



In June, Applegate residents joined the Rogue Forest Partners for a field trip to the Upper Applegate Watershed (UAW) project. Photo: Christina Frieauf/Rogue Forest Partners.

An update on the Upper Applegate Watershed Restoration Project

BY TERRY FAIRBANKS

In June, Applegate residents joined the Rogue Forest Partners for a field trip to visit our Upper Applegate Watershed (UAW) project. We explored stops at Charlie Buck, Texter Gulch, and Palmer Gulch in the Applegate Valley to look at projects in the Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District (U.S. Forest Service Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest) and Ashland Resource Area (Bureau of Land Management Oregon & Washington Medford District).

The day began with a land acknowledgment by the Forest Service and its representatives in honor of the trust, responsibility, and respect that these federal agencies hold with tribes and ancestral land bases on which we currently work and reside. We recognize that land acknowledgment is a necessary step toward honoring Native communities and enacting the much larger project of healing and reconciliation and that indigenous people, their tribal governments, and traditional communities are still here.

Throughout the day, we reviewed the need for and use of ecological forest restoration treatments of selective thinning, piling, and burning of hazardous fuels. Partners highlighted the science-based treatments that have already occurred in these areas and others planned for implementation in the next three years. As a project focused on ecosystem health under a Master Stewardship Agreement, any merchantable timber removed as the by-product of ecological thinning will be sold to local mills. Since this is a deficit sale, any revenue generated will help to pay for the work of removing the timber and getting it to the mill.

As the field tour progressed, we also discussed the importance of scientific monitoring of this project and the value of utilizing bird surveys with our partners at Klamath Bird Observatory to determine the short- and long-term positive and negative impacts on specific avian species. This information serves as a key indicator of habitat health and will help guide us with best science practices as we continue with our forest restoration treatments.

If you missed this field trip, fear not! We plan for additional community field trips to take a closer look at other project

areas in the future. Be sure to join the Rogue Forest Partners' newsletter list at rogueforestpartners.org/signup

What's going on in the woods?

As the spring prescribed-fire season came to a close, crews from lead implementation partner Lomakatsi Restoration Project and contract forestry services providers continued ecological thinning and piling treatments on private and public lands. At the time of this writing, crews are beginning their annual transition from ecological fuels reduction to wildfire response. Lomakatsi's 20-person hand crew and Type 6 engine received their first wildland fire assignments.

In the Applegate, Rogue Forest Partners exchanged chainsaws for notepads as our committees on restoration planning and monitoring used the hotter, drier months to revisit restoration objectives. Lomakatsi's technical forestry team laid out project boundaries, conducted pre-implementation monitoring, and drafted all prescriptions for 1,000 acres of ecological fuels reduction on USFS land.

As the cooler, wetter months of fall arrive, restoration crews will return to the forests to continue ecological thinning and prescribed fire. This fall, operations will include:

- Pile burning on BLM land in our Williams project area
- 1,000-plus acres of private land treatments in our West Bear project area
- 300-plus acres of ecological fuels reduction in and around the community of Jacksonville.

We are grateful for all the forestry services professionals who work day in and day out to make forests healthier and communities more resilient. We wish those working in wildland fire a safe fire season!

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Rogue Forest Partners (RFP) is a group of four nonprofits and six public agencies working as one for the communities and forests of the Rogue Basin to reduce wildfire risks, enhance wildlife habitat, and create equitable, sustainable jobs. Visit rogueforestpartners.org.

Prescriptions for Safety reduces fuel along critical corridors

BY KARA BAYLOG

You may have noticed some recent tree work along the roadsides throughout the Little Applegate. Take a drive along Sterling Creek Road, Griffin Lane, Highway 238, or Little Applegate Road, and you may find one of our crews out



Piles of wood and brush in the Applegate are ready to be chipped or burned as part of a new project called Prescriptions for Safety.

there, hard at work removing small trees and undergrowth along the roadside. Or you may notice under a freshly thinned canopy a couple of piles of wood and brush ready to be chipped or burned.

The landowners of these properties are receiving free work to help clear evacuation routes along their roadsides through a new project called Prescriptions for Safety. You can take part in this project, too! If you are a landowner on one of the project area roads, you may be eligible. Recently, Humbug Creek Road and Highway 238 from Jacksonville west to Humbug Creek Road have been added to the project area.

Prescriptions for Safety is reducing understory fuels up to 150 feet from the road along either side of critical evacuation corridors. The idea is twofold: First, a reduction of fuel will make for a less hazardous roadside during a wildfire event, when people need to evacuate and firefighters need to access the fire. Second, this will create a fuel break and a defensible area for firefighters trying to stop a wildfire already in progress. It will help keep roads open and safe.

The Prescriptions for Safety group and project idea was generated locally when Little Applegate residents Rich Fairbanks, Kathy Conway, Lydia Doleman, Megan Annand, Marion Hadden, Aaron Krikava, and John Galego came together with concerns about the risk that the Little Applegate could become the site of the next Paradise Fire disaster. They solicited the help of OSU Extension, Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC) and Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands, wanting to focus on protecting evacuation routes for residents and provide wildfire access for firefighters. The partnership grew

to include Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Lomakatsi Restoration Project, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council. (APWC). Work is being implemented by Lomakatsi Restoration Project. Funding is from the ODF Small Forestland Grant program and BLM Title II through grants obtained by SOFRC. Recruitment and education are coordinated through SOREC's landowner engagement program, My Southern Oregon Woodlands (mysouthernoregonwoodlands.org), with additional support coming from APWC.

Interested landowners located within the current project area receive a personal visit to their property by peer mentors to discuss potential fuel reduction actions. Landowners have full control to limit or refuse treatment at any time. All work is free of charge to the landowner although regular post-treatment maintenance is requested. Treatments are most effective when geographically connected, so if you are interested in this roadside fuel reduction, be sure to get your neighbors recruited as well!

To get involved, contact me, Kara Baylog, at 541-776-7371, ext 213, or kara.baylog@oregonstate.edu. Currently, we are able to provide free fuel reduction only for landowners along Griffin Lane, Sterling Creek Road, Little Applegate Road, Humbug Creek Road, and Highway 238 from Jacksonville to Humbug Creek Road. However, landowners outside of those roads are encouraged to leave their names with us in case of future fuel reduction project funding.

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Voices of the Applegate

We're back!

After more than two years of not being together as a choir, Voices of the Applegate is planning to begin singing again this fall. We have been sending out invitations to former members as well as through social media and Jo's List, and we have had enough responses to start rehearsals on Tuesday, September 13.

Everyone is invited to join us! No auditions are necessary. We will meet at Ruch Library, 7919 Highway 238, at 6:30 pm to register for the first session, which will last until 8:30 pm. Weekly meetings will continue until performances in early December. After a break, meetings will resume in January.

We will have two performances, one at the Presbyterian Church on California Street in Jacksonville on Saturday, December 3, and a second one at the Applegate River Lodge in Applegate on Sunday, December 4.

We are hoping to bring in enough new members to be able to continue with the choir through the winter and next year. If you are interested in joining us, contact me or just show up at the Ruch Library at 6:30 pm on September 13.

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