortable. Bowl shape and opening affect how aromas reach your nose, but there is no need to chase claims that a particular glass directs wine to a special tasting zone on your tongue.

Then comes the practical question: stems or no stems?

Stemmed glasses let you hold and swirl without gripping the bowl, helping protect chilled wine from warm hands and keeping fingerprints off the glass. They also bring a certain elegance to the table. The drawbacks? They take up more cupboard space and can be easier to tip or break during washing and handling.

Stemless glasses suit relaxed gatherings, patio dinners, and everyday use. Their lower profile generally makes them harder to topple and easier to store. The trade-offs are fingerprints and added warmth from holding the bowl for long periods. Stemless does not mean unbreakable, and shape still matters: a tapered wine tumbler offers more aromatic focus than a straight-sided water glass.

For most Applegate wine lovers, a versatile, medium-sized glass with a tapered opening is an excellent everyday choice. Add a larger glass for favorite reds and a tulip for sparkling wine if your tastes and storage space allow. Pour modestly, leave room to swirl, and compare the same wine in two glasses. Your own nose and palate can guide you. The discovery is part of the fun.

Ultimately, the best pairing includes good wine, good company, and a glass you enjoy using. So, the question is: Is your glass half full or half empty? Either way, there is room for a beautiful Applegate Valley wine.

Cathy Rodgers
cathyrodgers55@gmail.com



A holiday conversation worth having: Getting our affairs in order

BY HAYRIYA HEIDI HANSEN

The holidays bring people together as few other times of year do. Between shared meals, familiar stories, and catching up, families may find more space to talk about the things that matter—including plans for the future.

Getting your affairs in order for the end of life can sound intimidating, but it doesn't have to mean tackling everything at once. It's a chance to make important information easier to find, share your wishes, and spare loved ones from having to search for answers during a stressful time. At some point, we will all need to prepare for the end of life or help someone we love with their preparations. The new year can be a natural time to start.

This conversation doesn't need to happen during the holiday gathering or all at once. Consider setting aside time over coffee or during a quieter visit to discuss plans, wishes, and important information loved ones may need. Remember, communication is caring, so hold steady. Be creative. Don't get discouraged. You are working with humans, and we're messy! It can take time—a lot of time—to find the "in."

Perhaps open with something simple:

"I've been thinking about getting some end-of-life plans and important information organized for the new year. Could we talk about my wishes and what would be helpful for our family to know?"

"I want to make sure you know where to find important documents and information about my wishes when the time comes."

"We don't have to make every decision today. I'd just like to hear what matters to you and talk about how we can make sure our wishes are known."

The goal is to make the conversation feel like an act of care, not a demand for private details. With time, you can gather essential information about a person's life and wishes: where important documents are kept, who to contact in an emergency, financial and insurance information, healthcare wishes, funeral or burial preferences, and plans for pets or other dependents. Having these details organized means loved ones won't have to piece everything together after a death while dealing with grief.

Whether you're starting the conversation or listening to someone share their wishes, remember to be respectful. We all have different comfort levels around privacy, money, health, and planning. Listen without pressuring anyone to disclose more than they're comfortable sharing, and avoid criticizing past choices. If a topic brings up strong feelings, take a break and return to it later.

Sharing the steps you're taking to organize important documents and make your wishes known may make the subject feel less like an interrogation and more like a practical family conversation. My children call this "Mom's Decade Death Talk" (though it happens more often than that!). So far, it hasn't been too successful, as they really don't want to hear about my dying ("Mama, you are so healthy"). I've also taken a couple of swings at motivating them to get their own affairs in order, with equal results. But I'm hoping the new year can be another starting point!

No one has to finish everything before the holidays end. Choose one small step: locate your will or other important documents, make an appointment to discuss an advance directive or estate planning, or tell a trusted person where your documents are kept. Getting your affairs in order is ultimately about making your end-of-life wishes known, planning for what happens after your death, and making things clearer for the people you love. A thoughtful conversation during the holidays may be one of the most meaningful gifts a family can give itself as the new year begins.

Remember, the Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance is here to help. One way to connect with others and continue these important conversations is by attending one of the five monthly Death Cafes held throughout the region. Everyone is welcome!

Monthly Death Cafe locations and times

Williams Library: First Tuesday of each month, 6-8 pm.

Ruch Library: First Thursday of each month, 4-5:30 pm. Please RSVP to Hayriya at (541) 787-7490.

For more information, visit the Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance website.

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

■ SISKIYOU CREST

Continued from page 13.

tree canopy removals, particularly of large, relatively fire-resistant trees; road construction; and degradation of spotted owl and fisher habitat.

Only ~4 percent of the Applegate watershed is protected, while some 85 percent is open for resource extraction at various levels. An additional 11 percent could be impacted by the Trump Administration's proposal to remove protections for roadless areas and ramp up logging in older forests. This would degrade some of the Applegate's most intact habitats while leaving nearly all of the area open to more extractive, industrial uses.

Our ECA highlights the importance of the Siskiyou Crest bioregion and indirectly the value of the Applegate River watershed. The Applegate has many unique ecosystem values, including older forests, climate refugia properties, habitat connectivity values, and intact natural habitats. We showed through science what many of you already know: the Applegate watershed is a special place in need of increased protection.

To view the ECA, visit mdpi.com/1424-2818/18/7/415.

Dominick A. DellaSala, PhD
ddellasala@consbio.org

Dominick A. DellaSala, PhD, Senior Conservation Scientist at the Conservation Biology Institute, is a recipient of the 2026 Planet Earth Award and author of over 350 science papers and nine co-authored books. He has lived in the region for nearly three decades.

•••BIZBITS•••

BY LYNN TOWNS

AR Plumbing Services is ready to help homeowners prepare for the colder months. Winter is a good time to take care of outdoor plumbing, hose bibs, water heaters, well-system issues, leaks, and other plumbing repairs before freezing temperatures arrive. Alex offers residential plumbing service throughout the Applegate Valley. Call or text 708-805-5823 to schedule your appointment. Licensed, bonded, and insured (CCB #257494).

Madrona Craft Landscape is offering holiday lighting and gutter cleaning during this winter season. Reach out quickly to set up your lighting installation date. While Jeff is on the roof, he will be happy to take care of any clogged or dirty gutters! He is also available to help with other maintenance or landscape construction needs. Call or text for the quickest response: 541-787-0572. Licensed, bonded, and insured (LCB #100719).

Lynn Towns
lynntowns1@gmail.com

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.

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*...

CHAIR'S REPORT

BY DIANA COOGLE

The *Applegater* board is excited about the donations pouring in for this year's NewsMatch fundraiser. Thanks so much to those of you who have already donated. Your donation has been doubled!

If you haven't contributed yet, it's easy to do. Send us a check, made out to the Applegate Community Newsmagazine, for whatever amount you want, and put it in the mail to us at PO Box 14, Jacksonville, OR 97530. Or hit the "Donate" button on our website, applegater.org. That wonderful organization, the Institute for Nonprofit News, will match all donations we receive through December 31.

It is our readers—you—who keep us in print, as most of you prefer, and online, too, with your contributions, monetary and otherwise. It is you who keep the paper free for everyone who lives in the Applegate.

In other news, the board is looking into the possibility of publishing online audio and video files of community performances. Curious? Interested? Full of ideas? Let us know!

As we round out the year and head toward 2027, the board is feeling robust and enthusiastic, full of ideas, and grounded in what, at this point, we anticipate is a successful NewsMatch campaign. Would you like to join us on the board? We do have open positions. Let me know if you're interested.

Happy New Year to all Applegaters! And thanks for your support.

Diana Coogle
diana@applegater.org

■ GROWING SEASON IN REVIEW

Continued from page 3.

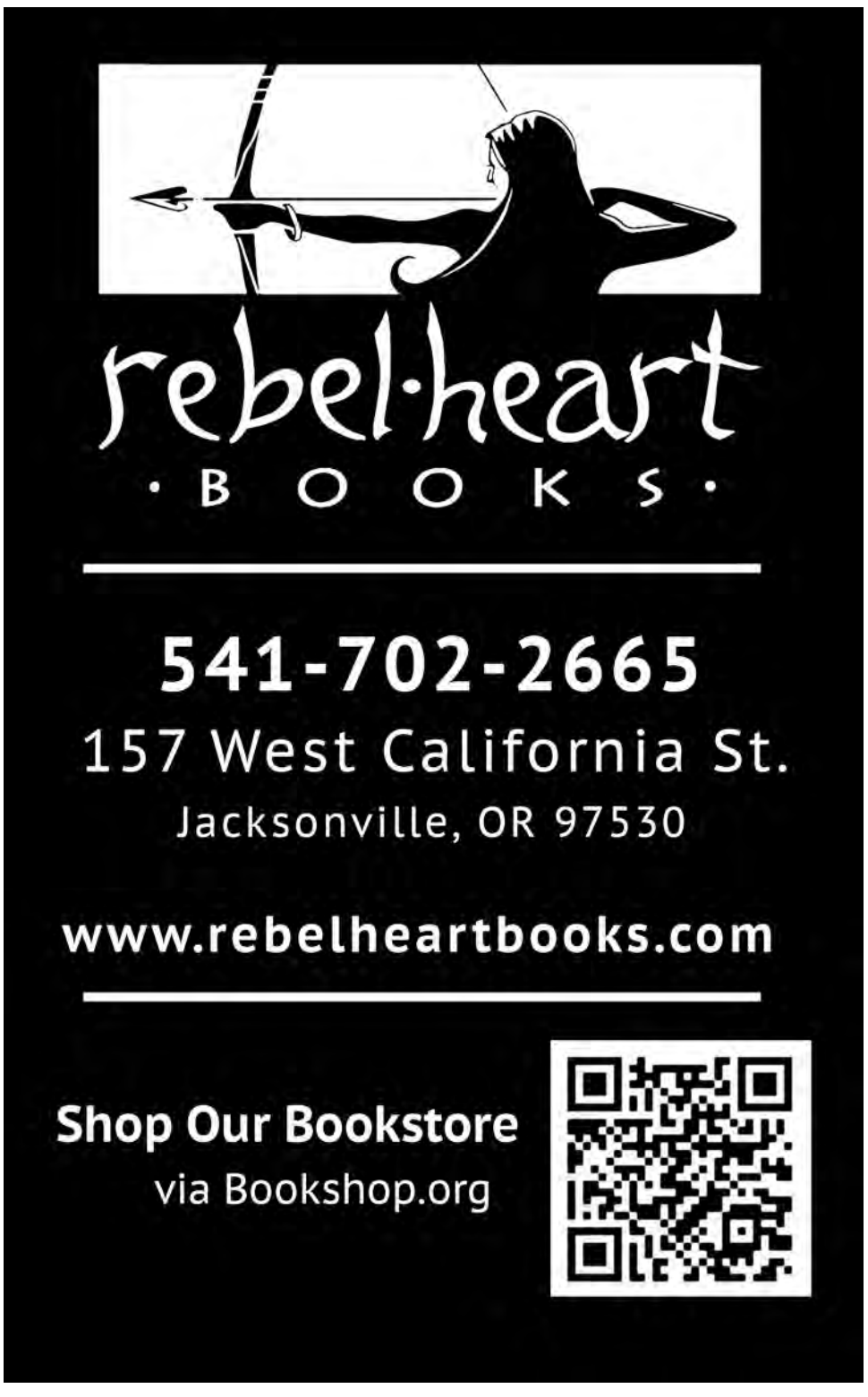
Ashland, participating farms explored a more coordinated approach to getting local food to customers. Shared transportation and delivery can help reduce the logistical burden on individual farms while creating more efficient ways to move local products into regional markets.

Agriculture is serious work, and there is always room for a little fun. The 2026 Jacksaphine Count(r)y Fair brought people together for a couple of agriculturally related events—a pepper roast at the Williams Farmers Market and a DJ dance party at Blue Fox Farm. These gatherings are another reminder that local food and agriculture are about more than production and sales—they are also about the people, relationships, and shared experiences that make a community.

The growing season may be winding down, but local food doesn't disappear with the summer markets. The Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market and Grants Pass Growers Market both host winter markets, offering opportunities to continue supporting regional farmers and food producers through the colder months. Check their websites and social media for current schedules and locations.

As we look toward 2027, the Applegate Farm & Food Network will continue working to strengthen connections among local producers, explore new market opportunities, and build a more resilient local food system. Thank you to everyone who grows, makes, sells, buys, volunteers, organizes, and shows up. It takes a community to make all of this happen.

Tracy Harding
tracy@agreaterapplegate.org







The rich history of Applegate holidays

BY JANEEN SATHRE

Applegate Valley holds a treasure trove of stories, traditions, and deep community spirit for this holiday season. Fortunately for us, centenarian Evelyn Byrne Williams is here to share fond reminiscences of Christmases past.

One story handed down through generations takes us back to 1899, when the family of her grandparents, Amos and Lottie McKee, lived and mined for gold in the wild country along Palmer Creek. As December 25 fast approached, Lottie felt sad that she had nothing to give her children. She asked her oldest son, Ernest, 11 years old, to ride their horse 14 miles each way to buy gifts at Casper Ruch's new general store. Ernest had just been let in on the secret about Santa, but he accepted the mission. He returned successfully, ensuring everyone received a fresh orange to go with their Christmas dinner—which we assume was venison and beans.

Evelyn also remembers her own early holidays in the Applegate, marked by family dinners and cold winter snows. In 1932, when she was six years old, the Applegate River actually froze, and people skated on ponds and ditches. Most presents were homemade clothing crafted by her mother, Pearl McKee Byrne. However, one year, her father, John, built a little wheelbarrow from a wooden box and discarded wheel. Pearl painted it red. John filled the wheelbarrow with kindling for young Evelyn to haul to the wood box by the house. What a thrill!



Heavy snow at the Byrne home in December 1932, when the Applegate River froze.



1880s Peter Britt portrait of Charlotte "Lottie" Pence McKee, maker of burnt sugar cake.

One Christmas, a special package arrived from Aunt Maude and Uncle Frank Watson in San Jose, California, bringing immense excitement to the gathering. When the box was finally opened, Evelyn was surprised to find a bounty of figs—although, unfortunately, she was not a fan of them then, and still isn't today. However, she thoroughly enjoyed the rest of the Christmas feast. If the family ate at her grandparents' house, they had turkey; if they stayed home, they ate chicken. The meals always featured sides of potatoes, dressing, and vegetables, rounded out by her absolute favorite: burnt sugar cake. No family holiday meal was complete without Lottie McKee's special cake.

As the population of Applegate Valley grew, Christmas became more of a community endeavor. Evelyn remembers one holiday when the teacher's desk at Beaver Creek School was transformed into a stage. A large board was placed on top of the desk, and a curtain was hung in front—and just like that, a stage was born. While she doesn't recall the plot of the play, she vividly remembers that a parent who was supposed to read a part got such a severe case of stage fright that she nearly burst into tears and had to leave.

The Upper Applegate Grange built a stockade-style lodge in front of McKee Bridge in 1938. This became a central gathering place for holiday events, a tradition carried on in the hall built in 1957 at 3901 Upper Applegate Road. (Visit the McKee Bridge Historical Society [MBHS] there at the Ruch Holiday Market on November 28-29!) The Grange always held Thanksgiving potlucks filled with plays, music, and dancing. One year, when Evelyn served as lecturer in charge of entertainment, she had husbands go onstage, remove their shoes and socks, and stick their feet out from under the curtain. Wives were tasked with identifying their husbands by their feet alone!

It is wonderful that Evelyn still celebrates the holiday season with the Applegate community. Come and say hello at Christmas On a Covered Bridge, at McKee Bridge on Saturday, December 12, noon-5 pm. The event is delightfully old-fashioned and absolutely BEAUTIFUL!! Free hot beverages, a massive bake sale, gift shopping, a painted rock hunt, Santa and Mrs. Claus—not to mention that MBHS volunteers are whipping up burnt sugar cakes! Get your taste of this Applegate classic.

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■ RAY REUSSNER

Continued from page 11.

But all was not lost. In London he met Sylvia, a beautiful Scottish girl. He was, he said, "immediately smitten." One date, one kiss, and they were talking about marriage. That marriage lasted till Sylvia's death three years ago.

In 1965, Ray and Sylvia left London for Ray's usual summer of studies with Segovia in Spain. In the film of this famous class, you can see Ray playing for Segovia and Segovia's warm response. "It was the most complimentary I've ever seen Segovia with a student," Ray says, awed by his luck.

Back in America—late sixties, Vietnam War. Ray no longer had a student deferment. As a teacher at the Kansas Conservatory, he received a teaching deferment until teaching no longer qualified him for one. Not wanting to move to Canada, he took his chances with the draft. He got a lucky number. Then, still lucky, he turned 26, and the danger passed.

By now, Ray and Sylvia were in Santa Barbara, and I have to speed up my storytelling. I have to leave out more Segovia stories and those about Burl Ives and Jonathan Winters and building guitar cases (Segovia bought four) and playing his own concerts, including one at Lincoln Center, and making videos at the Mission San Antonio de Padua, where he was so well liked that he was given a key to the building—stories about expert tennis playing and building his own house when he, Sylvia, and their son, Christopher, moved to Williams in 1984, and building guitars, too, in his obsession to find the perfect sound.

Ray's emphasis now is to foster Segovia's legacy. There is a tendency on the internet, especially from John Williams, to downplay Segovia's genius and importance. Ray wants to counter that by giving his own perspective, emphasizing Segovia's compassion, generosity, and musical genius.



Ray Reussner playing his guitar at the Mission San Antonio.

God must have been fascinated to watch Ray's life unfold after the moment he first heard the Segovia recording, just as Ray, looking back on that life, finds it fascinating himself, as though it had simply happened by luck. But, as the head of Barnes and Noble bookstores said recently, "I believe you make your own luck." So it was, surely, with Ray Reussner.

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News from the farm

BY THOMAS ECKERT

Hello, *Applegater* readers! My name is Tom Eckert, and I am a volunteer board member at Sanctuary One here on Upper Applegate Road. As a longtime reader of the *Applegater*, I enjoy catching up on the great things happening here in our backyard. I hope you do too. So in that spirit, I will be sharing in this column some of the amazing stories, events, and changes from Sanctuary One, called "the farm" by those of us who love it.

Sanctuary One is a 55-acre nonprofit 501(c)(3) animal rescue farm founded in 2007. Our founder's vision was to create a place where animals, people, and the earth could heal together. Most of the animals in our care come from official sources such as law enforcement agencies, county animal shelters, or other rescue operations. Most of our animal residents have experienced some kind of trauma in their lives. We work with the animals to reestablish trust, security, and self-confidence. The amazing thing is, as we do this work, we find it heals trauma for people too.

In addition to the animals on the farm, we tend a large garden and donate fresh vegetables to local community food banks.

Public tours are available by reservation on our website at sanctuaryone.org.

Animal updates

In July, we received a beautiful black-and-white gelding from a small animal rescue in Drain, Oregon. Jace was added to our herd of two mares and has made himself at home in our front pasture. Jace's story is not as pretty as he is, unfortunately. Originally owned by a man who passed away, Jace and his companion horse ended up in the custody of the heirs. Care for the horses fell off, including ample food sources. Jace and his companion lost a lot of weight, and after she injured herself on the property, she was purportedly shot to death by the owner in front of Jace. When Jace was finally rescued, he was near starvation.

At the rescue farm in Drain, Jace was nursed back to health, put on weight, and began enjoying life. A family who came to the rescue farm later fell in love with Jace and adopted him, with the condition that he allow the lady who ran the rescue to make regular visits to check on him. When the couple split up, Jace was once again in an untenable situation. When the rescue agent finally saw him again, she was shocked to find him undernourished. She took Jace back into her custody and returned him to her rescue ranch. At that point, she made Jace a promise that he would never go hungry again. And the staff at Sanctuary One will keep that promise.

This is one of many stories I hope to share in the coming months, along with other news from right here in the Applegate.

Sanctuary One—mending broken hearts since 2007.

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Jace's arrival at Sanctuary One from the rescue farm in Drain. Photo by Nanni Richardson.

Love, laughter, and evolutionary upwising: Witty comic Swami Beyondananda at Upper Applegate Grange

BY ERIN BRINDLEY

As anyone who follows the news can attest, we are living in serious times. The antidote? Serious laughter. Take it from the Swami himself: "The best way to overcome gravity is with levity."

Swami Beyondananda brings his laugh-filled, clean cosmic comedy show to the Upper Applegate Grange (3901 Upper Applegate Rd, Jacksonville, OR 97530) on Thursday, December 3, at 7 pm.

The pun-slinging, turban-powered Swami and his more serious alter ego, Steve Bhaerman, co-author of a book with the noted cellular biologist Bruce Lipton, are bringing wacky wisdom with the same mission: Evolutionary Upwising. They are helping us wake up and wise up to our true human potential, encouraging millions to participate in the greatest adventure in human history: conscious evolution. This is the great we-set, where we set a new standard that allows the golden rule to overrule the rule of gold.

Swami and Steve help us shift our attention from the identity issues that divide us to the identical issues that unite us. They bring an awakened awareness of "political climate change"—warmer hearts and cooler heads. They invite us to a new level of collective wisdom and political maturity that will allow us to become "the leaders we have been waiting for."

Spread the word and join the fun on Thursday, December 3, at 7 pm. Purchase tickets for $20 at wakeuplaughing.com/epistore/?productId=250. Tickets will also be available at the door for $25. Let's pack the house for this community-building event!

In this season of giving, treat yourself, friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues to an unforgettable evening to be enlightened and laugh till the sacred cows come home! Swami guarantees heartening laughter—or double your grumpiness back!

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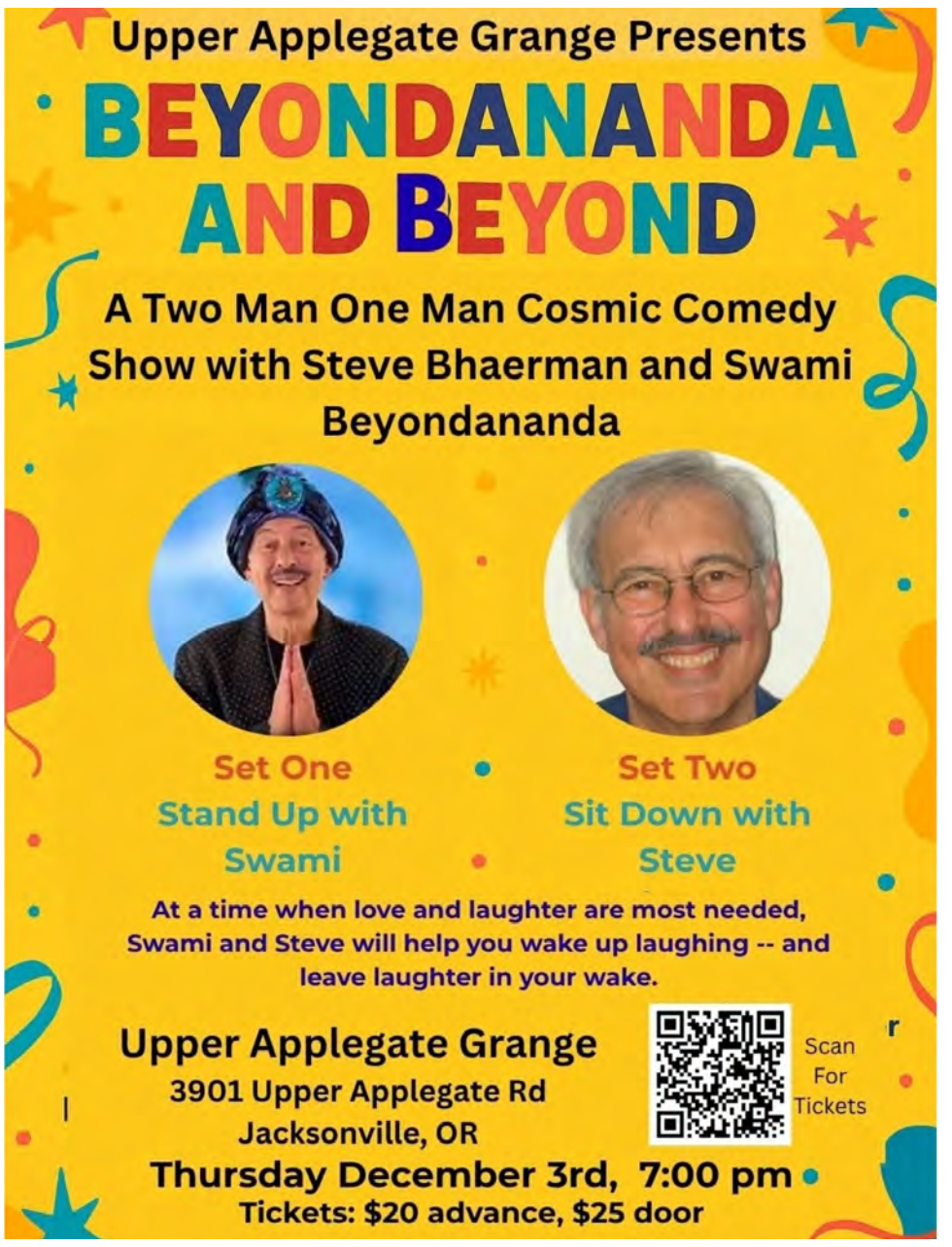











NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

Creativity, learning, and holiday giving at Pacifica

BY VANESSA REDDING

Creativity flowed at Pacifica as the leaves fell and we settled into the changing seasons. Students in our education programs continued learning through art, inspired by Pacifica's forests, gardens, and natural beauty.

New this year, Pacifica offers three days of learning each week through three different classes for ages 7-15. Siskiyou Roots is taught by Corbin Brashear, and Envision School is led by Amy Schlotterback and Mike Dickenson, with Ms. Tori as guide. Previously, Pacifica welcomed students for one-day field trips and three- to four-day Outdoor School programs. Having students return week after week fulfills a longtime vision. Friendships are growing, and hands-on, place-based learning connects lessons to the world around us.

In our Monday PALS program—Pacifica Adventure in Learning—students visited Pacifica's ceramics studio to sculpt clay pumpkins with Breonna Canvas. They also worked with artist Louisa Lenz-Porter to weave cattail mats, connecting creativity with practical skills and discovering the possibilities of natural materials.

PALS students hand-felted pumpkins with Corbin Brashear. With Louisa's guidance, they strung their felted pumpkins together with rose hips, leaves, and corn to create lovely holiday decorations, practicing patience and taking pride in making something by hand. Students collected white pine and fir needles for homemade soda, learning how fermentation creates bubbles.

White Oak Farm generously donated pumpkins for jack-o'-lanterns, pumpkin tossing, and pumpkin bowling, while the pumpkin flesh was saved for another purpose. Parent volunteers Bridget Berg and Dezirae Vestnys helped process the pumpkins into purée. Students will create a business plan, prepare pumpkin soup and baked goodies, and sell their creations at Pacifica's Winterfest to raise money for their classrooms. Please enjoy their hard work while supporting their learning. Thank you, White Oak Farm, Bridget, and Dezirae!

To wrap up our fall education season, we welcomed 126 students from Talent Elementary School and Phoenix Elementary School for Outdoor School. Students experienced nature's classroom with plenty of laughs, smiles, and learning.

We also hosted 105 students for field trips, rotating through hands-on stations and exploring on a scavenger hunt for natural treasures and signs of fall.

Pacifica's new school buildings, art room, and Nature Center are almost ready to welcome students! Next, we will develop the courtyard connecting them. This outdoor learning space will be as important as the classrooms—a place to gather and create. Creativity may also find a home in a proposed community makerspace at the former Webco Lumber Mill shop, 225 Powell Creek Road. The 1,700-square-foot industrial barn offers a cement floor, three-phase electricity, pneumatic piping, a hoisting gantry, and 12-foot sliding doors. A survey will reveal how the space was built, equipped, managed, and priced. Scan the QR code to share ideas and help shape a place to learn, collaborate, and inspire!

Join us December 5 and 6, from 10 am to 3 pm, for Pacifica's Winterfest Christmas Fair! This beloved holiday tradition, started by Pacifica founder Peg Prag, celebrates its 28th year. Enjoy handmade art from local makers, live music, and delicious food from the Monday Hub and Grip & Grub. Stop by for student-made soup and goodies, and cheer on PALS students performing "Sleigh Ride" under Harmony Sue's guidance. Bring friends and family to celebrate local creativity and community!

Every month, families request scholarship assistance. We strive to help every family who needs support, but we need your help. We are raising $20,000 for a scholarship investment fund, preserving the original investment and using its earnings for education scholarships. We hope it will provide approximately $1,200 annually, depending on investment returns. Thanks to a generous donation from Phyllis Nelson, we have our first $1,000 toward this goal! As a community, let's dig deep and build this fund together—a lasting gift for generations to come, giving students the opportunity to learn, create, and discover the wonders of nature at Pacifica.



Students collecting white pine needles and fir needles to make homemade soda. Photo by Vanessa Redding

Give the gift of time in nature! Pacifica's day-use and annual-use passes for 2026–2027 will be available for $5 off throughout December. Shop local and pick up passes at Winterfest for the nature lovers on your holiday shopping list.

This holiday season, please support Pacifica, your local nonprofit. Community generosity keeps our grounds open and our education programs thriving. Donate at pacificagarden.org/support. Thank you for helping Pacifica's students learn, create, and grow together!

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A colorful and adventurous fall at Woodland Charter School

BY CHRIS CARMIENCKE

So far, the 2026-2027 school year at Woodland Charter School has been filled with colorful fun, a few exciting changes, and many opportunities for students to get involved in the Applegate Valley!

We had some colorful upgrades to our facilities over the summer. At long last, we repainted all our school buildings a light green and dazzled the classroom doors with a variety of bright colors. This provided an exciting and cheerful feeling to the start of the school year.



Recess at the Juniper Stage: Rosie Granthem, Oak Brown, Rosa Martin, Harper Raymoure, Maple Brown, and Nanni Richardson.

Another exciting addition to the school year has been class-color T-shirt Thursdays. We provided every student and staff member with a colorful Woodland T-shirt. Each grade level has a different color based on the traditional grade level colors used in Waldorf Schools across the globe, and the faculty received bright pink shirts as well. Every Thursday, we encourage all students and staff to wear their new Woodland T-shirts for Class T-shirt Day.

New this year are Middle School elective classes. Our sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers have created elective classes that will change every 12 weeks. With this program, students can choose an area of interest to expand their educational opportunities during the school day. This fall, Hillary Spector (sixth-grade Canyon Class teacher) provided a drama elective, Roy Thomas (seventh-grade Blue Heron Class teacher) provided a sports elective, and Jason Anderson (eighth-grade Salmon Class teacher) offered a strategy games elective. Students have appreciated this new opportunity at Woodland Charter School.

This fall, students have been able to get out and about in the Applegate Valley with a variety of field trips. Students in first, third, and fifth grades traveled to White Oak Farm for hands-on learning—feeding goats, harvesting carrots, preparing delicious meals, and enjoying the rural beauty in Williams. Our seventh-grade students joined Grow Youth, through the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council, for several service-learning opportunities at the Provolt Recreation Site. These students have been removing invasive species and learning about critical habitat while having fun on the banks of the Applegate River. Also, our fourth-grade class, as part of their Local Geography Block, went on a hiking, trolley-ride, and camping excursion this fall. After a hike up Lower Table Rock and a historic trolley ride in Jacksonville, these fourth-graders enjoyed a night of camping on the banks of the Applegate River at the Jackson Campground.



Sixth-grade students and teacher show off their class color T-Shirt. From left, we have: Raylee Didier, Juliet Wallace, Vivek Rollins, Hillary Spector, and Dylan Groves.

Woodland Charter School is always grateful to be nestled in the Applegate Valley, for it is a genuinely wonderful place to learn, explore, and grow.

Chris Carmiencke
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Every donation you make to the Applegater will be doubled, now through the end of 2025, thanks to the annual NewsMatch program!

NEXT GENERATION | SCHOOL NEWS

A fate-aligned partnership: Sticks and Stones Studio and Ruch Outdoor Community School

BY KATIE WALKER

In October 2024, Sticks and Stones Studio and Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS) came together in partnership. Katie Walker had just founded Sticks and Stones Studio and was searching for a place in her community where her art education programs were needed. At the same time, ROCS was without an art program.

The fit was natural: a school that prioritizes place-based, student-led, community-focused education and a nonprofit dedicated to empowering young people through choice-based art education.

About Sticks and Stones Studio

At Sticks and Stones Studio, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to express themselves through art, which is why our mission is to provide accessible art programs for children from low-income and rural families. Our curriculum integrates nature-based art pedagogy and choice-based learning, fostering a deep connection between artistic practice and the environment.

Art education is critical to academic success and social-emotional development. Research shows students engaged in arts education are far more likely to earn mostly A's (63.8 percent vs. 43.7 percent of non-arts students), and students with high arts participation and low socioeconomic status have a dropout rate five times lower than their peers (Americans for the Arts, 2015; Arts Education Partnership, 2019). Funding shortfalls and the pandemic have cut many Medford School District art programs, creating an opportunity gap for low-income and rural students. The art programming that was once free and accessible to all children in public schools now comes with a price tag.

A thriving art program, rebuilt

After creating Sticks and Stones, Katie reached out to local schools with her ideas of bringing art back into K-5 schools. The very first school she called was Ruch Outdoor Community School. The conversation went a bit like this: Katie: "Hi there. I run a nonprofit with the mission of bringing art back into schools!" Ryan King (principal of ROCS): "When can you start?!" With support from Ruch Outdoor Community School teachers, parents, staff, and administration, Sticks and Stones Studio has reinstated a thriving art program at the school. It now includes weekly in-school art lessons aligned with classroom curriculum, After-School Art Clubs on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and a full-day Monday Nature Art Camp.

Art that belongs to the artist

At the heart of our partnership is Teaching for Artistic Behavior (TAB), a pedagogy that Executive Director and Lead Art Instructor Katie Walker is absolutely obsessed with. Unlike project-based art education, where step-by-step instruction leaves little room for independent decision-making, TAB invites students to think and work like real artists. They come up with an idea; choose their medium, tools, and techniques; and navigate the creative process of trial and error as their work comes to life. The result is intrinsic motivation, genuine engagement, and artwork that is unique. The difference this type of instruction makes is unmistakable: in a TAB studio, students are engaged, differentiation is inherent, creation is intuitive, and students thrive. The results are already visible at ROCS. The art room has become a place students want to be because there they can freely express their voices, ideas, emotions, and identities.

A $10,000 grant for a lasting TAB studio

Sticks and Stones Studio and ROCS are excited to announce that they have been awarded a $10,000 Arts Learning Grant from the Oregon Arts Commission. The grant supports rural schools in southern Oregon that partner with nonprofits to increase access to, and learning through, the arts. For ROCS and Sticks and Stones, it is a chance to strengthen their partnership and build an art program that will last.

The grant will transform the school's STEAM room into a fully operational TAB studio. Much like a makerspace, it will have stations for drawing, painting, collage, fibers, sculpture, and architecture. Through scaffolded instruction aligned with classroom curriculum, each grade level will get to know every station, resulting in student artists who are empowered to make artwork of their own design.

What began as a chance meeting of need and purpose has grown into a model for what a school and a nonprofit can build together. To learn more about Sticks and Stones Studio, its programs, or how to support our work, visit sticksandstonesstudio.org.

Katie Walker
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Forest investments enrich our future

BY NATHAN GEHRES

Forests are a defining feature of the Applegate, supporting our ecosystems, economy, and quality of life. Yet more than a century of fire exclusion and questionable forest management decisions have dramatically altered the wildfire regime that is essential for forest health.

Historically, Applegate forests were dominated by large, widely spaced, fire-adapted species such as sugar pine and ponderosa pine. Frequent, low-intensity fires, often ignited by Indigenous cultural burning, maintained open stands and healthy conditions. Fire-scar studies show a median fire-return interval of seven to nine years until the mid-1800s, when Indigenous tribes were forcibly removed, ending cultural burning (Metlen et al. 2018). Lightning-caused fires were suppressed beginning around 1910, a practice that intensified after World War II. As a result, today's fuel loads exceed any point in the past 3,000 years (Knight et al. 2021). At lower-elevation sites, tree densities are now about ten times higher than in 1911 (Rodne 2025).

These overcrowded forests face intense competition for limited water and nutrients as conditions grow hotter and drier. The outcome is widespread stress and mortality—too many straws in the coconut. This unnatural fuel accumulation has also created conditions for severe, stand-replacing wildfires that were historically rare.

The wildfire risk in the Applegate is now among the highest in the nation. Josephine County has a higher Wildfire Hazard Potential than 100 percent of other Oregon counties, and Ruch faces higher wildfire risk to homes than 95.6 percent of communities nationwide (Scott JH et al. 2020). Jackson County ranked second out of 417 counties in 11 western states for risk to development in fire-prone areas adjacent to public lands (Gude et al. 2008). Southwest Oregon also has the highest concentration of Douglas fir mortality in the state (Bennett et al. 2023). Beyond the threat to life and property, these conditions affect home and property values, insurance rates, and mortgage availability, pricing many residents out of the market and the community.

Addressing this crisis requires coordinated action. The degraded conditions we see today are the cumulative result of more than a century of fire exclusion and management choices. Reversing them will require robust partnerships, engaged landowners, and the full suite of forest-restoration tools. The Oregon State Wildlife Action Plan recognizes this need, recommending broad-scale forest management to address limiting factors. No single action will solve the problem; a combination of fuels reduction, prescribed fire, invasive species removal, and carefully designed commercial harvest is necessary to achieve the pace and scale science supports.

Fortunately, investments in active forest management yield exceptional returns. A synthesis of 16 studies evaluating fuels reduction across 17 benefit types found that every dollar invested in fuels reduction in high-risk, high-value watersheds generates more than seven dollars in benefits, a 600 percent return (Hjerpe et al. 2024). Because the analysis did not capture all possible benefits, this

See FOREST INVESTMENTS page 24.



Legacy fire scars on these ponderosa pines reveal a history of low-intensity surface fires that maintained open, resilient forests. These fire-adapted trees survived repeated burns, but decades of fire exclusion have allowed small Douglas firs to crowd the stand. Photo by Nathan Gehres. Location: BLM-managed land behind the author's home on Humbug Creek Road.



Dense understory vegetation and closely spaced young trees—a "bar code forest"—create ladder fuels that can carry fire into the canopy. Combined with abundant dry needles and branches, these conditions increase the potential for intense fire behavior, long-range ember transport, and spot fires, as witnessed during the 2026 East Evans Creek Fire. Photo by Nathan Gehres. Location: APWC project site, Sterling Creek Road.

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Photos, left to right:
*–**(Left to Right) Eric Rissler, Tara Holman, Paula Tougher,** and **Michael Tougher** reading the news outside Stonefield Castle in Loch Fyne, Scotland.*
*–**Jessica Bullard** keeping up with the Gater at the Isle of Skye in Scotland.*
*–**Connie Bishop** sharing the Applegater with a new friend in Oaxaca, Mexico.*
*–**Sang Montage** and **Kirsten Deising** at South Lake Tahoe.*
*–**(Left to Right) Alix George, India Wize, Christina Ammon, Jennifer Nidalmia,** and **Maud Powell** reading the Applegater in the Moroccan Sahara.*
*–**Simona Fino** keeping up with the Gater outside the Mosta Church in Mosta, Maltao.*





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

■ FOREST INVESTMENTS

Continued from page 23.

figure is likely conservative. Another study of fuels treatment effectiveness on U.S. Forest Service lands across the West found that each dollar invested returns $3.73 in value through reduced structure loss, lower carbon dioxide emissions, and fewer smoke-related deaths (Strabo et al. 2026).

Commercial timber harvest also plays a critical role in restoring forest health and supporting local economies. Federal timber revenue remains important to Jackson and Josephine County budgets, especially after policy changes in January 2026 increased the county share of the revenue from 50 percent to 75 percent. In 2024, Josephine County received $2.7 million in timber payments and $3.6 million in Secure Rural Schools funding; Jackson County received $3.5 million and $4.2 million. Given current economic conditions and the difficulty of raising taxes—particularly in Josephine County—there is no realistic replacement for federal timber dollars or the jobs the timber industry supports.

Natural systems are dynamic, and Applegate forests evolved with frequent, low-intensity fire. Restoring forest health will require returning beneficial fire to the landscape, but first we must invest in preparing our forests to safely receive it. Thoughtful, science-based forest management is not only essential for ecological resilience; it is one of the most cost-effective investments we can make in the future of our communities.

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8th annual Christmas on a Covered Bridge

BY LAURA AHEARN

On Saturday, December 12, from noon to 5 pm, the community will again celebrate our lovely, rustic landmark and the jolly holidays on McKee Bridge. Enjoy a free hot beverage, select some yummy home-baked treats, find special handcrafted gifts, hunt for painted rocks, and visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. This fundraising event is particularly important this year: in 2027, McKee Bridge Historical Society must fund an expensive engineering survey in order to keep the bridge open to the public. Be part of this wonderful event and support the preservation of Applegate heritage!

Laura Ahearn
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Some of the new gift items made by MBHS members. Photo by Laura Ahearn.



