



Photo by Linda Kappen

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Applegate Valley Community Newsmagazine
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Celebrating
~31~
Years

Threat of wildfire necessitates a plan

BY MIRANDA STEWART

2025 has been a busy fire season for the Applegate Valley, with multiple lightning strikes in July resulting in several wildfires across the landscape. The 2025 Upper Applegate fire started almost a year to the date from the 2024 fire in the Upper Applegate. Thanks to the rapid response of the Applegate Fire Department and land management agencies, none of the fires caused loss of life or structures. Instead, these fires delivered ecological benefits to the landscape.



2025 Upper Applegate Fire.
Photo by Brian Mulhollen, Fire Marshal.

These fires are not unique events, but a sign of changes within the Applegate Valley that are creating conditions for frequent fires. Yet, we may not always have the beneficial outcome that the 2025 Upper Applegate and July lightning fires created. Those fires burned with low to moderate intensity, removing dead trees and heavy fuel buildup, and generating some beneficial fuel breaks on the landscape for the near future. However, the conditions that existed when those fires ignited will not always be the same, and when hot weather, low humidity, high winds, and lack of resources align, as they often

do in August and September, fires may have far more devastating outcomes.

How do we as a community collaborate to better protect ourselves, our families, our properties, and our business interests from future wildfires? One large-scale fire has the potential to destroy our watershed and heavily impact the vineyards and other agricultural interests in the valley, including tourism and jobs. Recovery can take years if we do not plan for such an event. Proactive planning, such as identifying mechanisms to reduce

See **THREAT OF WILDFIRE**, page 3.

Applegate campaign to prevent firefighter cancers!

BY BABETTE RAPP AND LIZA CROSSE

Early this summer, as fire season got off to an intense start, we were reminded of our great appreciation for our Applegate Fire District. There's no doubt that we admire and love our firefighters for their willingness to run into danger to save our lives and our homes, risking injury and even the loss of their own lives. But many people are unaware that firefighters' service comes with another terrible threat—an extremely high risk of cancer from work-related causes.

Over a year ago, Ashland Fire Captain Daniel Caples was diagnosed with stage 3 rectal cancer, a diagnosis that is directly related to his occupation as a firefighter and exposure to carcinogenic substances on the job. Daniel is amazingly open about his battle with the disease, which included 15 months of chemo and radiation. He's glad to be back at work, but wants the public, government, and his fellow firefighters to be more aware of the risks and to take appropriate actions.

The data is increasingly clear: In 2023, the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) reported that an astounding 72 percent of IAFF member line-of-duty deaths were due to cancer and that occupational cancer is the leading cause of death for firefighters.



Applegater firefighter in full protective gear.

A number of causes contribute to firefighter cancers, including the inhalation of smoke and of PFAs (polyfluoroalkyl substances) in some fire equipment. As knowledge grows, a range of solutions is becoming

See **APPLEGATE CAMPAIGN**, page 9.

Looking out for little lungs

BY SARA JONES AND AMELIA LIBERATORE

Living in a fire-prone area, you've probably heard the term "defensible space." These words likely bring to mind chainsaws and weed whackers, ladders to reach the gutters, and mesh screens for the eaves of your home. But even if a fire—wild or prescribed—happens many miles away, your health may still be at risk. Have you created defensible space for your lungs?

Children are especially vulnerable to smoke exposure because their lungs are still developing and because they breathe more air relative to their body weight than adults do (see *Holm, et al. 2020*). Addressing smoke where children spend the most time—in school and at home—is the focus of a collaborative partnership between Oregon State

University's (OSU) Sustainable, Healthy, and Resilient Buildings Lab, ASPIRE Children's Environmental Health Center, Smokewise Ashland, and three Oregon school districts, including Ruch Outdoor School. In total, there are about 50 air-quality sensors across six sites, and more will be deployed over the next year.

The project, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, provides five air quality sensors to monitor air on the Ruch Outdoor School's campus and in classrooms. It's part of an effort at the state and national levels to monitor and protect air quality where children play and learn.

OSU's Sustainable, Healthy, and Resilient Buildings Lab will collect and analyze the air quality data from these

three school districts to better understand smoke exposure in and around school buildings. Ultimately, the partnering organizations will develop guidance and resources to help schools across the state improve resilience to wildfire smoke.

We are fortunate here in Southern Oregon to have resources coming from the federal and state levels to address this public health concern. We also have outstanding resources right here in our own communities. If you are interested in low-cost options for air quality protection in your home or business, join us on September 12 at ScienceWorks Hands-on Museum in Ashland. Smokewise Ashland



A family builds low-cost air filters during the Sparking Action! event at ScienceWorks.

and Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative will host educational activities for all ages, including a DIY air filter workshop. The event is free for ScienceWorks members and SOU students, \$10 for members of the public.

See **LITTLE LUNGS**, page 7.

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OBITUARY

Karen Marie Miller 1945 - 2025

BY ANDY SMITH

Karen Marie Miller, 80, of Loleta, California, passed away peacefully on June 29, 2025, while tending to her beloved garden. Karen was known for her huge heart and ability to make friends effortlessly. An excellent cook and passionate gardener, she brought joy to those around her with her warmth and creativity.

Karen and her family lived out on Little Applegate Road for years. Her children attended Ruch Elementary, and she and her husband owned and operated the



liquor store in Jacksonville for many years—Ye Old Curiosity Store.

Karen is survived by her son, Andy Smith; daughter, Lori Hansen; five granddaughters; and four great-grandchildren. A celebration of her life was held at the LDS Church in Fortuna, California, on

Saturday, July 19, 2025, at 11 am. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests honoring Karen's memory by sharing kindness with others.

Andy Smith

andysmith.sales@gmail.com

Steve Martin 1950 - 2025

BY HARMONY OLTMAN

Pacifica mourns the loss of Steve Martin, a cherished volunteer and instrumental member of our Outdoor School fishing program.

Steve was a steady presence at the pond, always the first to arrive, accompanied by his loyal pup, ready with a warm smile and wave. His dedication went far beyond showing up; Steve helped establish the core of our fishing program. From helping guide us in the purchase of our first fishing poles to organizing equipment, inspiring the creation of a wheeled cart to transport gear to the pond, and securing a reliable supply of worms, his



Honoring the legacy of Steve, whose love for fishing inspired many children. Photo by Vanessa Redding.

behind-the-scenes efforts made a lasting impact. Because of Steve, countless students had the chance to cast their first line and experience the joy of catching their first fish, memories that will ripple through a lifetime. His quiet generosity and commitment helped create a program that continues to inspire young fishers year after year.

Steve's legacy lives on in every child who finds wonder by the water's edge. We are deeply grateful for his time, heart, and enduring contributions to Pacifica.

Harmony Oltman

harmony@pacificagarden.org

Connecting the old-fashioned way

BY JULIE RAEFIELD

People have asked me whether community centers still matter in our electronically connected world. Sometimes, people are curious if there is still "live" community to connect with at all.

While a text or tweet might be the quickest way to share data, the "old-fashioned" style of gathering, talking, and creating together is surprisingly alive and well at Jacksonville Community Center (JCC).

What I see at our center is that when people connect in person, something extra and beautiful seems to emerge

that goes beyond the basic exchange of information. When folks join classes or events in our cozy space, you hear laughter, see smiles, experience the spark of new ideas, and feel a unique and vital sense of belonging. We all need more of this in our busy and machine-driven lives!

JCC is building these enriching moments for our surrounding communities. Here's a quick snapshot of just twelve months:

JCC presented 142 programs and events for adults and youth in wellness, the

arts, history, culture, music, community-building, science, nature-exploration, gardening, and cooking, including ten free house concerts, featuring local and international performers.

These programs were attended by just over 4,050 community members and visitors.

62 of these programs were designed to serve youth from preschool to high school, attracting 516 youth attendees and 508 accompanying parents or caregivers.

See *CONNECTING - JCC*, page 22.



JCC offers camps and afterschool programs for youth from the Applegate and Jacksonville areas, like this Eco-Adventures with Pollinator Pals Camp, where youth can watch butterflies emerge and bees transport nectar.

Wildfire risk in the Applegate: Wildfire as a tool

BY NATHAN GEHRES

On my hikes through the wilds of the Applegate, I often try to envision the landscapes of hundreds of years ago and of a century from now. Our local forests are currently in a state of flux, as the Douglas fir die-off continues across the valley, and now Ponderosa pines and madrones appear to be fading as well. Quite a few factors undoubtedly contribute to this mortality, but the primary culprit is the exclusion of wildfire, which shaped and managed the woodlands of southwestern Oregon for millennia.

According to historical accounts, burn scars in tree rings, and analyses of pond and lake sediment, wildfire exclusion started in southwestern Oregon well over a century ago. On average, the historic fire-return interval—the length of time between fires at a specific location—was eight years in the Applegate area, but this interval has altered dramatically. As an example, my property on Humbug Creek hasn't burned since the early 1920s, representing more than 12 missed fires that would have revitalized the forest had the natural cycle continued uninterrupted.

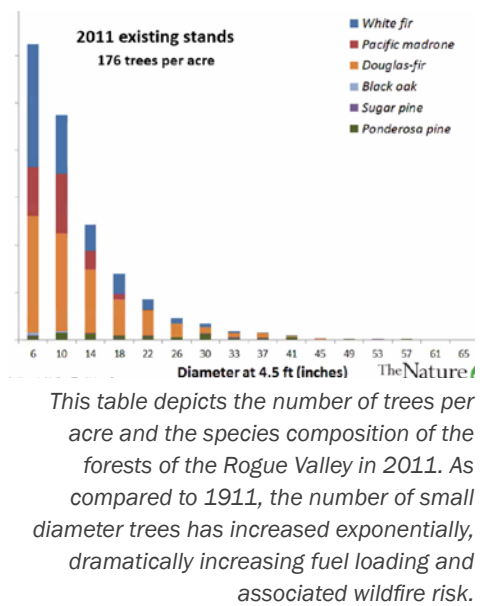
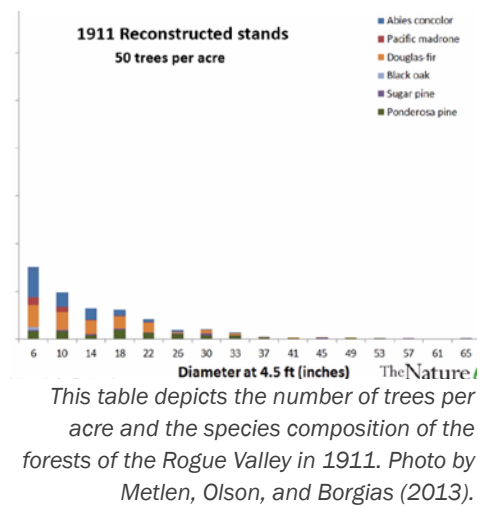
Without regular low- to mid-severity wildfires, seedlings—especially Douglas firs—and shrubs proliferated, forming a crowded carpet of young shoots that matured into dense thickets of suppressed trees. Competition within established stands intensified, and fuel for the occasionally occurring wildfire increased. The increase of fuel supercharged fire activity on the ground, providing ladder fuels that allowed flames to climb to the forest canopy and filling in the spaces around open-grown mature conifers, making them more susceptible to burning.

When tree and shrub propagation is unchecked by wildfire, competition increases for sunlight, nutrients, and water. This struggle for diminished resources reduces the health of the trees, making them more vulnerable to disease and drought. Additionally, this unchecked expansion of densely packed, small-diameter trees and shrubs has engulfed meadows and other natural openings that harbor the highest species diversity of any of our local habitats.

This unnatural density of our forests, caused by the exclusion of fire, has resulted in decreased habitat quality, escalated competition over limited resources, and an increased risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfires.

The concept of the fire triangle represents the three elements that determine how a fire ignites—oxygen, an ignition source, and fuel—and the three that determine how it behaves: weather, topography, and fuel. We can't remove the oxygen or prevent all ignitions, nor can we change the weather or alter the topography, but we can do something about the fuels on our landscape.

As I stated in my spring 2025 article, several agencies, organizations, and individual landowners are working



to mechanically treat fuels and reduce the risk of a wildfire throughout the Applegate. There will likely never be enough resources to treat all of our landscape, but with strategic prioritization, we can target areas where treatments will be most effective. As the Applegate is a checkerboard of ownerships, we need robust partnerships to achieve an "all-lands" approach across both private and public land. This initial work is expensive, but if done properly, the benefits can be maintained through periodic prescribed fires, with the assistance of state and federal agencies and groups such as the Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association.

As the forest conditions change around us, our idea of what a healthy forest looks like needs to change too. We are in a novel situation. Relying on the forest practices that got us into this conundrum won't solve our problems. Timber harvest won't solve the problem, as standing dead trees and brush hold little to no market value. Preparing the landscape for the reintroduction of prescribed fire is the only economically and ecologically viable method to improve the health of our forests and reduce the risk of an uncharacteristically severe wildfire from harming our communities and our environment.

If you have questions, please contact me at the information listed below.

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We are Pacifica: A garden in the Siskiyou

Celebrating a season of growth, creativity, and connection in Southern Oregon

BY HARMONY OLTMAN

Nestled in the heart of the Siskiyou, Pacifica is more than a nature preserve—it's a vibrant community where earth and air come together in balance. Here, rooted in the rich soil and uplifted by fresh mountain breezes, creativity, learning, and connection to the land flourish. This year has been full of growth and celebration, with projects and events that reflect our commitment to honoring these natural elements and inspiring people of all ages.

This spring, thanks to the incredible dedication of the Williams Garden and Horticulture Club, we planted a new children's orchard and garden. Their hard work, from planning and digging to planting and mulching, transformed a dream into a living, growing space. We are deeply grateful for their commitment and generosity. This vibrant garden serves as a hands-on classroom, connecting children and adults alike to the Earth,

teaching the importance of nurturing soil, tending trees, and harvesting the fruits of patient care.

Art Sundays breathe new life into our community, inviting local artists and participants to express themselves. Thanks to the generous support of the Roundhouse Foundation, these free monthly classes offer fresh creative experiences. Our basket-weaving workshops, led by Louisa Lenz-Porter, have given participants the chance to work with natural fibers, learn traditional techniques, and create beautiful, functional pieces. Nolan Babin led our inkle-weaving workshop, offering a calm, focused experience where participants learned the basics of this timeless craft. These were our first free classes open to the public, with only a small supplies fee for each—an accessible way to learn hands-on skills in a welcoming setting. If you're inspired to share your skills, Pacifica



Yak Attack bringing the groove to the summer breeze at the Community Rising Festival. Photo by Ryan Powers, Partnership Education Program.



From the saddle, a festival moment to remember. Photo by Vanessa Redding.

welcomes workshop proposals. We love partnering with artists and educators. If you'd like to offer a workshop, please send an inquiry through our website at pacificagarden.org.

To kick off the summer, we hosted the Community Rising World Music Festival, a joyous fundraiser where music and dance filled the open air, with local food vendors, drinks by Apple Outlaw, and workshops. Your donations made a difference, helping us continue our community programs and projects. Heartfelt thanks to all who gave their time and talents to make this event soar.

We added a playful element of a new five-hole mini-golf course near the playground, open to all on a donation basis, thanks to a generous gift from our founder, Peg Prag.

Applegate Trail Rides offers horseback adventures that connect riders to the land. Owners Tess and Tara led two fun Pacifica summer camps focused on horsemanship and riding techniques, helping kids build confidence, develop skills, and foster a deep respect for animals, all while having a ton of fun.

Perhaps the most exciting development is the long-awaited Pacifica Nature Center, now underway in phase one. Two modular buildings will become spaces where kids and adults explore Earth's ecosystems and

the air's vast openness through hands-on programs, homeschooling classes, and community gatherings—a true Pacifica dream come true.

Construction behind the Great Hall marks the near completion of our new fire-suppression system, safeguarding our natural home and community for seasons to come.

As autumn approaches, we prepare to welcome students for residential Outdoor School, now offering immersive two- and three-night programs. Our PALS (Pacifica's Adventures in Learning) homeschool group, for ages 5-12, returns in September, providing one-day-a-week adventures in outdoor education and local and team-building activities. Forest Fridays, for ages 6-11, will resume, where children deepen their connection through mindfulness, ecology, and outdoor skills, nurturing friendships and resilience.

New this year is Siskiyou Roots, a two-day-a-week microschool for 9-11-year-olds, blending core academics with place-based learning and global studies. This program helps students ground their knowledge while reaching for broader horizons.

Do you have guests coming to town? Pacifica has two beautiful Airbnbs onsite for those visiting our area. The Pond

See **WE ARE PACIFICA**, page 22.

■ THREAT OF WILDFIRE

Continued from page 1

community risk, can expedite post-wildfire recovery. Knowing what your plan is in the event of a fire, for yourself or for your business and clients, can be the difference between lives saved and lives lost.

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a document that drives decisions on reducing risk, identifies community priorities for preparing for and reacting to wildfires, and guides the post-fire recovery plan. A CWPP acts to coordinate stakeholders such as the power company, land management agencies, and county offices. Having a current CWPP also sets up eligibility for local nonprofits and fire departments for grants to reduce fuels, harden communities, provide education, and fill positions needed for fire response. CWPPs that are current and well-developed could also help residents maintain their wildfire insurance or qualify for it as new homeowners. Many of us can relate to the challenges and stresses of maintaining or obtaining wildfire

insurance. The inability to obtain that insurance has far-reaching effects, such as making it difficult, if not impossible, to sell a home. Going without wildfire insurance means relying on the state-offered insurance plan, known as the Oregon Fair Plan, which is generally more expensive and offers less coverage than most private providers.

A CWPP is more than a planning document for fire responders and community organizations. A CWPP is a plan designed by the local community to protect the residents and build relationships. It can help households develop their personal plans for what to do during red flag warnings and fire watch days, ensure that evacuation routes are marked and the risk along those roads reduced, create plans to reduce hazards in and around communities, and more. The Applegate CWPP is meant to help you. Please be alert for community meetings and other forms of outreach in the coming months, so that you can contribute to your community's CWPP.



2025 Upper Applegate Fire. Photo by Brian Mulhollen, Fire Marshall.

Questions about the CWPP? Please contact Nathan Gehres, APWC Habitat Restoration Project Manager, by email at nathan@apwc.info or by phone at 541-890-9989.

Miranda Stewart
Retired BLM Wildfire Specialist
Volunteer with Applegate Fire District
wildfire73@gmail.com

POETRY CORNER

From OBSERVANCES, Inscape, IX (Gerard Manley Hopkins)

by Christin Lore Weber

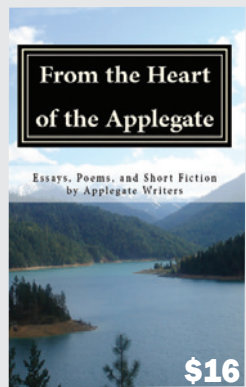
Now with you gone I dig into your cliffs of fall
 With torn fingernails and a mind too close to see
 The mountaintops. Instead, I glimpse the
 dappled things.
 Things here. Edges of things. How edges
 Catch light and shine, quicken hearts or stop them,
 The dappled edges of our lives twined, as they are,
 With the Beyond. Sing it! Cling as you are
 To mountains of mind, hope as you desire
 To hope to fly, not fall, into common space
 Of dappled songbird, brindled cow, cloud reflections
 On a pond, the small, all the pied, streaked,
 stippled, mottled,
 Speckled, flecked, marbled things, tender
 Touch of earth upon a tenacious mind, grace
 Of our soft world of moss, leaf and petal
 To breathe and cool our mental heat.

Christin Lore Weber lives along Sterling Creek, where she weaves dreams into words, the words into poems, her life into memoir, her imaginings into novels, and her hopes into spaces too large for words to hold.

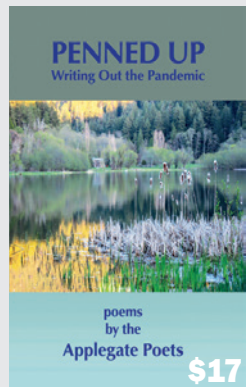
Have a submission for Poetry Corner, either written by an Applegate resident or about the Applegate? Email it to *Applegater* poetry editor Paul Tipton at ptipton4u2c@gmail.com.

Though we couldn't include it in our print edition this time, a beautiful poem by Tamaura Murphy is waiting for you online. Discover her work in the *Applegater's* digital edition at applegater.org.

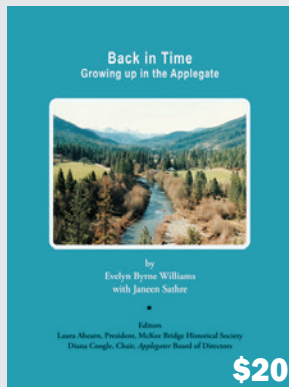
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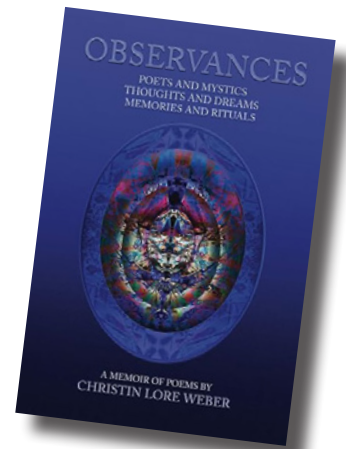
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BOOK REVIEW

Where poetry meets the divine

Observances: Poets and Mystics, Thoughts and Dreams, Memories and Rituals—

A Memoir of Poems by Christin Lore Weber.



BY PAUL TIPTON

Christin Lore Weber, local author, poet, and, I must add, mystic, has created a stunning tapestry of poems for us to observe with her new book, *Observances*. She draws on her many life experiences, intertwining them with the influence of poets and mystics of the past one thousand years. It is a chronical of her search for meaning within the church, within herself. This is a book you will want to read in a quiet place, the best way to absorb the rhythms, the use of language, and the wisdom that flows from the page and into our hearts and minds, our very souls. She blends the secular and the nonsecular into her unique introspection of both the spiritual and the hard realities of life, having lived years as a nun and, beyond that, a more worldly, but deeply spiritual life.

I know Christin and have had the pleasure of hearing her speak about the newest poems for this book and then read them aloud to the Applegate Poets, a group she and I are part of. On those occasions, it was quickly obvious that her relationship with—and study of—the mystics she writes about has earned her the title of mystic as well.

Having abandoned organized religion at fifteen, I have continued searching for a broader, more inclusive and encompassing spirituality all my life. I find in Christin's words and thoughts a connection to the Unknown, the Beyond, that I can accept

and understand, except that she speaks from a deeper knowledge than I have reached. She says of her mentor Jessica Powers, in "Fissure in Time," "Your winged soul lifted me from, as you envisioned, 'the fissure of time in the rock of eternity' and carried me back into the infinite heart of God." And to Marguerite Porete, burned as a heretic in 1310, she writes, in "FarNear, VII,"

... "You are not old that you might know these things
 Nor are you clear, to let self go. With or without fear
 To unknow. To fall into the rapture.
 To annihilate.
 To thus become the aperture through to the ultimate
 Far/Near."

This is heavy, dense, but beautiful writing that should be read with "the heart instead of the mind," as Diana Coogle suggests in the introduction, writing that calls you back to see and read again, to garner further understanding after contemplation, to soak in, again, the spirit of these poems and the wisdom of this mystic poet, Christin Lore Weber. To read and absorb this book is to allow her to lead you through her words into an experience of the Divine.

Paul Tipton
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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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Submissions for the next issue must be received at gater@applegater.org by the deadline (see Editorial Calendar on this page).

Applegater Newsmagazine
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Conversations with the land When the trees keep talking

BY GAY BRADSHAW

"As scientific understanding has grown, so our world has become dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos because he is no longer involved in nature...Thunder is no longer the voice of an angry god, nor is lightning his avenging missile. No river contains a spirit, no tree is the life principle of a man, no snake the embodiment of wisdom, no mountain cave the home of a great demon. No voices now speak to man from stones, plants, and animals, nor does he speak to them believing they can hear. His contact with nature has gone, and with it has gone the profound emotional energy of this connection."

I think of this passage by C.G. Jung every time the heavens break.

It begins with a quiet lowing, tense with the blue-black buildup of emotions that can no longer be held. Thunder reminds us that there is something, someone else, ever-present, witnessing, watching, knowing, as we scurry about our everyday lives,

consumed by the vicissitudes of self-absorption, oblivious with nary a glance at the vastness of the cosmos and Nature's infinite perfection.

Usually, the warnings ask for and seek gentle conciliation. The hardened heart of unrepenting disregard, however, has lasted too long, and nothing but the eruption of an anguished demand seems able to pierce the armor of separation that our species hides behind to mask its birthmark of vulnerability.

Sky whispers turn to bellows so overwhelmingly powerful and penetrating that the noisy, busy, endless track of the mind stops cold. Even though this inner silencing may last but a moment, the message has been delivered. We can no longer call ourselves immune. While growing up here, I loved the thunderstorms that came upon us in the summer. All of a sudden, we were stripped of any veil that might have hung between us and Nature's



Photo by Frederick Wallace, sourced online.

sparkling mystery. We were no longer set apart from the swaying cottonwood, clarion jays, sleek and knowing cougars, and massive oaks. In an instant, we were alight with the magic of the land. We lived and breathed as one.

These days, the frisson of excitement quickly turns to gripping fear because I know that the voices of the sky can flash from sound to flames, uncaring of who lies within its fiery path. At these moments, I try to retrieve that sense of magic to hear and listen to what the snakes, stones, plants, and animals are saying: Find contentment with inner silence, because that's when the trees keep talking.

Gay Bradshaw
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November 1**

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Thanks to Linda Kappen for the lovely photo of Applegate fall garden Indian Blanket Flower blooming.

...

Have a photo for the Fall 2025 *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.

A huge THANKS to the generous donors who recently contributed to the *Applegater*.

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Editorial Calendar

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

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— Applegate Library — Fall Fun!



BY CHRISTINE GRUBB

The Applegate Library is more than just a place to check out books—it's a vibrant hub for learning, connecting, and experiencing community spirit, a welcoming space where patrons of all ages can explore resources, attend programs, and enjoy the quiet charm of this rural gem. From free Wi-Fi to story times to community programs and meetings, the Applegate Library continues to grow as a cornerstone of the valley, supporting lifelong learning and local connections. Come see a tapestry weaving by local artist, Thalia Truesdell, of a 1909 homestead on the Applegate River, pictured below.

Upcoming events

End of Life Planning for Your Online Accounts, 18+ years. Have you ever wondered what happens to your digital accounts after death? This program will help you and your loved ones take practical steps to prepare your digital legacy. 11 am-12:30 pm Friday, September 12.

Applegate Music Festival, 3+ years. Love Scandinavian folk music? We will have that! Love keyboards, fiddles, and cello? We will have that too! Browse the library, pick up your holds, and listen to local musicians playing various instruments and songs. Whatever your pleasure, these artistic, fun, and talented musicians are sure to send you on your way with a smile on your face and a song in your heart. 12:30-3:30 pm Saturday, September 27.

Pressed Flower Ornaments, 6+ years. Join us for a hands-on crafting session where you'll create beautiful pressed-flower ornaments using dry clay and garden blooms. These elegant pieces make lovely gift tags, keepsakes, or seasonal decorations. No experience is necessary, just bring your creativity! All materials will be provided. 4-5 pm Thursday, October 2.

Make Your Own Mini Piñata, 8+ years. Participants will learn about the rich history of piñatas and create their own, fill them with a mix of spicy and sweet candies, then break them open and enjoy! This program will be presented in both English and Spanish. 3-4 pm Friday, October 10.

Collaborating with Beavers for a Resilient Future, 8+ years. Beavers can

build water security and habitat resiliency for your land. They can also be a nuisance. This class introduces beaver biology and what beavers do and why they do it. You will leave with an appreciation for beavers, and value their work because beavers are “dam” good partners! Local human, father, husband, and Executive Director of Project Beaver, Jakob Shockey will present this informative class. 12:30-1:30 pm Saturday, October 10.

Halloween Craft, 3+ years. Join in the fun of painting or carving your very own mini pumpkin. Come in costume for a special treat! 4-5 pm Thursday, October 23.

Paint Your Own Sugar Skull, 5+ years. Get ready for Día de los Muertos by painting your own sugar skull. Follow a traditional pattern or give it your own spin. This program will be presented in English and Spanish. 3-4 pm Friday, October 24.

Embrace Your Inner Wild: Music and Movement with Laurie Finear, 8+ years. This class combines singing, rhythm, movement, and sign language. Get ready to sing beloved songs and play with percussion instruments, hoops, balls, dyna bands, and more! 3-4 pm Tuesday, November 4.

Reminders

- A Digital Services representative will be here on Tuesdays from 10 am-12:30 pm on a first-come, first-served basis. You can also make an appointment by email at teched@jcls.org or by phone at 541-734-3990.
- The Applegate Library meeting room can be booked for your meeting, program, or event (even when the library is closed) by going to jcls.libcal.com/reserve/ap-meeting. Need a place to rehearse? You can do that here, whether for a meeting or music practice.
- 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.

Christine Grubb
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18485 N Applegate Rd, Grants Pass



The Home Place tapestry weaving by local artist Thalia Truesdell.

— Ruch Library — Fall Fun!

BY MEGAN PINDER

All are welcome at the library! Programs are free, and you do not need a library card to attend.

Basic Seed Saving. Seed saving can be easy and fun! We'll cover the basics of how to get started saving seeds confidently. 1-2 pm Saturday, September 6.

End of Life Planning for Your Online Accounts, 18+ years. Ever wondered what happens to your digital accounts after death? This program will help you take practical steps to prepare your digital legacy. 3:15-4:30 pm Thursday, September 11.

Mental Health Tools and Tips: Community Education, 13+ years. This program, led by a mental health professional, is designed to equip community members with the tools to recognize and respond to mental health challenges. 1-3 pm Saturday, September 13.

Make Your Own Mini Piñata, 8+ years. Learn about the history of piñatas and create your own using common crafting supplies. Presented in English and Spanish. 1-2 pm Saturday, September 20.

What Is AI and Should I Be Worried?, 13+ years. Explore the hot topic of AI. Learn what it is and some of the challenges and concerns it creates. 1-2 pm Saturday, October 4.

Community Ofrenda. Celebrate Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)! Help create a community ofrenda (altar) to remember our deceased loved ones. We will make crafts to decorate the ofrenda. You may also bring a picture of your loved one to be placed on the ofrenda. Presented in English and Spanish. 4-5 pm Thursday, October 9.

Paint Your Own Mini Pumpkin. Celebrate the fall season with a fun and creative pumpkin decorating program! 1-2 pm Saturday, October 11.

Bewitching Brews, 18+ years. Evoke the magic of the season with this enchanting class, where we'll conjure up toasty teas, herbal elixirs, and fall-inspired mocktails. 1-2 pm Saturday, October 18.

Paint Your Own Sugar Skull, 5+ years. Get ready for Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) by painting your own sugar skull. Presented in English and Spanish. 1-2 pm Saturday, October 25.

Beginning Herbal Crafting, 12+ years. Sample different herbs in their fresh and dried forms—including in teas and

other edible delights. Make crafts and body care products that you can take home to enjoy. 1-2:30 pm Saturday, November 8.

Civic Book Group: The Bill of Obligations, 13+ years. Explore democracy, civic engagement, and social change through books and discussions. This fall, we are reading *The Bill of Obligations: Ten Habits of Good Citizens* by Richard Haass. Multiple copies are available for check out—get yours today to prepare for the November 15 discussion! 1-2:30 pm Saturday, November 15.

Winter Clothing Swap. In observation of National Homelessness Awareness Month, bring your extra winter clothes, or come to get “new-to-you” clothing. You don't need to bring clothing to participate. Donations must be clean and functional. No underwear. 1-3 pm Saturday, November 22.

Hunger Awareness Food Drive. Throughout September, Ruch Library is collecting nonperishable food donations for our local food bank.

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

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

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

Community Yoga, 13+ years. Join us for an all-levels yoga class with Dr. Rachel Stricker. The Community Room will open at 8:45 and class will begin at 9:00. Registration required at jcls.org/events or by calling the Ruch Library. Bring your own mat. 9-10 am second and fourth Wednesdays.

Game Night, 10+ years. Join fellow gamers in the Community Room! Gaming options and snacks provided. You are also welcome to bring your own games to share. 4-6 pm fourth Thursdays.

Megan Pinder
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Welcome to our new layout editor

BY DIANA COOGLE

Michelle McAfee, newly hired as layout editor of the *Applegater*, brings a ton of experience and talent to the job. She moved to Williams 16 years ago, and spent many summers in the Copper River region of Alaska. She created a grassroots singer-songwriter magazine and podcast called *Songbones*. It ran throughout 2019, “solely on grit and heart,” she says. It was Michelle who, as she says, “dreamed the project, learned InDesign to create the layouts, collected and edited writers' stories, and hosted, recorded, and mixed the podcast.” She also designed the website and promoted the project.

When the music scene came to a halt in 2020, Michelle turned to other work, including work for nonprofits.

“I love the *Applegater* newspaper!” Michelle says. “It is a high-quality publication that enhances our community.” She adds that she is glad to be involved—and we are so glad to have her expertise and her enthusiastic attitude with us. She promises to be a boon to the paper.

Diana Coogle
Chair, *Applegater* Board
of Directors

Note: The Applegater board would like to thank Barbara Holiday for doing the layout for the spring issue of the paper, stepping in at the last minute and doing her usual excellent job.



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— Williams Library —
Fall Festivities!

BY BRANDACE ROJO

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

Featured events at the Williams Branch

Williams Weekly Story Time. Themed story-time-and-craft session in a safe and fun environment. 11-11:30 am every Friday.

K9 Reading Buddies. Trained therapy dogs provide a nonintimidating environment for children to learn to read out loud. Young readers explore language and books during this special story time. 3-4 pm on Tuesdays.

Adult Williams Book Club. From gripping plot twists to heartwarming characters, participants unravel the wonders of literature together. Explore what you love about the books you're reading or the ones you've recently finished. Noon-1 pm the last Saturday of every month.

School's starting—Get free homework help with your library card

As the new school year begins, Josephine Community Library is here to help students and families start strong. With Brainfuse HelpNow, students of all ages can get free, live online tutoring and homework support—just by using their library card. Live tutors are available in English and Spanish

every day. Users can also submit questions for next-day answers, get expert feedback on writing assignments, and access skill-building tools for math, science, reading, and more.

HelpNow isn't just for kids—adults can also prepare for the GED, study for the US citizenship test, or get help with resumes and job interviews. Wherever you are in your learning journey, Brainfuse HelpNow can help make this school year a success. Visit josephinelibrary.org and click "Online Learning Resources" from the "Education/Research" menu to get started.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

To register your children under the age of five for free online, go to josephinelibrary.org and find Dolly Parton's Imagination Library on the "Children" page under the "Youth/Family" menu. To register using a paper form, visit your nearest library branch in Grants Pass, Williams, or Wolf Creek. In eight to ten weeks, your child will receive the first book. After that, age-appropriate books will arrive monthly.

Williams branch hours

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

Brandace Rojo
Communications & Partnership Manager
Josephine Community Library
brojo@josephinelibrary.org
541-476-0571 x114

Invitations from The Friends of Ruch Library

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

Psst...you! Yes, you! Person with your feet planted on the earth in the Applegate—you are invited to the Ruch Branch Library for some lively events and conversations.

- **Ice Cream Social and Book Barn Re-opening!** Noon-2 pm Saturday, October 4. Members of the Friends of Ruch Library (FORL) gather for this annual event. Not an official Friend of Ruch Library yet? Sign up on October 4, make your own fancy ice cream sundae, and help support giving books to our students and the Friends' special programs below.

- Get bargains at the Book Barn and A-Frame Bookstore, Noon-4 pm.

When's the last time you had an opportunity to gather in a neutral place with others you may not yet know and talk about some of our country's shared history and what being a citizen means today? Check out these opportunities:

- **The Constitution of the United States—4-5:30 pm Wednesday, October 8.** It's the supreme law of our land, but when did you last read or study it?

- **The Declaration of Independence—4-5:30 pm Wednesday, October 15.** It's our nation's fundamental ethical document. Both foundational documents are flawed, and both are front and center in our civic life. John Frohnmayer will review both with us and discuss their relevance to our daily lives.

John Frohnmayer has degrees in American history (from Stanford University), Christian ethics (from the University of Chicago), and law (from the University of Oregon). He was both a career trial lawyer and Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. A noted speaker and commentator, John is also the author of nine books. We welcome him to Ruch!

Pick up your free copies of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence at the Ruch Library to read before October 8. Have questions? Contact Pat Gordon at 541-899-7655.

- **Civic Book Discussion: *The Bill of Obligations: The Ten Habits of Good Citizens* by Richard Haass—1-2:30 pm Saturday, November 15.** FORL is enthusiastically supporting this Ruch Library program! It's a book recommended by master teacher Lois MacMillan in her three-week April series with us: Civic Behavior from Yesterday for Today. This book is available from our library in print, audio, or e-book versions. Reserve the version of your choice early and read it before November 15.

Friends (FORL) continues our 40+-year support of our Ruch Library with books for young people and programs for



John Frohnmayer

all ages as part of our mission. Become a member and join our lifelong-learning movement!

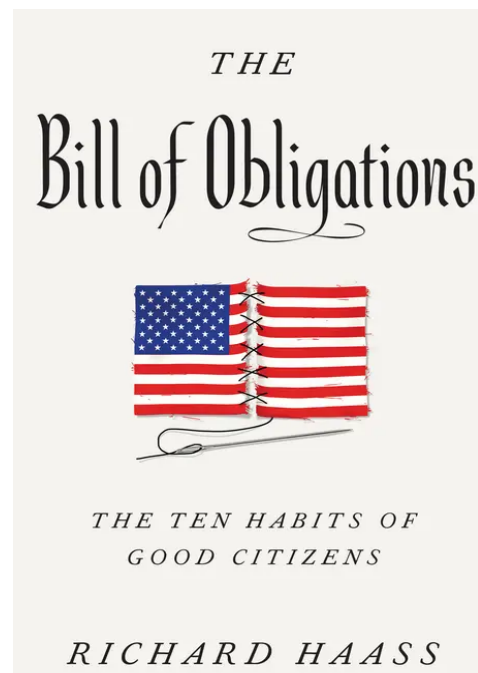
The Friends' Board meets in the Ruch Library's Community Meeting Room on the first Wednesday of the month, September through June, 10 am-noon. You are welcome to join us and bring your suggestions for community-interest programs and presenters.

The Friends also manages an A-Frame Bookstore and a Book Barn on our Ruch Library Campus—all staffed by volunteers. (You can become one too!)

The A-Frame Bookstore is open every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, 1-3 pm. Children's books are 50 cents, and all other books are two dollars.

The Book Barn is open the first Saturday of the month, noon-4 pm, from October through June. All sales—books, CDs, and DVDs—are by donation!

Janis Mohr-Tipton
FORL President
janis.agapark@gmail.com
541-846-7501



■ **LITTLE LUNGS**

Continued from page 1

Participating in the air filter workshop means you will build and take home your own air filter!

As we head into the later part of wildfire season, and then the fall prescribed-fire season, consider creating clean-air rooms in your home, school, or business. Here are some ways you can be proactive in protecting your lungs and the lungs of those you love:

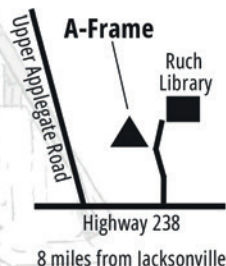
- Check real-time local air quality index (AQI) rating at airnow.gov and follow safety guidance when AQI ratings are high.
- Visit the Smokewise Ashland website for more tips on protecting your home or business from smoke at smokewiseashland.org
Sara Jones and Amelia Liberatore
Smokewise Ashland, City of Ashland
sara.jones@ashland.or.us
amelialiberatore@gmail.com

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

Visit the A-Frame Bookstore @ Ruch Library

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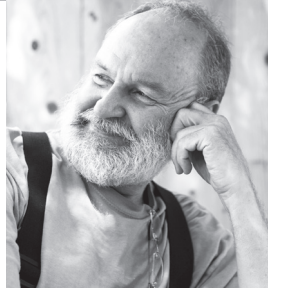
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THE STARRY SIDE

Milky Way

BY GREELEY WELLS



Greeley Wells.

Hello! Here I am again, taking you all to the sky with me.

By now, the Milky Way (which, by the way, the Chinese call the Silver River) has made it to the top of the sky and is sinking west, rotating slowly counterclockwise, as all planets, stars, and galaxies in the sky are always doing. We can watch the Milky Way rotate steadily until May, when it disappears, slowly returning by June.

Now, in the fall season, the magnificent Milky Way is sliding westward. You can see the Milky Way at this time of year if you look northeast, overhead, and then south. If you are in a dark enough spot, you'll be seeing at least a vague Milky Way, maybe like a thin mist, starting at Cassiopeia, the "W" in the north (and slightly east).

Cassiopeia's husband, Cepheus (shaped like a house with a roof—a point-up triangle over a square), is just outside the Milky Way, just above Cassiopeia. Next overhead is Cygnus, the



Image: Sky & Telescope (skyandtelescope.org).

Swan, or Northern Cross. Both names are accurate, depending on how you look at this constellation.

Next, going south and past the directly overhead position, is Altair, a

really bright star in Aquila, the Eagle.

I've never really distinguished the shape of an eagle in this group of stars, but I love the three-in-a-row effect with the bright middle star. Lastly, just above the southern horizon is Sagittarius, who is described as several things, but to me is definitely a pot of tea with the little right-hand triangle as its spout, a triangle of stars its top, and the squarish formation on the left its handle. It was named fairly recently by the British, and I agree with them.

In this season, the Milky Way is a full north-south sweep, starting slightly east of north and ending almost exactly south.

Next month, its movement takes Cassiopeia farther north and up, while the other end of the Milky Way is still in the south. In the third month of this season—November—the Milky Way is even farther west and lower, but still attached to Cassiopeia, who is now going over the top of the North Star and continuing around it, drawing the Milky Way with it. The North Star is the turning point for the counterclockwise motion of all stars, planets, and constellations. (That's why the North Star is such an important star to learn.)

Even if the Milky Way is dim in your sky, I hope you can still see many of the magnificent planets and constellations and can enjoy the night sky, wherever you are.

— OF NOTE —

Planets

Mercury is visible in August, not in September, and at dusk in October.
Venus makes a dawn showing in September and October.
Mars shows up at dusk in September and October.
Jupiter is visible in our morning skies.
Saturn is in view all night in September, and in the evening in October.

Meteors

Orionids occur October 2-November 12; peak nights are October 22-23.

Applegate Library free business and artist workshops

BY CHRIS LOEFFLER

The Rural Entrepreneur in Residence program is offering free-to-all workshops, presented by local industry leaders who will share their insights for running successful businesses in the Applegate. All workshops run from 5:30-6:30 pm at the Applegate Library and are hosted by the Jackson County Library System and A Greater Applegate.

Business Workshop Series by Don Tipping of Siskiyou Seeds

- September 15—Start Your Small Business
- October 6—Identifying Synergy with Local Businesses
- October 20—Marketing in the Applegate
- October 27—Building Resilience in Your Business

- November 3—Social Media Strategies for Applegate Businesses
- November 17—Businesses Services and Systems

Artist Workshop Series by Colene Milligan of Sweet Colene Art

- September 9—Thriving as an Artist in the Applegate

- September 16—Blank Canvas: Know Your Art Best
- October 7—Pricing Your Art and Merch
- October 14—Artist Networking and Opportunities
- October 21—How to Work Galleries and Shows
- October 28—Selling Your Art in the Digital Age

Learn more at agreaterapplegate.org/eir2025/.
 Chris Loeffler
chrisloeffler@hotmail.com

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Rebuilding community with A Greater Applegate

BY GABRIELLE PULLEN

In January, A Greater Applegate screened the provocatively titled documentary “Join or Die” at the Upper Applegate Grange. Based on the work of Robert Putnam, the film suggests that individual health is tied to participation in civic society and social connection, and that a healthy democracy ultimately requires strong social connections and community life. It urges Americans to reconnect and rebuild their communities by finding new ways to foster community groups, organizations, and clubs.

There used to be a multitude of ways to do this, but many historical organizations that emphasized building social bonds have been in steady decline for decades. The result has been a more fragmented society and community life. Between the 1970s and 1990s, the number of Americans who attended a single local civic meeting in a year plummeted by 40 percent. The number who went to a single meeting of a club—say, the Rotary or a local tennis team—dropped by 50 percent. Even the number of picnics Americans joined dropped by 60 percent.

We are lucky here in the Applegate, aka Jacksaphine County, as we still have many options for participation and connection. The month of September will feature many ways Applegaters can engage and invest locally, while also having some fun close to home. Culminating with the third annual Jacksaphine Count(r)y Fair

from September 19-28, this month is chock-full of ways to wander through our valley enjoying the food, beverages, art, music, venues, and scenic vistas (among other things) that the Applegate is known for.

The insert in this Applegater has a map with many of the events happening during the Jacksaphine Count(r)y Fair and some ways for you to engage with our local businesses, organizations, and activities throughout the month (or anytime, really). Be sure to check the community calendar on applegateconnect.org and agreaterapplegate.org for a complete schedule and event details.

In addition to the Jacksaphine Country Fair and AGA’s fundraising efforts, several other organizations are hosting events this month with the goal of raising some money for their projects and organizations, including the Friends of the Applegate Fire District, the Applegate Siskiyou Alliance, Pacifica, and the Upper Applegate Grange, which also just celebrated its first-year anniversary of being open again. This sure looks like a golden opportunity for investing in our community!

With a population of 20,000 people, it could feel like we are spreading ourselves thin—or we could see this as a way to dig in and help support all the things that make this place special and



A Greater Applegate.

connected. If everyone donated \$25 for every member of their household to one of these community-based groups, that would result in \$500,000 being invested into projects and programs that directly benefit our residents and are run by people who live and work here. AGA alone has brought in over \$2.5 million dollars to the Applegate in the past five years. If you include all of the nonprofits working locally and often in collaboration, that number increases exponentially—something we can’t do without community involvement and support.

Beyond making a financial contribution to a nonprofit, you can help in many ways, from working on a trail-building crew to attending the farmers markets and picking up some local produce. Or get in on the

chili cook-off on September 20, or bake a pie for the auction at the Salant Family Ranch BBQ on September 26! All of these upcoming events need participants, and they often need volunteers to make them happen too. So come on out this month! There is a lot going on and a little something for everyone! Get to know a new neighbor and invite them to watch the paragliders land at Moulin Ruch on September 18 or to take a bike ride through Jerome Prairie on September 21 or to attend the poetry reading on September 27. It’s all here. All it needs is you.

Megan Fehrman
Co-Executive Director, A
Greater Applegate
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megan@agreaterapplegate.org

■ APPLGATE CAMPAIGN

Continued from page 1

standard across the firefighting world, such as the use of respirators. Less known by the public is that carcinogens in smoke build up on firefighters’ Personal Protective Gear, known as PPE or “turnouts.” Recently, Captain Caples explained that during a fire, carcinogenic substances can pass through the PPE layers to skin, concentrating in areas where there are folds—the armpits and groin. As a result, firefighters experience a high incidence of diverse cancers, especially near folds, such as bladder cancer. When handling their equipment after a fire, firefighters are further exposed to this cancer-causing residue.

But awareness is growing, and prevention makes a difference. Essential steps include correct handling of equipment, as well as proper cleaning of firefighters and their PPE. The best way to clean PPE? With a purpose-made PPE washer-extractor.

The “Wash for Their Wellness” Firefighter Cancer Prevention Campaign!

The Friends of the Applegate Fire District is pleased to support the district’s efforts to protect its firefighters by fundraising to purchase a \$25,000 extractor. Captain Caples was very glad to hear about the effort to acquire an extractor, calling it “a critical piece of any prevention program.” This specialized equipment does the best possible cleaning job while also preserving the condition of costly PPE. Across the country, these extractors are becoming standard equipment.

The 2025 Fire and Vine Benefit Dinner!

On September 5, 2025, we will celebrate our firefighters at the 2025 Fire and Vine Benefit, featuring a gourmet meal, wine, and fun auctions. All funds raised will support the purchase of a PPE washer-extractor! Tickets must be purchased in advance. Please keep in mind

that last year’s fundraiser event sold out quickly and tickets may not be available if you procrastinate for this one.

Contributions in any amount are appreciated! To learn more, please visit the Friends website at <https://friendsofapplegatefire.org>. Or use the QR code above.

Please support this campaign by being an event sponsor at one of three levels:

- **Fire Chief:** \$1000—This package includes four tickets to the 2025 Fire and Vine Dinner and Auction, two Applegate fire challenge coins, and a commemorative firefighter helmet signed by all Applegate Fire District firefighters and officers. Sponsorships will be recognized in event literature, the special edition of the *Applegater*, and the *Fireside Newsletter*.
- **Captain:** \$500—This level includes two tickets to the 2025 Fire and Vine Dinner and Auction, two Applegate fire challenge coins, and recognition in event literature, the special edition of the *Applegater*, and the *Fireside Newsletter*.
- **Engineer:** \$250—This level includes recognition in event literature, the special edition of the *Applegater*, and the *Fireside Newsletter*, along with two Applegate fire challenge coins as a thank-you gift. While this sponsorship does not include event tickets, supporters at this level are welcome to purchase single-seat tickets separately.

Thank you!

Babette Rapp and Liza Crosse
Friends of the Applegate Fire District
lizacrosse@comcast.net
7919 Highway 238, Ruch



QR code for Fire and Vine Benefit

Wild Oak Preschool

indoor/outdoor home-based nature-inspired preschool program

NOW ENROLLING FOR FALL 2025!

A nature-based preschool program inspired by the seasons.

Wild Oak’s seasonal curriculum combines hands-on sensory and science-based education with nature and outdoor exploration, with a special focus on early academics and social, emotional, and cognitive development. Join us as we explore and connect with the world around us.

Limited spaces available for Fall!

Fall Session: September 8 - November 21
fall enrollment period: August 1 - September 3

Winter Session: January 5 - March 19
winter enrollment period: November 15 - December 15

Spring Session: March 30 - June 11
spring enrollment period TBD

Program Details

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- Class runs Monday through Thursday
- Healthy meals provided
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- Licensed as Certified Family Childcare Provider with Oregon Dept of Early Learning & Care
- ERDC accepted

My contact information

Heather Paladini, Program Director

text 336-937-2882

email wildoakpreschool@gmail.com

www.wildoakpreschool.com

Schedule your meet-and-greet today!



Happy days ahead: Fall brings color, cooler weather, and a chance to show some community love at Cantrall Buckley Park!

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

The third annual Volunteer and Community Event at Cantrall Buckley Park on April 12 was a resounding success for community members and families who participated, as well as for the volunteer-run nonprofit organizations and groups throughout the Applegate Valley.

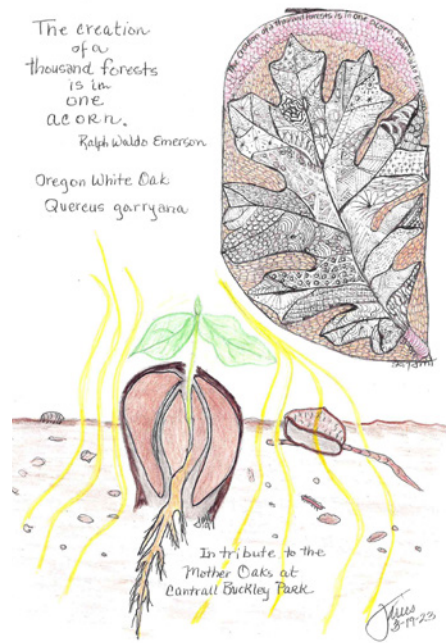
A highlight of the event was the performance by students from Ruch Outdoor Community School, directed by Principal Ryan King. Many audience members mentioned feeling “misty-eyed with joy” as they watched the enthusiastic and happy smiles of the children singing. Following this, the local duo “Justaduo” captivated the crowd with their strong, gusty voices that carried their songs throughout the event area.

The children’s activity area was a major attraction for families all afternoon. It was bustling with happy children engaged in art projects, planting willow cuttings, and creating river systems in

the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council’s (APWC) Stream Table, a special trailer filled with sand, water, and various items to create miniature stream simulations. Another highlight was the chance to visit the newest fire truck in the Applegate Valley Fire Department’s fleet. Children had the opportunity to sit in the truck and received special fire helmets and badges.

The crowning moment of the day was when all participating organizations and groups formed a big circle. We spent over an hour learning about each other’s activities and getting to know one another. Sharing our needs led to the decision to work together as a “volunteers collective,” meeting quarterly and developing a plan of focus points important to the entire group. The underlying theme was to help each other and invite guest presenters as needed.

Jim Reiland, a community member and A Greater Applegate board member, and I are developing a survey for the group



Art Credit: Janis Mohr-Tipton, 2013.

to determine priorities for the rest of 2025. If there are any other volunteer groups or nonprofits who didn’t make the event or would like to join this “volunteers collective,” please contact me. **Volunteer opportunities around the park**

It’s time to care for our Cantrall Buckley Park. We have many designated areas that need weeding, deadheading of flowering species, and planting or replanting of pollinator-friendly plants. Individuals or small groups are welcome to join workdays.

Interpretive sign installations will take place when summer workers are available to assist Brien Dallas, Operations Manager for Jackson County Parks.

The Hiker-Biker Shelter needs its wood frame sealed with a clear coat after the rainy weather has passed. We



Members and friends of Applegate Valley Garden Club are preparing this space for a pollinator garden in the park’s upper terrace to the right of the entrance. Photo by Janis Mohr-Tipton.

need a couple of volunteers to help with this task, so please contact me if you’re interested.

Enjoy the wonderful outdoor blooming happenings!

Janis Mohr-Tipton
Chair, Cantrall Buckley
Enhancement Committee
Applegate Partnership and
Watershed Council
541-846-7501
janis.agapark@gm

Local grant supports forest health and air quality monitoring at Ruch School

BY RYAN KING

Ruch Outdoor Community School (ROCS) has long embraced the outdoors as a key classroom. Thanks to a partnership with the City of Ashland, this commitment is expanding with a meaningful project based in the school’s adjacent nature park. The goal? To deepen environmental learning, empower students, and support the health of our local ecosystem—all while preparing for the challenges of wildfire smoke.

Awarded in partnership with Oregon State University’s ASPIRE Children’s Environmental Health Center, this grant supports hands-on science education and restoration work on the school grounds.

Over the next year and a half, Ruch students will install air quality monitors, conduct forest restoration activities, and work with local partners to better understand the links between air quality, climate, and ecological health.

Our guiding vision is to give students the tools and experiences they need to become environmental stewards—starting right here at home.

Real Science, Real Impact

One of the most exciting aspects of the project is the way it blends rigorous science with local relevance. Students will take part in designing and carrying out field experiments related to forest succession, smoke readiness, and ecosystem restoration. From measuring soil moisture and tracking tree growth to interpreting data from new air quality monitors, students will build skills in observation, analysis, and communication.

While this grant funds supplies like native plants, forestry kits, and educational materials, the true investment is in student leadership and environmental literacy. As students map photo points, analyze seasonal

data, and make presentations to their families and neighbors, they become active participants in shaping a more resilient community.

With guidance from science teacher Steve Forrest and support from the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council, students will engage in restoration efforts that include planting native species, managing understory vegetation, and installing erosion control measures. These efforts not only improve watershed and forest health but also offer students a deeper understanding of fire ecology and resilience.

A Collaborative Effort

This initiative is truly a community collaboration. Local experts will host teacher workshops in the school’s nature park, bringing regional knowledge directly into the classroom. Educational signage will be installed to inform visitors and neighbors about the work underway and the student science behind it. A community showcase is planned for spring 2026, when students will present their findings and restoration progress.

Students’ learning will also contribute to broader community readiness. By developing a school-based smoke readiness plan and participating in indoor air quality trainings offered by OSU and the City of Ashland, Ruch is taking a proactive approach to health and safety during wildfire season.

Join Us

As this project unfolds, we invite local residents to follow our progress, attend



The nature park is on the east side of campus with a fitness trail and cross country course. Photo by Ryan King.



A peaceful corner of the campus nature park, perfect for a jog or a stroll. Photo by Ryan King.

community events, and enjoy the evolving nature park trails that showcase student work. We are proud to demonstrate how rural public schools can be hubs for innovation, environmental learning, and civic engagement.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Ruch Outdoor Community School at the information listed below.

Ryan King
Principal/Athletic Director
Ruch Outdoor Community School
Medford School District
ryan.king@medford.k12.or.us
541-842-3472

THEY LIVE AMONG US

For Chris Jagger, Blue Fox Farm is a way to make the world a little better

BY DIANA COOGLE

When Chris Jagger and his wife, Melanie Kuegler, were considering names for their newly acquired farm in the Applegate, a blue heron flew past. Then a fox trotted by. Chris has an affinity for foxes; his mentor, a farmer named Judy, had an affinity for blue herons—thus, Blue Fox Farm.

That's the way Chris' mind works. He puts things together.

At college in Iowa, he was eating what he calls "commodified junk"—McDonald's and Taco Bell—and his mind was always clogged. Putting two things together, he began to "think his way back to the source"—food on the farm. After college, he moved to Santa Cruz, California—the hub of a growing national mindset focused on replacing industrialized food with knowing where the food you eat is grown.

That's where he met Melanie, who, like him, was working on farms around Santa Cruz. It wasn't a big jump for them to move to the Applegate, one of the best agricultural areas in the country, Chris says, for its soil and climate.

At the height of Blue Fox Farm's success, 45 acres were in production—greens, cherry tomatoes, all kinds of vegetables—sold wholesale as far as Portland and Seattle. Young people who came to the Applegate to work as trimmers in hemp fields, which were so often masking as marijuana grows, worked on vegetable farms before that harvest.

With abundant markets and ready labor, Applegate farms were thriving.

"We farm because we're sadistic," Chris says, without a hint of humor, "like people who do extreme sports. [His was mountain biking.] Farming pushes us to our limits, provides the same kinds of physical, spiritual, and mental challenges. But at the finish line," he ends, pointedly, "you're providing food to nourish people."

That's why Chris enjoyed doing the markets. "There was nothing political or religious about it," he says, "just 'Do you like carrots or not?'" He watched customers' children grow up, learned of customers' deaths. He likes to think about the effect he had on the thousands of people he met in the 20 years he worked the markets, helping them think more clearly because they were eating good food.

In 2015, things abruptly changed for Applegate farmers. The owners of large grocery outlets decided they valued the dollar savings of buying from agribusinesses over the superior quality of food from small farmers. "In one day, we went from Fred Meyer and other large outlets saying, 'Send us as much as you can,' to zero sales," Chris says. Blue Fox Farm cut back production from 45 acres to 12, from "all the vegetables you can think of" to 15 crops.

During COVID, Blue Fox Farm took online orders for door-to-door deliveries. It wasn't financially fulfilling, but people got fed, and that's what Chris cared about.

Applegate hemp fields and vineyards were flourishing, as people stuck at home were smoking and drinking for entertainment.

But by 2021, the hemp market crashed. Without the hemp farms, Chris couldn't find labor to work his crops. And now, with the immigrant crackdown, Hispanic and other laborers have also disappeared. The Applegate became a depressed area.

So, Chris Jagger, determined to see the area once again agriculturally vibrant, put two things together—farming and community—and began working with A Greater Applegate (AGA). Megan Fehrman, AGA's executive director, praises Chris's "grounded perspective and amazing systems mind. He is always doing things

See **BLUE FOX FARM**, page 12.



Chris Jagger.



The farm at dawn.



Radishes in the greenhouse.

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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Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council pilots Applegate Outdoor Summer Camp

BY CHARLOTTE HYDE

This June and July, Cantrall Buckley Park was abuzz with laughter and outdoor fun from Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council's (APWC) first-ever Applegate Outdoor Summer Camp (AOSC). Long dreamed of by APWC's education staff, AOSC was created to provide Applegate Valley families with high-quality, low-barrier outdoor summer programming for children ages 5-11.

Camp ran during the weeks of June 16-20, June 23-27, July 7-11, and July 14-18 from 9:30 am-3:30 pm, with aftercare available from 3:30-5:00 pm. Each day consisted of a camp meeting, morning snack, instructor-led group activity, lunch, a second instructor-led group activity, and afternoon free time. Free time offered arts and crafts, board games, and waterplay, including a water table, a splash pad, and an immensely popular inflatable water slide.

Each week of AOSC pertained to one of the following themes: Science Superstars, Art Outside, Water Wonders, and Amazing Animals. During Science Superstars, group activities included a nature scavenger hunt, digital microscope exploration, flower and owl pellet dissection, and tree identification. Art Outside activities consisted of nature journaling, pet rocks, origami, basket weaving, earth altars, collage-making, papermaking, color hunts, nature bug crafting, fairy gardens, and a presentation from Katie Walker of Sticks and Stones Studio. Water Wonders boasted activities such as fish prints, macroinvertebrate sampling, water quality testing, beaver

dam modeling, leaf boat races, sponge relays, erosion table play with APWC's Riparian Restoration Manager Caleb Galloway, and a salmon life cycle game hosted by APWC's Aquatic Restoration Program Director Luke Wimmer. Finally, Amazing Animals featured animal yoga, animal art with realistic skull and track stencils, birding with binoculars, "Bird Ninja Warrior," bumble bee roleplay, and insect-themed presentations from Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District and Pollinator Project Rogue Valley.

AOSC was incredibly well received for its pilot season, and program staff are so grateful for the community's support. The average session size was 23 campers, and we had the pleasure of hosting 50 total campers, of whom many attended multiple weeks, with eight attending all four weeks.

Parents provided the following feedback on a post-camp survey:

"AOSC is a much-needed program for our rural community. We have very few kid-friendly options in the area, especially during summer breaks, so this camp was a true gift. The hands-on experiences and caring staff made it more than just a camp—it was a real connection to the land and the community. I'm so grateful for the way AOSC fosters curiosity, stewardship, and a love for the Applegate Valley. We'll definitely be back next summer!"

"[My camper] attended all four weeks and aftercare at AOSC. She had a wonderful experience, learning so much about the ecosystem that she lives in.

See **OUTDOOR SUMMER CAMP**, page 14.



AOSC Campers create bugs out of natural materials. Photo by Applegate Partnership Education Program.

■ BLUE FOX FARM

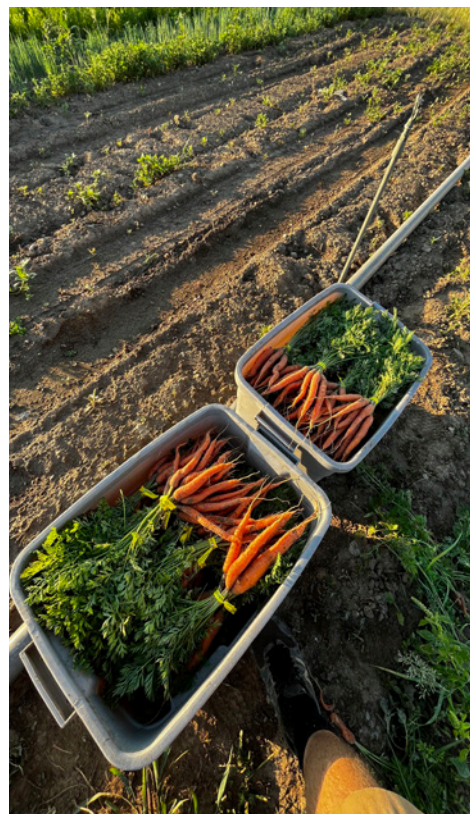
Continued from page 11

like producing podcasts or YouTube videos," she says—and helping organize a community food hub through AGA.

Chris' "systems mind" has helped him find a way to bring the many acres of land now lying fallow in the Applegate back in production. If farmers leased unused acres to young people who want to farm in the Applegate, he thought, the land would again be productive, and young farmers would have access to land otherwise unattainable, and to mentors too.

Leasing isn't an easy relationship, but it is working out well at Blue Fox Farm. Chris's fields are thriving, and his lessees, Matty Berude and Krissy Jouppi of Intergalactic Acres, are thrilled with their opportunity. "Chris is a great friend and an amazing mentor," Matty says, then repeats what is most notable about Chris Jagger: "He works endlessly to bring people and communities together, which in turn puts food on so many tables in this valley."

Diana Coogle
diana@applegater.org



Carrots.

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9:30 AM Dementia Behavior Support for Families	9:30 AM Cancer Screening Made Easy - Paid for by Medicare, and You Can Get It Done Today!
10:00 AM Medicare 101	10:00 AM Surviving Retirement: Safeguard our Retirement with Strategic Planning
10:30 AM Empowering Your End-of-Life Choices. What You Must Know BEFORE You Need It	11:00 AM Downsizing: When, How and Where Will You Go? Keeping You Safe!
11:00 AM The Importance of Health Services Being Available, When Choosing Senior Living	11:30 AM Medicare Changes Uncovered: What Seniors Need to Know
11:30 AM Area Agency on Aging Overview: What They do and How to Utilize Their Services	12:00 PM Long Term Care Medicaid Financial Qualification. What You Need to Know. SPOUSES CAN QUALIFY!
12:00 PM Ageless Grace – a Highly Effective Brain Fitness Program	1:00 PM Are You Prepared for a Major Disaster? In this must-attend class, you'll learn how to protect yourself when emergency services aren't available, get on local registries, stay connected when cell service is down, and understand the threat of the Cascadian Fault to Southern Oregon. Don't wait until it's too late—get ready now!
1:00 PM How to Utilize VA Benefits & Medicaid for Caregiving at Home	
1:30 PM Hope for the Best, Plan for the Rest: 7 Keys to Navigating a Life Changing Diagnosis	
2:00 PM The Importance of Intergenerational Connection – for a Stronger Sense of Belonging and Community	
2:30 PM Securing Your Future: Smart Tips for a Worry-Free Retirement	
	Kim Cardenas
	Marya Kain
	Melissa Mlasko
	Sabrina Zehe
	Dave Keaton, ED, The Manor
	Ann Marie Alfrey, Jon Pfeifferle, Monique Clark
	Rachel Gibson
	Kim Cardenas
	Angela Franklin
	Twin Creeks
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THROUGH THE LEPIDOPTERAN LENS

Boisduval's Blue

BY LINDA KAPPEN

Boisduval's Blue, *Icaricia icarioides*, of the Lycaenidae family, is frequently encountered in the Siskiyou, Cascades, and eastern Oregon. The Boisduval's is less than 1.5 inches in size, large for a blue. The ventral upper forewings have larger black spots, ringed in white. The ventral hindwings have smaller spots and vary to mostly white. The male's dorsal is light blue, deepened by a black to brownish border, fringed with white on upper and lower wings. The female's dorsal is a warm tan with shades of blue and white fringes.

The flight period is late May through late July. The Boisduval's host plants are many lupine species. Both sexes can be seen sipping nutrients from muddy spots or seeps. They use nectar sources as well.

Females will lay their eggs on the host plants. The butterfly is univoltine, meaning it produces a single brood per year. The second instar larvae overwinter and emerge in the spring, then feed on the hostplant. Larvae of the Boisduval's Blue have a relationship with ants, who tend the larvae and keep predators away. In kind return, the larvae secrete a sugary liquid eaten by the ants.



Blues female and male at Siskiyou Crest.
Photo by Linda Kappen.

Boisduval's habitats are the subalpine meadows and slopes, lower-elevation grasslands, and fields with lupines. They range beyond the Pacific Northwest, occurring west to the Great Plains and from British Columbia to Baja.

At least two subspecies of the Boisduval's Blues are endangered or threatened, and one is extinct (Xerces Blue)—all due to habitat loss from urban development or other factors. One subspecies—the

Fender's Blue, *Icaricia icarioides fenderii*, in Oregon—went from endangered to threatened status because of success in habitat restoration. For more information, read the fall 2024 issue of the *Applegater* at applegater.org in the "View Issues" section.

Several years ago, our son, Dakota Kappen, traveled to eastern Oregon and captured a photo of the subspecies *fulla*, which shows some ecoregional variations. His photo is published in the book *Butterflies of the Pacific Northwest*, by Robert Michael Pyle and Caitlin C. LaBar, on the right lower bottom of page 259, along with photos of other subspecies.

One fun fact about Boisduval's Blue is that it belongs to the second-largest family of butterflies in the world, Lycaenidae. This family represents 40 percent of all known species of butterflies.

Jean-Baptiste Boisduval was a 19th-century entomologist and lepidopterist,

known for his descriptions and classifications of butterflies and moths. Two pronunciations are heard. Boisduval might be pronounced "bwah-doo-VAYL." The other pronunciation is Bois-du-val, sounding like "boy-du-val" (val as in valley).

Say it how you will—you might be lucky enough to see one on an outdoor excursion one sunny spring or summer day!

Linda Kappen
Siskiyou Naturalist
humbukkapps@hotmail.com



Linda Kappen.



Male Boisduval's Blue.
Photo by Linda Kappen.

Shoulder to the wheel on proactive forest management in Williams

BY AMELIA LIBERATORE

Late summer heat is buzzing. Puffy white clouds loll on a blue horizon. At the time of this writing, the 2025 wildfire season in southern Oregon has been mild. A flurry of lightning- and human-caused fires in early July were contained quickly, thanks to the Oregon Department of Forestry and local fire-response teams.

By the time this article is published in early September, the 2025 wildfire season may be wholly different. Catastrophic autumn fires of years past are haunting reminders: September 8 is the fifth anniversary of the Almeda and South Obenchain fires; November 8 is the seventh anniversary of the Camp Fire.

Fire season is long and troubling, yet we have a winning card to play—proactive forest management. It's a big cultural shift from the previous century of wildfire suppression, but Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC), Rogue Forest Partners, Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council, the fire districts, and other Applegate Valley community leaders are doing just that.

To showcase their efforts, Rogue Forest Partners hosted a community tour near Williams on May 30. We visited

two locations. The first was treated with ecological thinning and pile burning about five years ago, and the second will be treated this fall.

Sean O'Connell, a Williams resident, attended the tour to learn about Rogue Forest Partners. At the first stop, he saw distinct differences from the dense, overgrown forests common throughout southern Oregon. He noticed understory plants that attract pollinators and oaks with room to sprawl their branches in the sun. He noticed a gap between shrubs and the tree branches above—a critical gap for keeping fire on the ground and out of the canopy.

O'Connell, originally from the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, spent the last seven years making similar improvements on his land. "I was unfamiliar with the forest type," he said, "so I was going very slowly, cutting a little bit at a time and then observing the changes." He asked USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) scientists and others for guidance early on and, little by little, made progress towards the agency-recommended prescriptions. O'Connell is now enrolled in an Oregon Department of Forestry program to advance his restoration.

"There's been lots of good work done all around the valley, and these specific areas [near Williams] desperately need fuel reduction," he said. "These are fire-adapted forests without fire. There are tons of ladder fuel, tons of surface fuel, tons of ground fuel. The canopy is too dense. So, when fire does return, it could be devastating to those old-growth forest ecosystems." The forest restoration work of Rogue Forest Partners in places like Williams aims to reduce the risk of severe wildfire, protect old-growth trees and the species that depend on them, and increase landscape resilience.



Rogue Forest Partner collaborators show a map of project areas near Williams during a community tour on May 30, 2025. In the background is an area five years post-treatment.
Photo by Amelia Liberatore.

"Ultimately, fire resilience comes from fire. Multiple rounds of low-intensity fire are what make a forest fire-resilient," O'Connell said.

Collaborative forest restoration done by agencies and nonprofits is one way to make progress. Individuals like Sean O'Connell also make important contributions to neighborhood wildfire resilience. Prescribed Burn Associations (PBAs) present a unique in-between—a framework for experienced fire professionals and neighbors to burn private land together.

O'Connell, who has been involved with the Rogue Valley PBA since 2021, says, "The Rogue Valley PBA is a wonderful organization that provides free or very low-cost prescribed burning to landowners who have treated their land." Several landowners in Williams have hosted PBA burns.

"There are many myths about fire and fire behavior," O'Connell said, "but the Rogue Valley PBA gives the community an opportunity to have firsthand experience with live fire to either prove or disprove what they have heard or read."

Terry Fairbanks, executive director of SOFRC and a founding member of Rogue Forest Partners, agrees: "PBAs present the most important opportunity for changes to private land caretaking. It's not necessarily about different kinds of treatments; it's about changing the culture of how we relate to the land. Western fire management is very technical and very narrow—not everyone can participate. But when neighbors help neighbors and they see how fire impacts the landscape, that changes the culture."

Amelia Liberatore
Southern Oregon Forest Restoration
Collaborative
aliberatore@sofrc.org



Large fuel, dried through the summer, is consumed in a fall burn. Note the minimal smoke.
Photo: Mark Hamlin.

BIRD EXPLORER

Acorn Woodpeckers

BY HEATHER PALADINI

As the days shorten and golden leaves blanket the hillsides, the Applegate Valley becomes a sanctuary for birds adapting to the changing rhythms of autumn. This time of year, our picturesque valley transforms into a haven for both resident and migratory bird species. While many species of birds stop here along their routes to warmer climates, resident birds are busy preparing for winter.

The acorn woodpecker, *Melanerpes formicivorus*, a common year-round resident familiar to most of us, is one. The acorn woodpecker, iconic to our oak woodlands, is one of the most fascinating and most social birds in our region. One can hardly mistake its call—part laugh, part cackle—an unmistakably wild “waka-waka” sound.

The clownish appearance also sets acorn woodpeckers apart from most of our other resident backyard birds. Medium-sized, ranging from 7.5 to 9 inches in length, they have a bright red cap on top of the head and a white face with a black patch around the bill. They are mostly black on top, with three white patches—one on each wing and one on the rump. Females have slightly less red than their male

counterparts. Aside from that, males and females look very similar.

Acorn woodpeckers are impressive in flight. Their distinct, undulating flight pattern looks like aerial acrobatics. They tend to fly with a series of wing flaps followed by a glide, and they can fly nearly vertically for short periods of time, usually while catching insects.

Acorn woodpeckers are ecological keystones

Acorn woodpeckers live and breed in oak and mixed oak-evergreen woodlands. They have a strong, mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship with oak trees. The presence of acorn woodpeckers is a strong indicator of a healthy oak woodland. The oak woodlands of the Applegate Valley, particularly those with mature, living oaks and scattered snags, provide ideal habitat for these birds.

Acorn woodpeckers eat flying insects, insects found on and within oak trees, and, of course, acorns harvested directly from the oaks. They are notorious for their food storage habits, as they stockpile acorns into individually drilled holes in tree bark and other wooden structures, creating impressive granaries that can contain up to 50,000 holes. These granaries serve as their food source during late fall and winter, when food becomes scarce.

The food storage habits of acorn woodpeckers benefit oaks by helping disperse the acorns and propagate new oak trees. Each of these intimately intertwined species—bird and tree—plays a crucial part in the other’s life cycle. The preservation of oak woodlands is crucial for the long-term survival of acorn woodpeckers.

In addition to relying heavily on oaks for food, acorn woodpeckers also use them for nesting sites. The birds excavate cavities in dead



Acorn Woodpecker. Photo: Anne Goff, found online.

and dying oaks for nests and nocturnal roosting. They might reuse nest holes for many years.

Acorn woodpeckers are communal breeders, a characteristic shared by only three percent of all bird species. They live in family groups of a dozen or more, with all breeding females contributing their eggs to a single nest. Some breed while others help raise the young, and they all work together to defend territories. Young offspring often remain with their family units for several years and help raise younger generations.

Living with the woodpeckers

For rural residents of the Applegate Valley, living alongside acorn woodpeckers can be both delightful and, occasionally, challenging. Their loud, laughing calls and bold personalities make them favorites among birders, but their habit of drilling acorn holes in wooden structures can cause problems for homes and outbuildings.

The best approach? Leave dead trees standing when safe to do so, as these are prime granary sites. You can also consider installing nest boxes or decoy poles away from structures to redirect their attention. Native plantings of oaks and other trees also support their foraging needs.

A bird worth watching

With their colorful plumage, unusual social lives, and industrious habits, acorn woodpeckers bring an undeniably iconic charm to the Applegate Valley’s autumn landscape. Whether you hear their raucous call on a foggy morning, spot a granary tree brimming with acorns, or catch their aerial acrobatics in motion, take a moment to appreciate this remarkable species.

They’re not just birds—they’re builders, families, and guardians of the valley’s native oak forests.

Heather Paladini
heather47bear@gmail.com



Acorn Woodpecker Granary. Photo: Ingrid Taylor, found online.

■ OUTDOOR SUMMER CAMP

Continued from page 12

She learned the names of many organisms unknown to her before. She also learned new skills with crochet and macrame. The counselors inspired creativity and an all-around great learning environment. She can’t wait till next year!”

“The program kept kids engaged for the entirety. My child said each day was better than the previous day. She wanted it to happen every day, even on the weekends. All the counselors were awesome. I don’t know what activities you did throughout the day, but I know she had fun. She

learned, and she was able to socialize with friends, new and old.”

This enthusiastic feedback illustrates the extent to which a program like AOSC is needed in our valley, and staff are excited to make camp an annual offering. This year, to keep within our aim of providing the most accessible possible program, AOSC cost \$180 per child per week. We also collected donations from generous community members to provide full scholarships for six campers. Financial analysis has revealed that to make this program sustainable, we will have to increase our registration fee in future years. To minimize this increase, we plan to supplement program

fees with grants and community fundraising. If you are interested in contributing to AOSC, whether through a program sponsorship or by donating to the AOSC scholarship fund, please refer to the contact information below. We are grateful for the opportunity to grow such a meaningful program and look forward to nurturing it for years to come.

Charlotte Hyde
Education & Outreach
Program Director
978-270-8831
charlotte@apwc.info



AOSC Campers play with an interactive erosion table. Photo by Applegate Partnership Education Program.

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

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Turtle tales at Acorn Woman Lake

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

In between summer thunderstorms, hail, and drenching rain on August 1, Applegate Siskiyou Alliance hosted a workshop called Turtle Tales for local folks to learn about western pond turtles at Acorn Woman Lake. With cool, post-storm temperatures on a beautiful morning, Jade Keehn, wildlife biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), led the group along the lake's trail, stopping at locations where she spotted basking turtles sunning on logs along the lake's shoreline below. From the trail, participants could view the turtles up close with a spotting scope and binoculars to see details of their color, patterns, and behavior, while Jade regaled participants with information, including how to tell the difference between male and female turtles.

Male turtles, she explained, have a white patch under their chins, a thinner body, and a concave area on their belly, while females are rounder and have darker chins than the males do.

Western pond turtles, *Actinemys marmorata*, have been proposed for listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act by the US Fish and Wildlife Service because of population decrease due to drought, habitat loss and fragmentation, road mortality, and predation by nonnative species, primarily nonnative bullfrogs. Western pond turtles are also identified as an Oregon Conservation Strategy species by ODFW.

Acorn Woman Lake is home to one of the largest populations of western pond turtles in southwest Oregon, with a current



Jade Keehn, wildlife biologist for ODFW, holds a western pond turtle at Acorn Woman Lake.

Photo by Suzie Savoie.

estimate of just over 200 turtles. That number may go up as we learn more about the turtles here. Wildlife biologists from ODFW and the Forest Service have been studying the turtles at Acorn Woman Lake for seven years, making biannual visits to count, measure, and monitor the turtles, including notching the turtle's shells in a special way for future identification.

After several stops to observe turtles basking along the shore, Jade led the workshop participants to the back side of the lake, where Erin Considine, lead wildlife biologist for the Siskiyou

Mountains Ranger District of the US Forest Service, was waiting under an easy-up canopy. Much to the group's delight, Considine had been very successful in catching nine turtles with traps she had set the night before in various locations around the lake.

Workshop participants helped measure and identify the turtles before releasing them back to the lake. Jade and Considine took photos of the turtles to add to their extensive data book about Acorn Woman Lake turtles. The nine turtles varied in

See **TURTLE TALES**, page 23.

McKee Bridge Historical Society's new online look

BY LAURA B. AHEARN

McKee Bridge Historical Society (MBHS) volunteers have spent many hours updating and improving our website. Please take a look at the gorgeous photo galleries, streamlined features, and expanded archive of historical resources. The Virtual Museum houses over 1,300 historic photos, newspaper articles, and ephemera, many available nowhere else. For die-hard researchers and genealogists, we are adding an online library of unique documents and transcripts, like bitterly fought legal proceedings of notable Applegate pioneers (think Armstrong Gulch or Cameron Bridge). We are blessed by tips and contributions from members who have shared family albums, scrapbooks, and legends, or their time and ingenuity in tracking down the facts of long-forgotten people and events (for example, Dr. Mushett's sanitarium in what we now consider Ruch). Check out our Facebook page to see how



New Website.

much forgotten Applegate history we've discovered and recovered.

It's now easier than ever to become a member at www.mckeebridge.org. As you'll see, you no longer need to log in with a password (which you've probably forgotten). Starting September 1, 2025, you can initiate or renew your MBHS membership through December 31, 2026. Dues are still only \$20 for your entire household.

Why is it important to be a member of MBHS? You'll be part of the community which maintains McKee Bridge, preserves and shares Applegate heritage, and puts on

very cool events, such as the awesome Chili Cook-Off and our signature Christmas on a Covered Bridge. We receive many inquiries about volunteering at MBHS functions. For insurance and legal reasons, volunteers must be members, and members are somewhat like shareholders. They select the directors, decide on major corporate policies, and have statutory rights to review financial records and attend meetings. There are many more reasons to join. For example, members will sample and vote for the tasty entries in the Chili Cook-Off, which will follow the MBHS Annual Meeting at 11 am Saturday, October 4, 2025, at McKee Bridge. Plus, we'll unveil exciting new MBHS bling. Be there and get yours!

As a member, you can get involved in our festive holiday activities, from making handcrafted gifts to baking yummys for our Best-Ever Bake Sale, from decorating the bridge and Star Ranger Station with greenery and thousands of lights to making the stellar table pieces which have proven so popular. Your contributions will help keep McKee Bridge standing and support our scholarships for young adults who are pursuing college degrees. Throughout the year, we need help eradicating graffiti, pulling weeds, and on and on—everything needed to keep McKee Bridge such a magical place.

Laura B. Ahearn
McKeebridge1917@gmail.com
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"Thanks for loving the bread, Applegate!"

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Harvest Festival and Chili Cook-off at Upper Applegate Grange

BY ALLIE PARKIN

We hope you'll join us at the Upper Applegate Grange on Saturday, September 20, for our first annual Harvest Festival and Chili Cook-off during A Greater Applegate's Jacksaphine Count(r)y Fair week.

We will have local artisans, live music, a chili cook-off, and a smoked BBQ tri-tip dinner available for purchase. It's sure to be a hootin' good time!

To enter as a contestant in the chili cook-off, scan the QR code. For vendor inquiries, please email upperapplegategrange@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page for the vendor application link.

We hope to see you there!
Allie Parkin
Grange Lecturer
upperapplegategrange@gmail.com

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Hosted by your Friends at the Meraki Project!

For more information contact merakiproject24@gmail.com

Fall into wellness with the Meraki Project

BY MARIA RICHARD

Meraki Project celebrated its first-year anniversary in Williams this March. We are a nonprofit dedicated to bringing wellness and the community together.

Current offerings

- **The Fox Den.** Children's music circle for ages six months to six years. 10-11 am first and third Tuesday of the month.
- **Yoga Class.** 9:30-10:30 am every Tuesday.
- **Narcotics Anonymous.** 6-7 pm every Wednesday.
- **Breathwork and Meditation.** 5:30-6:30 pm every Tuesday.
- **Teen Girls' Circle.** 6-7:30 pm every Thursday.
- **Women's AA Meeting.** 3-4 pm every Friday.
- **Women's Circle.** 6-7:30 pm last Friday of every month.

Fall festival is a family event on October 4, 11 am-3 pm. Please reach out if you are interested in setting up a booth or joining us for this fun family event!

We also offer periodic sound healing and yoga classes.

Email merakiproject24@gmail.com for other monthly events!

If you are interested in using our space for an offering to Williams, please contact us. We have a small room available for licensed body work. Space is also available for small events, like birthday parties or baby showers.

The Meraki Project is located at 206 Tetherow Rd, Williams, Oregon.

Maria Richard
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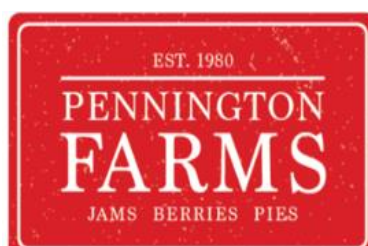
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Special thanks to Red Lily Vineyards for providing a beautiful venue for our benefit dinner.



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Hosted by Friends of Applegate Fire District

Friday, September 5, 2025 · 5:00 PM

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Sponsorship levels may include tickets, gifts, and recognition - supporting equipment that protects firefighter health.

Scan the QR code for full details and to reserve your sponsorship.

To Support the Campaign or learn more please visit our website at <https://friendsofapplegatefire.org>

Fall update from Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District-Star Ranger Station

BY U.S. FOREST SERVICE-SISKIYOU MOUNTAINS RANGER DISTRICT

Happy fall to the Applegate community and our valued partners!

As of July 22, the district has responded to 18 wildfires—17 of which were caused by lightning—with just under 100 acres affected. The largest of these was the Kinney Fire, which burned 51 acres in the Jackson Campground area.

When not actively suppressing fires, our crews are hard at work on fuels-reduction projects in preparation for fall and spring prescribed burns. This includes thinning, piling, and chipping near communities, critical infrastructure, and popular recreational areas to help increase forest resilience and safety.

Our Recreation Crew hit the ground running this May. They've collaborated with the incredible women of the Back Country Horsemen of Oregon's Sourdough Chapter, using traditional, nonmotorized methods to haul treated wood out of the Red Buttes Wilderness (Photos 1 and 2). The crew also enjoyed a fantastic trail restoration day with the Lomakatsi Youth Crew, helping reestablish sections of the Seven Mile Ridge Trail lost in the 2018 Hendrix

Fire. Thank you to our partners for their dedication and support!

Recreation and fire staff have also joined forces on vegetation management projects at recreation sites, working to mitigate hazards and providing valuable support during July's thunderstorms.

Update: The Butte Fork Bridge—connecting Trail #954 from Shoofly Trailhead to Trail #957 to Horse Camp Trailhead—is no longer in place. We encourage users to follow best wilderness practices and use caution when crossing water.

An uptick in bear activity has been observed throughout the Applegate Valley, including near popular recreation areas and trailheads. For the safety of people and wildlife, stay alert and practice responsible outdoor habits. Report concerning behavior to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Do your part to keep Applegate's wild spaces safe—for the people and the wildlife that live here. Be "Bear Aware" and enjoy the outdoors responsibly!

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in the Applegate Valley!

Project Updates

On July 3, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture published a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Interim Final Rule in the Federal Register. The rule is effective immediately.

Thompson Creek (formerly Grayback) Shaded Fuel Break Categorical Exclusion

This significant fuels-reduction project is planned along Forest Service Roads 1010 and 1020, targeting approximately 1,000 acres. Proposed treatments include thinning, hand piling, pile burning, and underburning to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health. Community input has played a key role in shaping this project. In partnership with the Oregon Department of Forestry, final surveys are underway. We anticipate completing the NEPA using the new Emergency Authority Determination. We anticipate beginning implementation next spring. For project details, visit fs.usda.gov/r06/rogue-siskiyou/projects/63141.



Women of the Back Country Horsemen of Oregon's Sourdough Chapter hauling treated wood out of the Red Buttes Wilderness. USDA Forest Service. Photo by A. Dieter.

Yellowjacket Environmental Assessment (formerly Little Applegate Environmental Analysis)

The Yellowjacket Project is designed to improve wildfire resilience across the Upper Applegate Watershed while connecting strategic fuels-reduction efforts with the Ashland Forest Resiliency Project. In addition to enhancing forest health, it supports local economies through sustainable timber production. The project is proceeding under an Emergency Action Determination, in accordance with Executive Order 14225: Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production (March 1, 2025). This spring, a collaborative field trip with A Greater Applegate provided an opportunity to explore potential treatments and gather community input. Final surveys are being completed in partnership with the Oregon Department of Forestry. Additional opportunities for public involvement will be available once detailed planning is underway. Stay informed and engaged as we move forward.

Upper Applegate Watershed Restoration Project Environmental Assessment

While much of the Upper Applegate Watershed project was paused for the summer, pile burning and underburning are scheduled for this fall. Additional surface- and ladder-fuels reduction work will continue into next year to support long-term forest health and wildfire resilience. Project information is located at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r06/rogue-siskiyou/projects/archive/52305>.

Staying Informed

- **District Email:** As of June 2025, GovDelivery is no longer in service. Instead, please email our District for any comments or project communication at comments-pacificnorthwest-rogue-river-siskiyoumountains@usda.gov.
- **Forest Webpage:** Our website was recently updated. Check us out at fs.usda.gov/r06/rogue-siskiyou. View current and recent projects at fs.usda.gov/r06/rogue-siskiyou/projects.
- **Forest Facebook Page:** Follow us at RRSNF Facebook.



A member of the Women of the Back Country Horsemen of Oregon's Sourdough Chapter riding the trail. Photo by A. Dieter.

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OPINION

Words that divide

BY JIM REILAND

I love that language is alive. New words and expressions enter common use, some words acquire different meanings, and other words fade into obscurity. Though this dynamic can be refreshing, it can also pose challenges for clear communication.

Slang infuses our language. In my lifetime, the words “copasetic,” “groovy,” “cool,” “radical,” and, more recently, “sick,” have been used to describe roughly the same sentiment and sometimes reveal the writer’s or speaker’s age and cultural identity.

Language swells with jargon, too—words, expressions, and acronyms common in nearly every line of work. We have all listened to people talking shop or tried to fathom technical material written in jargon we’re not familiar, let alone fluent, with. Attend any Applegate Valley forest management or wildfire prevention meeting, and invariably you hear the experts begin speaking in tongues that only the other experts really understand.

Slang, specialized vocabularies, and acronyms make sense to people on the “inside.” This sort of language isn’t meant for others. It’s meant to streamline communication among peer groups or colleagues in the same field.

Then there are words that carry different connotations. When trying to communicate across the ideological divide, it helps to know the words that people on the left and on the right use and interpret differently.

“Collective” is a word used by most of the organizations I volunteer with. People who lean left usually intend this word and its derivatives to mean “working together” or “group effort.” But many people who

lean right read or hear “collective” as a “sacrifice of individuality and freedom.” Not so far-fetched if you think of this word’s association with Marxist-Leninist ideology or recall the villainous “Borg Collective” from the Star Trek universe.

What is meant by the word “patriot” seems to depend on which parts of the US Constitution the writer or speaker professes to preserve and protect.

Were George Bernard Shaw alive today, he may well have quipped, “America—one nation divided by a common language” instead of “two nations [Great Britain and America] divided by a common language.” Using the wrong words can cause readers and listeners to disengage as surely as wearing a MAGA hat or pasting a Dump Trump sticker to your car bumper lets others know where you stand and whether they stand with you.

For a partial list of words that have different meanings across the political spectrum, check out the word translator on the Allsides website at allsides.com/translator.

The expression “a fish doesn’t know it’s in water” applies here—we’re generally not aware that the words in the sea of words we swim in—the language of our lives at work and among family and friends—may have different meanings when read or heard by others.

Unless we want to exclude others by expressing ourselves with slang, jargon, acronyms, or words with different connotations, speaking or writing more thoughtfully will help others to hear or read what we actually mean.

Jim Reiland

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Setting the record straight on BLM logging

BY DAVE RUSSELL

The article “The return of clear-cut logging on BLM lands in the Applegate Valley,” by Luke Ruediger, published in the spring 2025 issue of the Applegater, is inaccurate, misleading, and lacking credibility.

For the most part, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is not clearcutting and, indeed, rarely clearcutting mature Applegate forest stands. For instance, the photo of Boaz 24-7 that accompanied the article does not seem to depict a mature-stand harvest. There is not enough slash or large stumps present. Mature-stand volumes in the Applegate tend to be at least 25MBF (1000 board feet) per acre and up. The photo shown seems to represent a harvest of 15MBF per acre or less. We do not know how much of the total entry was salvage.

The article states that clearcutting is occurring in mature green stands that have survived flatheaded fir borer beetle outbreaks. The beetle outbreak, drought, and increased temperatures amplified by climate change are continuous. Because the viability of most forest stands remains at extreme risk, continued survival is tenuous. Generally, a moderate level of thinning—removing at least one-third the existing basal area—is needed to increase the overall vigor of stands that are not producing enough sapwood to deliver water to tree crowns developed

during times of increased annual and decadal (ten-year) tree growth. The beetle outbreak should be seen as the result of unusually dense tree growth—caused by the long absence of fire and other natural disturbances—that left the forest more vulnerable to infestation.

The statement about monitoring the timber sale and finding hundreds of trees over 30” DBH cut is unfounded on its face. Monitoring is not about going out and finding something you don’t like. In this case, preharvest measurements for either implementation or effectiveness monitoring studies would be needed to compare postharvest results. None are mentioned. Ned’s Gulch is essentially a dry gulch with infrequent flows. There is no required riparian reserve. There may be some future water quality issues on a small scale.

The article makes no attempt at contributing to accurate forest science and management or to a cooperative Applegate community discussion and dialogue. Rather, Mr. Ruediger cherry-picks examples to match what he has already determined and the conclusion he wants to make. It’s not helpful.

Dave Russell

dr1855@q.com

541-479-3446

Dave Russell is a semi-retired forester, previously employed by Medford BLM, now a consulting forester.

Protect the beautiful blank spaces on the map: Pass the Roadless Area Conservation Act!

BY LUKE RUEDIGER

The Applegate Valley, like so many other places throughout the American West, is defined by the public lands that surround our communities. This includes BLM lands in the Applegate foothills and National Forest lands on the Siskiyou Crest and at the headwaters of our rivers and streams. These public lands contain old-growth forests, deep canyons, clear-flowing streams, refugia for wildlife, intact habitats, recreation areas, backyard trails, remote wildlands, and beautiful blank spaces on the map.

These areas are threatened as never before. National proposals call for the privatization of public lands, increased mining that will toxify local streams, increased logging in mature and old-growth forests, removal of environmental-protection regulations, and the revocation or watering down of bedrock environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires transparency, scientific accountability, and meaningful public involvement in the federal land-management planning process; the Clean Water Act that protects our nation’s water and watersheds; and the Endangered Species Act that protects species currently at risk of extinction. These proposals could turn our beautiful public lands into strip mines, clearcuts, or private housing developments.

One particularly troubling proposal would be the revocation of the 2001 Roadless Rule and all current protections for Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). IRAs include some of our nation’s most intact and undeveloped wildland habitats. The 2001 Roadless Rule protects these areas from commercial logging and new road construction.

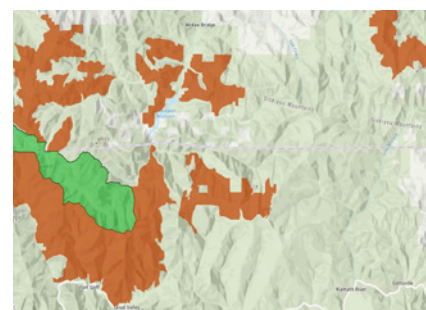
In an effort to increase timber and mining production on federal lands, the Trump Administration has proposed to revoke the 2001 Roadless Rule and remove protections on over 58 million acres of federal land in 39 states. This includes old-growth forests, rocky high country, headwater streams, and tens of thousands of acres of federal land in the Applegate River watershed, including six large IRAs, each with unique characteristics and important values.

The Little Grayback IRA includes the Mule Mountain, Mule Creek, Baldy Peak, and Little Grayback trails and spectacular low-elevation foothill habitat in the Upper Applegate Valley. The Collings-Kinney IRA includes the Collings Mountain and Grouse Loop trails and beautiful mixed-conifer forests above the Applegate Reservoir and on Carberry Creek.

Other roadless areas include vast swaths of old-growth mixed-conifer and montane forest on the northern flank of the Siskiyou Crest, including the over 35,000-acre Oregon-Kangaroo IRA, which contains Grayback Mountain, Craggy Mountain, the slopes of Mt. Elijah, and the backcountry surrounding the Oregon Caves National Monument. The area includes the Boundary National Recreation Trail and the O’Brien

Creek, Sturgis Fork, Elk Creek, Miller Lake, Limestone Gulch, and Grayback Mountain trails.

The California-Kangaroo IRA surrounds the spectacular Red Buttes Wilderness Area with over 60,000 acres of intact, roadless habitat. The IRA drops from



This map shows the Red Buttes Wilderness Area in green and the Applegate’s six Inventoried Roadless Area in red.

the Siskiyou Crest and the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) around Cook and Green Pass to the Klamath River between Happy Camp and Seiad Valley and north into the rugged canyons of the Middle and Butte forks of the Applegate River, where one of the Siskiyou Mountains’ largest concentrations of old-growth forest

grows along the Horse Camp, Cook and Green Creek, Butte Fork, and Middle Fork trails.

The over 9,000-acre Condrey Mountain IRA includes rugged canyons, extensive old-growth forests, high mountain meadows, diverse botany, unique schist geology, and clear-flowing streams. It is also one of the Applegate’s forgotten gems. Traversed by the PCT, the area includes upper Dutch Creek, Alex Creek, Studhorse Creek, and the mountain summits of Condrey Mountain, Scraggy Peak, Black Mountain, White Mountain, and Copper Butte.

Finally, the McDonald Peak IRA, which comprises roughly 10,000 acres in the headwaters of the Little Applegate River, includes the over-7000’ summits of Wagner Butte, Split Rock, and McDonald Peak, dense old-growth forests, lush mountain meadows, large aspen glades, and sagebrush clearings, as well as the Wagner Butte and McDonald Peak trails.

Inventoried Roadless Areas, among the most intact and iconic landscapes in our region, deserve permanent protection from logging, mining, road construction, and commercial exploitation. The current situation demonstrates that the 2001 Roadless Rule is not enough, and the Roadless Area Conservation Act must be passed to make these protections more durable and permanent. Contact your elected officials and demand that they protect these important landscapes for future generations. The Applegate simply would not be the same without these beautiful roadless wildlands. Applegate Siskiyou Alliance strongly supports their permanent protection.

Luke Ruediger

siskiyoucrest@gmail.com

Upper Miller Lake in the Oregon-Kangaroo Inventoried Roadless Area.

THE GRAPES OF CATH

A sparkling revolution bubbles up in the Applegate

BY CATHY A. RODGERS

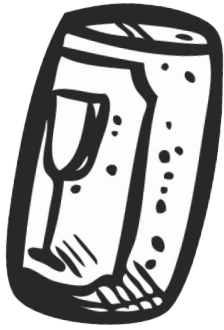
Southern Oregon's Applegate Valley is one of the West Coast's most exciting destinations for wine tourism, and sparkling wines are emerging at the heart of its growing appeal. The Applegate Valley has evolved from a quiet agricultural corridor into a vibrant wine destination, drawing in both serious connoisseurs and casual tourists. While the region has long been celebrated for its robust reds and crisp whites, it's the effervescent charm of sparkling wines that's making headlines and capturing palates.

Here in the Applegate, travelers are pairing the region's stunning natural beauty with the festive experience of sparkling-wine tasting. "We have the climate and the soil, but more importantly, we have the creativity of our local winemakers, who, by intentional design, are crafting something truly special in sparkling wines," says local winemaker Nichole Schulte of Quady North. Nichole has been producing sparkling wines for over ten years and supporting many of the small local vineyards that are looking to produce a bit of the bubbly.



At Longsword Vineyard, Kate Vongeloff is offering two sparkling wines—Glissade, a fun-filled bubbly rosé, made from Tempranillo grapes, and Accolade, her sparkling chardonnay. These wines are made by carbonating into a pressurized vessel or tank. This differs from the traditional method, like that used for champagne, which involves a second fermentation in the bottle after the wine is already made. RiverCrest Ranch, with the help of Mike Brunson at Valley View Winery and Nichole Schulte at Quady North, is using this traditional, more time-intensive champagne method to produce its first sparkling rosé. Pét-Nat, another method, is a French term meaning "naturally sparkling," referring to a style of making sparkling wine where the wine undergoes a single, continuous fermentation that finishes in the bottle.

Troon Vineyard, under winemaker Nat Wall, is a wonderful example. Troon



is having fun with fizz and has three sparkling wines in its lineup. Their first sparkling wine is called Pét tanNat. Tannat is a somewhat powerful red grape, grown in a way to make it perfect for sparkling wine production. The wine is made in a *blanc de noirs* style, in which the tannat grapes are pressed very gently

to avoid color extraction, making the resulting wine white. Troon also offers Fiano Fizz, made from the Fiano grape. This is a *petillant naturel* wine, meaning it is bottled at the end of primary alcoholic fermentation, and the last bit of grape sugar is consumed by the yeast inside the bottle, producing the bubbles. Last in the trio is Piquette, made from rehydrated grape skins that are pressed for a second time (almost like using a tea bag twice), resulting in a lower-alcohol sparkling wine. Troon's sparkling wines are made from a wide variety of grapes grown in the valley, including grenache, mourvèdre, cinsault, counoise, and carignan.

Linda and Brent Gee, owners of Dwell Vineyards, also boast a growing sparkling-wine program. Dwell offers their Méthode Champenoise Blanc de Noir, meticulously handcrafted from their estate-grown pinot noir, resulting in extremely fine effervescent bubbles. Dwell's 2024 Bubbly Rosé is their first rosé with force-carbonated bubbles, making it quicker and less expensive to produce and available at an affordable price for everyone. This Bubbly Rosé won a Gold Medal at Savor Southern Oregon and was selected for the July Oregon Wine Press Cellar Select.

Bubbles are becoming the new wine magnet, attracting wine enthusiasts looking to put a little pizzazz on their palate while enjoying the scenic vistas in our beautiful valley. Whether they're lounging on the Longsword patio while paragliders soar overhead, sitting hilltop overlooking vineyard rows below, or enjoying picnic paninis and live music at Red Lily along the Applegate River, locals and visitors alike are enjoying sparkling flights and celebratory sips. With its unbeatable mix of landscape, wine culture, and artisan craftsmanship, the Applegate Valley is proving that the best way to toast southern Oregon is with a glass of local sparkling wine in hand. Whether you're a wine aficionado or a traveler seeking your next scenic escape, the Applegate promises not just a glass—but also an experience worth savoring.

Cathy A. Rodgers

cathyrodgers55@gmail.com



Nate Wall, Winemaker, and Micah Wagner, Assistant Winemaker, having fun making the fizz. Photo by Craig Camp.

Grief and Gratitude with Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance

BY HAYRIYA HEIDI HANSEN

Looking back on life, we get a sense of who we are and who we've been—how we have managed our emotions. Personally, I've always been a grateful person. Adopted at three months old, I've always felt deep gratitude!

This summer, traveling and seeing friends also showed me the spectrum of my emotions from grief to gratitude. While I was spending time with a dear 95-year-old friend, she experienced the last of her contemporaries die. She said, "Guess I'm the last of the Mohicans" with little visible emotion. I curiously watched this lack of expression. It was familiar. Perhaps she was afraid of succumbing to tears? Afraid the tears might never stop? Was it sadness shut down, grief presumably averted?

After ten days enjoying this dear friend, I flew to Marin. Wow, to look down on "the State of Jefferson" and see wide-open land and feel the grandeur of this planet—it was thrilling after almost ten years not being in an airplane. Here one minute and there the next, what a rush of awe!

Upon arrival, I was scooped up by my friend, whom I had not seen in 33 years. This precious friend was recently diagnosed with Parkinson's. She looked great, and... there were subtle signs of the disease. We had three glorious days, undisturbed—precious time, a sweet gift that's not guaranteed. It was a validation of my belief to enjoy those I love, as one never knows what tomorrow holds. We talked, drank tea, stayed in our jammies, cried, laughed, reviewed our lives, and looked ahead, wondering about these aging, fragile bodies. I was swinging again, from grief and pain to love and joy.

For us all, having history with beloved friends gives us a unique glimpse into who we are, who we've been, where we've come from, and perhaps where we're going. It's healthy to allow our range of emotions. I cherish friends who've witnessed decades of my life through all the highs and lows. To be seen, heard, and held enriches and encourages me and validates my existence. My friends have helped me blaze trails toward my highest and best calling.

When we allow ourselves to be vulnerable with friends and other community members and speak from our hearts, we validate the truth that life is not independent but exists because of interdependence. "It takes a village" is an adage many wish to deny or ignore, yet it's a truth most come to realize at some point.

With all this in mind, beginning in October, Southern Oregon Living and Dying Alliance will launch an open group, Grief and Gratitude, a nonpolitical, nondenominational, safe space for community sharing. Realizing we are all in this together, we'll talk, do rituals, and share the enormity of feelings about living on planet Earth. Watch for details on our website solada.org. And please join us for ongoing Death Cafes, held four times each month throughout Josephine and Jackson counties.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As I step into my third issue as editor of the *Applegater*, I want to take a moment to thank you—the Applegate community—for welcoming me so warmly. It's been a gift to witness firsthand the beauty of this valley and the dedication of the people who live here.

I also want to recognize the editor-in-chiefs who have come before me, as well as the board members and countless community members who have shaped both the Applegate and the *Applegater* into what they are today. I'm well aware that I'm stepping into some very large shoes—and I'm still figuring out how to wear them. (Confession: I've stuffed them with tissue paper for now, just to keep them from flopping off.)

Thank you for allowing me the chance to grow into this role and for sharing your stories, your kindness, and your love for this valley. I'm looking forward to continuing this journey together, one page at a time.

Annika Hodges
Applegater Editor-in-Chief
annika@applegater.org

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

••• BIZBITS •••

Art Presence. Throughout October, Art Presence, an art gallery in Jacksonville, is presenting the Imaginarium, “where the veil between reality and fantasy dissolves into the crisp autumn air.” Arts of many mediums, reflecting the theme of autumn, Halloween, or whatever shines a glow in the night, will be on display. October 1-November 2, Wednesday-Sunday, noon-5 pm. 206 N. 5th Street, Jacksonville. 541-414-3234.

Apple Outlaw. The new taproom on Highway 238 is now fully open, serving wood-fired pizza, cider, and rotating local beers, with live music on Wednesdays from 8-10 pm, after the Applegate Evening Market, and Saturdays from 6-9 pm, through October. Apple Outlaw has recently started a loyalty rewards program, where customers earn points for every purchase, encouraging return visits and local support. 15090 Highway 238. info@appleoutlaw.com.

Wild Wines. Carla David, at Wild Wines, 4550 Little Applegate Road, would like Applegater readers to know that they have opened their beautiful land for weddings, parties, and other events. “It’s a stunning, peaceful, private, limited-services, farm-and-winery setting on the Little Applegate River that you and your guests will love,” Carla says. 541-899-1565, or enjoywildwines.com.

A new addition at the **Williams General Store** is a disability access ramp, making it easier for all members of the community to get into the store, where everyone is always welcome. 20180 Williams Highway. williamsgeneralstore.com.

Wild Oak Preschool is now offering seasonal sessions beginning in fall 2025. Each session will engage learners with exciting, hands-on, nature-based themes inspired by the seasons. Each seasonal session runs 11 weeks. Classes are held Monday-Thursday from 8 am-2 pm. Text or email Heather Paladini for more information or enrollment. 336-937-2882. wildoakpreschool1@gmail.com

The folks at **Blossom Barn Cidery**, at 950 Kubli Road, came home from the 2025 Northwest Cider Cup last June with big grins. They won two medals in the Perry categories: a gold medal for their Rogue Valley Barrel-aged Perry (low tannin) and a bronze medal for their Estate Perry (high tannin). “We proudly celebrate Oregon’s state fruit—the pear—and the generations of people in the Rogue Valley who have grown and marketed pears,” says Jeremy Hall, cofounder, with Erin Chaparro, of Blossom Barn Cidery. jeremyanderin@blossomcidery.com. 541-514-2347. On Facebook and Instagram: @Blossombarncidery. On YouTube: youtube.com/@blossombarnfarm.

Diana Coogle • diana@applegater.org

BizBits highlights businesses new to the area, holding special events, or offering new products. If you are a business owner, let us know when you move into the area or to a different location, hold a special event, expand your business, or mark a milestone. Email gater@applegater.org.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

BY DIANA COOGLE

I am sorry to announce the resignations of Jenn Theone and Rachel Arappagis from the board. We have appreciated both Jenn and Rachel’s presence on the board and their willingness to work in helping the Applegater continue to be a vital part of our valley. We wish both Jenn and Rachel the best of luck and hope to see them at future Applegater functions.

Chris Loeffler has taken over Jenn’s job as treasurer. Many thanks to him!

Would you like to join the board? We are looking for someone to fill Rachel’s position as ad manager and have several open positions for people who are enthusiastic about the Applegater and willing to work to keep the paper vibrant. Contact me if you are interested.

Board member Ash Martel has been organizing the board’s volunteers thank-you party, our way of thanking our many volunteers: writers, copyeditors, proofreaders, distributors, photographers, past board members, and others. If you are one of those volunteers, I hope to see you at the party.

We are gearing up for NewsMatch, our annual fund drive in November and December. Be prepared to send your donations to the Applegater during November and December, when each contribution is matched in full by the Independent News Network.

As always, if you have feedback—praise or otherwise—about the Applegater, send it my way. I like knowing what you think.

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



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GARDENING FROM THE HEART

Seed saving is good for the heart

BY NOEL RUIZ

It's seed-saving season! I'm always amazed how abundantly plants produce seeds. A bean plant may make dozens of seeds, while kale can make thousands! In partnership with our plants, we gardeners can enjoy numerous seeds, often far beyond what's needed for planting next season.

Extra seeds are:

- **In the wings** for planting—years, sometimes even decades—later
- **Imbued with love** to share with family and friends
- **Squealing with joy** when taken to local seed swaps
- **Enjoying healthy circulation** when contributed to our seed library. (Shout-out to Ruch Library's seed library!)

Saving seeds empowers us to eat our seeds! Our family loves to eat homegrown dry beans and dry corn in masa and tortillas. We just started baking bread with homegrown winter wheat. (Shout-out to Rogue Valley Heritage Grain Project!) We fill our spice cupboard with seeds, too. Kale seeds, mustard seeds, poppy seeds, and fennel seeds are easy-to-grow favorites.

Saving seeds is natural. Some plants excel at volunteering. Saving their seeds and scattering them around follows their natural tendency. Kale, calendula, lettuce, poppies, fennel, chard, nigella, lemon balm, rudbeckia, and arugula, for

example, all love to volunteer in a wide range of garden conditions. We collect and scatter their seeds over exposed soil, fall through spring, for more plants next season.

Saving seeds is care-giving. I take more care saving and planting seeds from summer plants like squash, tomatoes, corn, basil, and watermelons because these plants are frost-tender, take time to produce, and often want the garden's best soil.

Saving seeds is carefree. Plants whose seeds require little thought to save—because they don't often cross with other varieties—include self-pollinators like beans, tomatoes, lettuces, and peas.

Saving seeds is adventurous. On the other hand, planting seeds that crossed with another variety (thanks, bees!) can be a fun adventure the following season, provided we like both varieties that crossed!

Saving seeds is a human right! Although we're not the only species that saves and plants seeds—I'm looking at you, rodents, ants, and birds—harvesting, eating, saving, adoring, adorning, and planting seeds are activities that humans have really taken to heart, hands, belly, mind, and spirit. Seeds are a rich, full-body experience!

If we go back far enough, our ancestors were all intimately and directly connected with seeds. Not only for



Rudbeckia seeds rub off the seed head easily.

survival, but as a way of life. We don't have to look back that far, really, only several generations for most of us.

Saving seeds connects us with our ancestors as far back as many millennia ago! My family's relationship with seeds had been broken for at least a few generations on both sides. I don't have a clear picture of what it looked like before that. Anyway, saving seeds is still deeply ingrained in my DNA and mitochondria, as I'm certain it is in yours. The seeds told me so when I held them in my hands.

It was the same feeling I had when I first started gardening, when I dug in the soil and planted those first seeds, when I adored those precious little seedlings. A feeling poured from wellsprings within, letting me know I had come home to soil. I didn't have knowledge of gardening, but I had an inner knowledge of being connected with something deeply familiar.

Are you intrigued but perhaps uncertain about getting started with saving

seeds? Here are some words of comfort: Seed saving, like gardening, is a journey of mystery and discovery!

Apparently, gardening is designed this way so that knowledge isn't as important as simply jumping in and having the experience. The seasonal ritual of saving seeds, the mystery, the not knowing, the patient waiting until next season, the excitement, the reverence, are all connecting us to something deeper, something special—little everyday miracles of life.

I invite you to let some of your favorite plants set seed this season. Visit the garden each day and watch flower petals wither away as the fruits or seeds swell. Find the seeds where the flower once was. Then invite those seeds into your life. It's a recipe for mystery, transformation, and joy.

Noel Ruiz

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

CONNECTING - JCC

Continued from page 2

Volunteers from our community gave 208 hours of their time to our youth programs and several hundred more hours to support JCC adult programs, maintain JCC's gardens, and maintain our building.

JCC also served as an affordable host site for 265 private events for family gatherings for weddings, baptisms, birthdays, showers and celebrations of life and for business events, serving an additional 5,625 individuals from Jacksonville and our surrounding communities.

JCC's volunteers, donors, presenters, and participants have all joined together to share their gifts, talents, and time to bring out the best in each other and our larger community.

This is truly inspiring. Our small staff, of less than two full-time people,

could never have made all this happen without so many people who share in the value of community and who are willing to try some old-fashioned ways of connecting! If you can join our circle of donor supporters, we thank you in advance!

Start your exploration of JCC this fall. Attend a weekly wellness program, join an art or cooking class, bring your toddler in for music and movement fun, enjoy a free concert, or drop off your six- to 12-year-old for after-school science or arts. Check our website for our event and program calendar, sign up for our weekly email at jacksonvillecommunitycenter.org, or call for more info at 541-702-2585. We hope to see you here in person!

Julie Raefield

Executive Director, Jacksonville Community Center

WE ARE PACIFICA

Continued from page 3

House sleeps up to 16 and is perfect for families or groups, while the Meadow Cottage, with sweeping views, is a serene retreat for two. Additionally, our venue is available to rent for weddings, retreats, and special events. The great thing about hosting your event at Pacifica is that the proceeds help sustain Pacifica as a treasured gem for the community. And don't miss our upcoming FallFest fundraiser on September 27th from 3-10 pm! Join us to celebrate harvest time with local music, farm-fresh food, children's activities, and a joyous gathering of community beneath the open sky.

At Pacifica, we believe in the power of nature, community, and creativity. Thank you for being part of our journey. We can't wait to see what the next season will bring! For more information about programs,

upcoming events, or to get involved, visit pacificagarden.org or email us at info@pacificagarden.org.

Harmony Oltman
harmony@pacificagarden.org



Threads of creativity come alive under little fingers at our free Community Art Sunday Class. Photo by Vanessa Redding.



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Essay

A beautiful place

BY MARGARET PERROW DELLA SANTINA

I love summer in the Applegate—cold-river plunges, clear night skies, ripe blackberries. But summer also opens the door for far-flung adventures. In July, my husband and I traded the Applegate for Peru’s Amazon River basin and rainforest jungle.

In Cusco we boarded a van to ascend two 15,000-foot passes, then descend to the cloud forest for first glimpses of jungle fauna: cock of the rock dancing for mates, capuchin monkeys swinging from trees, agouti foraging in the grass.

For seven days we traveled by boat in Manu National Park, initially staying



A capybara along the Rio Madre de Dios.

in the “buffer zone” at a research center that studies the impact of reforesting previously farmed land. (Over 80 percent of native jungle species have returned to the reforested area!)

One morning before breakfast, we saw six capybaras and two crocodilian caimans on the bank of the Madre de Dios River. On an afternoon jungle walk, we saw white-fronted nunbirds, owl butterflies, black spider monkeys, Spin’s guan, screaming piha, deadman’s fingers, rufus and green kingfishers, brown capuchin monkeys, pale-winged trumpeters, yellow-tufted woodpeckers, squirrel cuckoos, saddleback tamarinds... and a posse of fire ants on my shirt (ow!). My notebook exploded with words for lifeforms I didn’t know existed, and my lungs filled easily with deep breaths of clean, damp air.

Our guide, Nefi, was a self-described “jungle boy,” with contagious enthusiasm and reverence for the natural world (“Looka-looka! A tailless scorpion! A squirrel monkey!”) and encyclopedic knowledge of flora and fauna. He knew the name and facts of everything we spotted and every birdcall we heard. I felt like a little kid in a world where everything was new, eyes and ears just opening to it all, from the tiniest cicada larvae undulating on a leaf to giant freshwater otters lounging on a log.

I had previously been ambivalent about visiting the Amazon forest: interested, yes, but worried about tourism’s negative impact on fragile and endangered areas. I’m still concerned about my “footprint,” but this trip complicated my perspective. Exiting the vast, pristine national park, we passed some of the many illegal gold-mining operations that poison the river with mercury used to process ore. Mining has been an irresistible lure to impoverished individuals and communities, as well as opportunistic corporations and

governments. Protective, educational, and restorative efforts face tremendous challenges.

“Thanks to people like you, this place can continue to exist,” Nefi said. This is not simply polite appreciation. So-called eco-tourism is part of the hope for national parks and reserves like Manu. Although tourism should not be necessary to protect these wild, essential places that benefit the entire planet, thoughtful tourism can bring attention to them, support organizations



Margaret (L), Bryan (R), and their guide, Nefi Valdez (C), in the Peruvian jungle under a giant ficus tree.

and people doing vital conservation and education work, and affirm the value of these areas for government-policy decisions.

Returning to the Applegate, whether from the Namibian desert, Alaskan glaciers, or South American jungle, I always exclaim, “We live in a beautiful place!” What an amazing planet this is, and what a privilege it is to come home to the last days of summer in this special corner of the world.

Margaret Perrow della Santina
margaretperrow@gmail.com

■ TURTLE TALES

Continued from page 15

age and size, the smallest estimated at about seven years old.

“You can estimate the age of a western pond turtle by counting the lines on the turtle’s scutes,” Jade explained, pointing to the hard plates on the underside of a turtle. Turtles can live for decades, even upwards of 50-70 years and possibly longer.

Two of the nine turtles had one missing foot, likely due to an encounter with a predator.

Considine took the participants into a nearby fenced area that was erected several

years ago to protect one of the pond turtles’ nesting sites from cows and human activity. Unfortunately, she said, most of the nests at that site had been dug up and the eggs eaten, most likely the work of a native animal, such as a river otter.

Western pond turtles face many perils. Nonnative animals are having a huge impact on their populations, especially bullfrogs, which will eat young turtles.

As Jade told participants, the name “pond turtle” is a bit of a misnomer for these reptiles, as they will also live in moving water, such as slack water in rivers, small streams, and the slow side channels of the Applegate River.

Thanks to Jade and Considine, the Turtle Tales workshop allowed participants to get to know the imperiled western pond turtles, as well as the unique quality of habitat at Acorn Woman Lake.

If you like to hike, swim, and paddle at Acorn Woman Lakes, be sure to give the turtles plenty of space so you don’t stress them out. Don’t try to approach them or handle them. Keep dogs on leashes and away from the turtles. These cute, special reptiles deserve our protective actions.

Suzie Savoie
klamathsiskiyoud@gmail.com



Participants in the Turtle Tales workshop at Acorn Woman Lake listen to Jade Keehn describe how to tell the difference between a male and female western pond turtles. Photo by Suzie Savoie.

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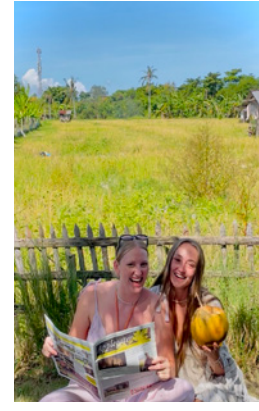
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Photos, left to right:

-**Shari Kain and her dog Tucker** read the *Applegater* on Pilot Butte summit in Bend, Oregon with the 3 Sisters in the background.
 -Somewhere deep in the Peruvian jungle, **Bryan and Margaret Della Santina** search the *Gater* for clues to lost Inca treasures.
 -**Cathy Rogers** and her grandchildren **Ronin and Gia Guitierrez**, and nephew, **Jacob Downey** reading the *Applegater* while coolin' in the pool near the entrance of Yosemite National Park.
 -**Allie Parkin and son, Azure**, catching up on local news while visiting the American Gothic House in Eldon, Iowa.

-**Susie Smith and her daughter Madi McKay** in Laborie St Lucia!
 -**Nova & Nahane Rumery** reading the *Applegater* alongside a rice paddy in the Bali sun.
 -This is **Karen Giese** crossing the border on the Camino de Santiago from Portugal to Spain. They all went to University in Seville in 1975 so decided to hike the Camino in 2025!
 -**Jennifer Strange and Terry Moore** staying current with the *Gater* at the Orson Welles garden at the Medina in Essaouira, Morocco.

Thank you!
 The *Applegater* enjoyed traveling with you!



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



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Meat Bonanza October 10 & 11

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Liquor
 Hand-Cut Meats
 Farm-Fresh Vegetables
 Applegate Valley Wines
 Craft Beers

