



THE CONSERVATIONIST

JSWCD NEWSLETTER

Turning Natural Resource Concerns into Opportunities

FALL 2010 VOLUME 7 ISSUE 2

Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat

By Lori Tella, Urban & Community Conservationist

Know Your Environment

Just about every landscape, from apartment patios to backyards, can be designed to attract wildlife. Look around your neighborhood to see what kind of water sources and habitats are nearby, and examine what kinds of animals already visit the area. If there is a park across the street or a stream close by, you might be able to entice those animals to stop over at your home. One way to see what birds are in your area is to log on to the Great Backyard Bird Count. Not only can you see maps of recent sightings but also you can record your own list of visitors.

Know Your Wildlife

Once you have decided what kind of wildlife habitat you would like to enhance, you can select plants they use for food, shelter and nesting. Each species will have different requirements to meet their basic needs, from seeds and berries for birds, to the grasses, forbs and shrubs preferred by butterflies. Lizards like rock piles, while salamanders prefer downed woody debris. Although you might not be able to



Plain Titmouse

meet all the needs of a particular animal you can certainly provide supplementary habitat. Remember to provide the four basic components of good habitat- food, water, cover and space.

Tips

- Plant native species.
- Plant a diversity of vegetative types that vary in height and width.
- Select plants that flower and bear fruit at different times of the year.
- Leave snags and some downed, woody material for perching, hiding and nesting.
- Bat boxes and birdhouses can encourage these species that often feed on insects.

- Avoid using harmful chemicals or fertilizers.
- Increase the health and size of riparian zones.

Know Yourself

Next, think about how you use your home. Do you entertain? Are there areas where you would like a visual screen? Could portions of your lawn be converted to native plantings? Is there a good window you would like to view wildlife

from? Thinking about how you use your space will help determine where to create habitat. Create a site map of your home to highlight existing plantings, where shady and sunny areas are, and where you could add habitat.

Know Your Responsibility

There is a great responsibility the homeowner takes on when choosing to feed wildlife. It is necessary to maintain a safe environment. Remember that cats are predators and will likely frighten away, or

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 Lori Tella, Urban & Community Conservationist
 Dan Scalas, Natural Resource Engineer, EIT
 Paul Showalter, Natural Resource Technician
 Markie Germer, Administrative Secretary

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 Bill Cronin, Irrigation Engineer

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Tax Deductibility for Donations / Contributions

Please think of Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD) if you are interested in donating, gifting, granting, and/or bequeathing items, real or personal property, or monetary contributions for soil and water conservation efforts. Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government. IRS Code, **Section 170(c) (1)** states: Contributions or gifts to a state or any of its political subdivisions, i.e., conservation districts, are “charitable” contributions for tax purposes, and are, therefore, **tax deductible**. (See IRS Publication 526: Charitable Contributions).

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Contact: Markie Germer
markie.germer@jswcd.org

573 Parsons Drive, Suite 102, Medford, OR
 541-776-4270 Ext. 3 FAX: 541-776-4295

Web site: www.jswcd.org

A new face in the Office!

In September Lori Tella joined Jackson Soil and Water as the Urban and Community Conservationist. Lori was born in Colorado and raised just outside of St. Louis, Missouri. Most recently, she comes to us from Fairbanks, Alaska where she had been working with Fort Wainwright to improve the environmental management of military lands.

Lori has a Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Illinois specializing in Ecological Design and Technology. She has been learning the latest and greatest in green design— from rain gardens to pervious paving. Lori received her Bachelor’s in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in Human Ecology from Prescott College in Arizona.

Her travels have included experiences working on urban and community conservation projects in diverse environments. Her work in Montverde, an eco-tourism town in Costa Rica, focused on water conservation, green trail design, and wildlife corridor protection. She also developed a How to Guide and Best Management Practices manual for sugarcane farmers in Fiji. Lori’s Senior Project allowed her to work with a relocated Chapter of the Navajo Nation to improve community development and rangeland sustainability.

She has worked for several years



Lori Tella— Urban & Community Conservationist

in the field of conservation working on natural resource issues in several states—including grassland ecology in northeast Oregon, and wildlife management in Missouri. She has worked on a Fire Effects Team studying the effects of various logging techniques on fuel loading and forest health. She is always up to being a part of a good prescribed burn.

Lori’s thesis involved creating a board game called ‘Biodiver - City’ that teaches about ecology in urban areas. She also designed a ‘toolbox’ for enhancing wildlife habitat through landscape design. As the Urban and Community Conservationist for the District, Lori looks to help private landowners improve their backyards, and in turn, one step at a time, improve the health of the watershed.

Lori can be reached at lori@jswcd.org or call the JSWCD office—541-776-4270 Ext 120.



Around the Stump – new seedlings grow!

By Allan Campbell –JSWCD Board Chair

With this JSWCD fall newsletter, let us welcome two new members to our District family. Lori Tella, hired to replace Vicki Simpson as the new Urban and Community Conservationist, started work on September 13. Larry Martin, Director from Zone 1, will take office in January 2011. Larry was elected on November 2nd and will replace Keith Emerson. Brian Gebhard has resigned and the board will appoint a replacement in January 2011. Each one, Brian, Keith and Vicki, are moving on to new challenges—each in their own way have contributed greatly to the growth and success of JSWCD.

It is apparent to many residents of Southern Oregon that both Countywide and local community agriculture and forestry needs/expectations are growing in our rural and urban settings. And, the opportunities for assistance afforded by the JSWCD staff (e.g., technical support, on-the-ground site visits, development of individual management plans, and financial assistance) are numerous. Because of this, coupled with an increase in notoriety, JSWCD work activities are on the increase. Hence the growing reality that JSWCD will need more staff in the not too distant future.

Because of the current crowded conditions, six staff members

working (living) together in a 936 Square foot space (i.e., main office complex), the hiring of additional staff is not practical.

Currently, if all things were equal, each staff member would be allocated 156 square feet (i.e., the equivalent of laying five sheets of plywood (4' X 8' sheets) side by side. But, of course, the reception area is large. Which means the staff areas are smaller. Each staff office/area includes a desk, chairs(s) file cabinets(s), shelving, and waste basket(s) – and, of course, computer equipment. Visitors to JSWCD can easily recognize that staff work areas are quite small. In fact, staff members often talk to one another, in conversational tones, from their respective desk chairs.

Currently, JSWCD is evaluating the options of relocating the USDA Service Center, which includes JSWCD, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the USDA Rural Development (RD). Our Primary option, at this point, is the possibility of relocating to the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC). The District and its above-mentioned partners have had a long-standing and positive working relationship with SOREC.

A small committee, including one of the County Commissioners, has had initial discussion regarding the possibility of this relocation option. It is the consensus of this group that there are enough advantages to warrant further research, including but not limited to:

- Improved understanding and communication among all the above entities
- Improved efficiency in meeting the needs of clients
 - Education
 - Communication
 - Research efforts
 - Technical assistance for completing on-the-ground projects
 - Development and use of Demonstration sites
 - Financial assistance
- Improved interagency partnerships

Accomplishing a move to Southern Oregon Research Extension Center will increase OSU Extension's security in Jackson County by helping them to successfully obtain a tax rate limit.

Bottom Line: Our JSWCD tree needs room to grow and bear fruit for the people of Jackson County.

Creating Backyard Wildlife Habitat

(Continued from page 1)

destroy, the animals you try to attract. It is best to keep them inside for their own safety, and for the sake of declining songbirds.

Birds are one of the most common types of backyard wildlife to attract. Surprisingly, one of the biggest urban killers of birds, besides your cat, is your window. If you are attracting birds and have large windows, be sure to decorate the outside of them with ribbon or decals to prevent the birds from crashing into them. It is also important to prevent the spread of disease. Using a metal or plastic



Spotted Towhee

feeder, and cleaning it with a diluted (10%) bleach solution will help keep the birds healthy. Prevent the food from mixing with feces on the ground by using a wire cloth attached to two by fours, or use a tarp to catch and remove fallen waste.

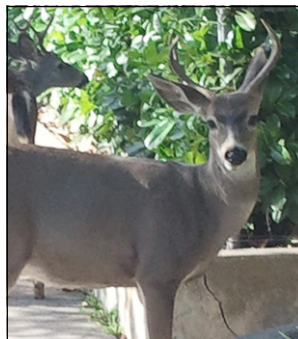
Know Our Predators

It is important to make sure we improve the habitat without being detrimental to the wildlife or inviting unwanted animals. Two of the biggest threats to wildlife are habitat loss and introduced species. As human populations continue to grow we displace natural communities and ecosystems. Animals often have little choice but to seek refuge in our urban areas and use the remnant habitats of our parks and yards. The urban environment is a gauntlet of fences, vehicles, invasive species, concrete, and windowpanes. While we certainly have made it a challenge for wildlife to survive, we have also managed to improve conditions in other ways. We have brought in water to

originally dry places through irrigation. We also plant lots of trees and shrubs loaded with fruits and berries. Our numerous structures provide perching ledges and nesting platforms. And we are always in good supply of extra garbage.

Regardless of if we intend to attract animals or not, we will likely have some company. Please remember Jackson County is also home to cougar, bear, coyote and other perhaps unwanted backyard visitors. There are certain steps you can take to minimize the chance of attracting these animals. Remove extra food from your landscape - for example, bring in pet food (or feed your pets inside), pick up fallen fruits, and accumulated birdseed. Control the odors coming from your compost, and consider putting your garbage out in the morning, instead of leaving it out all night. Additional precautions can be taken, such as electric fences or hazing permits from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, to dissuade predators without hurting them.

Deer are also very common in our urban areas, and while they are beautiful to watch they are known to dine in our gardens and are often a hazard for vehicles. The only proven deterrent for deer has been a 7' tall fence and cautious drivers.



Other options include products that have a foul taste, and carefully selected deer resistant plants. Do not feed the deer, as they may become sick and overly reliant on urban areas.

If you have further questions contact Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District and ask for Lori.

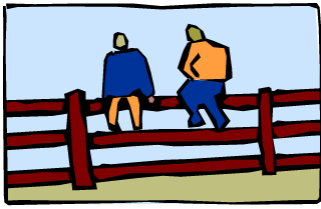
**Tax Deductibility
for
Donations/
Contributions**

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Your help is greatly appreciated.

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Across the Fence — Helpful Tidbits for the Farm

By Dan Scalas, Natural Resources Engineer, EIT

Managing the Mud and Muck

If you have ever owned livestock you know that when winter brings the rains, managing mud can be an arduous task. Extended exposure to muddy conditions can cause serious health problems for livestock. Sometimes, muddy areas can even lead to violations of the law. Here are a few tips that might help you manage that muddy mess.

Keep Clean Water Clean

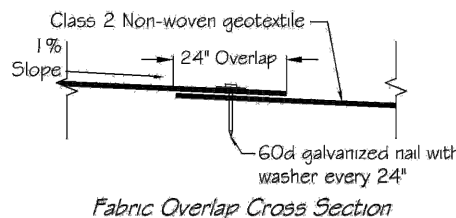
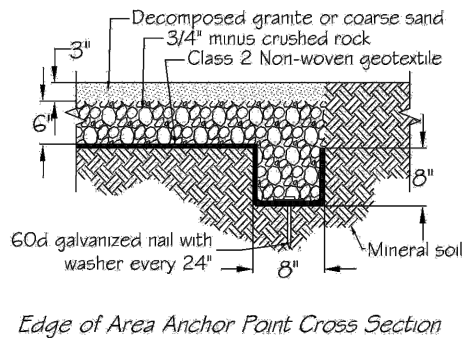
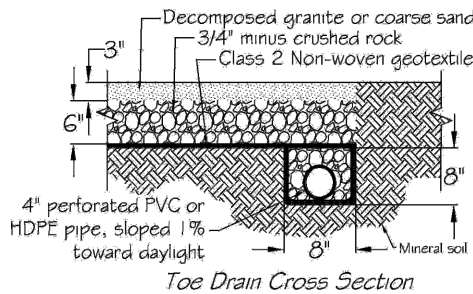
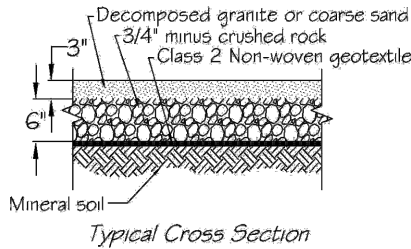
The first order of business is keeping clean water clean. If possible, try to divert, catch or contain any clean water that might be coming onto your property. Use grassy ditches or french drains to divert clean water away from your winter paddocks. Additionally, ensure rain gutter downspouts are diverting clean water away from winter paddocks or into a rainwater catchment device (rain barrel or cistern). Reducing the amount of water that can run onto a winter paddocks will significantly reduce mud problems.

Next, the clean rainwater can be diverted to a pasture or grassy area that will help infiltrate the water into the soil. If this is not possible, clean rainwater can be released off your property into a natural drainage.

Separating Dirty Water

Whenever possible try to separate dirty water from clean water. Rain water that falls on winter paddocks inevitably becomes dirty water from mud and manure. It is possible that if this dirty water leaves your property, it may be a violation of the law.

CROSS SECTION DETAILS FOR HEAVY USE PROTECTION AREA



For Example Only

Harden winter paddocks and remove manure frequently, this will reduce mud problems significantly. Divert the dirty water from the winter paddocks using grassy ditches and french drains.

It is important that the dirty water be treated before it leaves the property. Divert the dirty water into a pasture or field with good plant vigor and a stubble height of at least 4-6in. This will slow down the water, reduce erosion, filter and help the water infiltrate. Additionally, dirty water may be diverted to a small pond or bioswale to retain the dirty water onsite.

Heavy Use Protection Area

The most affective way to reduce mud problems is to harden your winter paddocks creating a heavy use protection area. Start with a geotextile (filter fabric) placed over a tightly bladed soil surface. Make sure your surface has about a 1% slope toward a toe drain or grassy area. Use a 6 inch base of 3/4in minus crushed rock and run over it twice with a compactor. Next, place 3 inches of footing material on top of the base. There are three common options for footing material: hogs fuel (wood chips), decomposed granite or coarse sand. Remember not to feed horses on sand, as they can get sand colic. Depending on the layout of the heavy use area, a toe drain may need to be install at the downhill side of the area in order to divert water to a treatment area. Remember, these tips are for general installations. A professional should be consulted before constructing a heavy use protection area.

Links to the Past

Lake Creek Store— A Glimpse of a Pioneer Community!

By Margaret Meierhenry

The column **Links to the Past** started when Fred Straube wrote an article for the first JSWCD newsletter in 2004. It was called ‘Fred’s Facts’ and its thesis was a historical perspective of the people and land that make up the communities of Jackson County. *The Conservationist* continues this tradition of visiting old-time Rogue Valley families, learning about their history and their impact on local agriculture. On a recent visit to the small community of Lake Creek and the Lake Creek Historical Society now located in Pioneer Hall, which was converted in 1990 from the old community hall building, a treasure trove of information was discovered about the Lake Creek Store and its impact on area farming families from the late 1880’s to the late 1960’s.

For ‘newcomers’ to the Rogue Valley, Lake Creek is located approximately 20 miles east of Medford off of Highway 140. An unincorporated community, it takes its name from an important local stream. In 1981, Helen Barrow wrote an article about the Lake Creek store for the Eagle Point Independent (now know as the Upper Rogue Independent). Many local Eagle Point area residents may know Ms Barrow, as she was a teacher and principal at Little Butte Intermediate School for many years. It is with her permission, we re-visit the history of the Lake Creek Store. All quotations within this article were taken from Helen Barrow’s newspaper article, unless otherwise noted.

Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary defines a store as an establishment where goods are regularly offered for sale. The Lake Creek Store has been this and much more for many years. This area, unlike many

other pioneer communities, has never had a church to serve as a community center. The Lake Creek School, the Lost Creek School, and the Middle District School provided education for the youth. At times these schools did house religious services, but by and large, community life centered around the store and post office.

The Lake Creek store really started out as a post office. Established on December 10, 1886, records show Joseph Delk was appointed postmaster on April 25, 1888. “Its [Lake Creek Store] origins are lost and probably never will be rediscovered, but from its humble origin as a post office where the owner may have begun the store by stocking small items such as chewing tobacco for sale, it kept pace with the people who lived on both forks of Little Butte Creek, becoming the ‘Heart of the Community.’” (*The Lake Creek Letter*) Postmasters and on occasion postmistress contributed their own history to the ‘store’.

What year the ‘store building’ was built is still a puzzle. Some tax and deed records indicate postmistress, Sarah Conley Wright Hessler owned the property on which the store was located when she acquired the land from the Oregon and California Railroad Company by deed in 1907. She then sold the property to A. H. Thompson in 1908. Other records show the original store was built to replace the old 1880’s building that was destroyed by fire. “Best guesses of old-timers date the

store at around 1904.” (*The Lake Creek Letter*)

The Thompson’s ran the post office and store for thirteen years, but did not always put store merchandise out on the shelves, tending to keep it in boxes. The story goes they did not have fire insurance and it would be easier to drag out boxes in case of a fire. In 1921, it was sold to Walt and Edythe Antle and Edythe became the postmistress.

The Antles, who were musicians, enjoyed playing for country-dances and had a local carpenter build a dance hall across from the store. The band played every other weekend with Walt Antle on drums and Edythe played piano. Leland Charley, a local resident played the trombone, and his cousin Hurst Charley played the saxophone. Admission was by ticket.

“These dances continued after the Wyant family bought the establishment in 1925. The makeup of the band changed but the community danced on and on in great numbers.” It has been noted that, “...when word got out through the ‘pipeline’ that the moon shiners would be there, the floor would be so crowded that dancing was almost impossible.” On nights the moon shiners were there they usually paid the band. Mrs. Wyant and daughter sold refreshments—a tin cup of hot coffee cost a nickel and shredded pork on a bun cost a dime. If a ride to the dance hall left the coiffures of the ladies a bit mussed, they were allowed to redo their hair with curling irons heated in



Sarah Conley Wright Hestler

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Lake Creek Store

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the chimney of a kerosene lamp at the Wyant house located next to the store.

The Wyant family operated the store until 1947 and during that time installed tongue and groove fir flooring in the store, while the home had no sub flooring and dirt under the house was visible in some places.

The Wyants were hospitable people, taking in folks overnight who come to the store only a couple of times a year to order provisions brought by Mr. Wyant in his truck. Milo Conley would come down one day. Go to town with Mr. Wyant the next, and the next day take his flour, bacon, beans, etc. home in his wagon. Other neighbors would hang out a white dishtowel to alert Mr. Wyant to stop and get their orders. Often these neighbors would ride into Medford in the truck.

The store was a fascinating place to go, especially for children—the glass showcase was filled with all kinds of candy costing one penny and the store was where pencils, crayolas, and writing tablets could be purchased. The side storeroom with livestock supplies had scales operated with weights and it was fun for the children to weigh themselves and then have the teacher put their weight into their health record.

During the Depression, the Lake Creek Store was the ‘hub’ of social life for the neighboring residents. You could buy coal oil (kerosene) for your lamps, gasoline for your car, and sell your excess eggs. On occasion, a part of the store was curtained off to provide living quarters for a new schoolteacher. Rodeos, 4th of July celebrations and fireworks, and ‘last day school picnics’ were held near the dance hall. “In the hall, Christmas programs were given and elections conducted.

At the store, once in a blue moon, a fight might liven things up.”

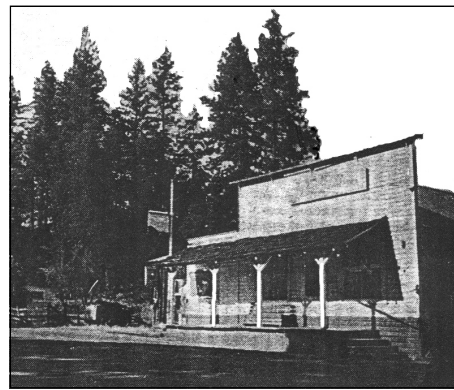
The post office was located at the back of the store with boxes for each family’s mail. There was no rural delivery and people called to see if they had mail or neighbors would pick up mail for each other. “Often the Snyder cream truck driver took mail up his route and left it along with the empty cream can.” It cost two cents to mail a letter! The post office was the delivery site for many things—on occasion a box of baby chicks, that had been ordered, was waiting to be picked up by the farmer’s wife.

“Changes came when, in the summer of 1941, the dance hall burned. The Community Hall which replaced it served as the location for parties, not dances, and at times for Sunday School.”

Then Lewis Wyant had a stroke and Bert and Hallie Dodenhoff took over the store in January 1947 and ran it for two years. Refrigeration was installed during this time so that ice cream and cold drinks could be sold. Under the Dodenhoff management, business doubled the first year and exceeded that figure by \$2000 by the second year. The store now had livestock feed available and sold five tons per week. A wholesaler in Ashland delivered groceries. “They were able to get only chocolate revel ice cream at first, but the Lake Creekers didn’t care. They bought sixty-five gallons of it the first month after refrigeration went in.” Bert [Dodenhoff] was quoted in the newspaper article as saying, ‘You know how it is in a country store. People come there for what they need and go to town for what they want.’ Bert expanded the front of the store with a roof and a new floor

with steps at both ends of the porch. One day a “... handsome rancher in a moment of exuberance, rode his horse lickety split across the porch.”

A succession of owners followed. In 1949, Alfred and Agnes Nelson bought the store and a quarter acre of land that included an apple tree ‘that Alfred wanted’. The Rollie Davis family operated the store from 1955 to 1960 and Mr. and Mrs. U. S. Atkinson stayed until 1967 when they sold it to Philip Dunkel and Al Humpert.



The dynamics of the store and the relationship with the community changed forever in 1968. Even though the local residents wanted the

services of a post office, the Lake Creek Post Office was discontinued from service on August 1, 1968 and Lake Creek became a route out of the Eagle Point Post Office. The next owners were only proprietors of a store, adopting modern conveniences and making them available to the community. The closure of the post office impacted the purpose of going to the store on a daily basis and the community began to change as well. There were more people commuting to town to work and fewer ranchers.

The Lake Creek Store and Post Office of years past will forever be remembered as the heart of the community. The glass showcase filled with assorted penny candy pulled a child to it like a magnet, the old potbellied stove probably heard many a wild tale when folks gathered around it to keep warm on a winter day and chat with old friends.

(Continued on page 11)



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd. Suite 900, Portland, OR 97232 • www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

CONSERVATION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO FARMERS, RANCHERS AND FORESTLAND OWNERS

December 15, 2010— Deadline to Apply for Conservation Financial Assistance

Medford, OR.— Private landowners working on enhancing the sustainability of their farm, ranch or non-industrial private forestland now have the opportunity to apply for technical and financial assistance through their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

NRCS continues to work in partnership with private landowners, conservation and agricultural groups to identify and prioritize natural resource problems within our community. This local guidance ensures that NRCS works collaboratively with land managers and partners to address and improve resource issues on a landscape scale.

Last year, NRCS in Oregon worked with 527 land managers and provided over \$13.6 million through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) to help improve the sustainability of their operation. Routinely, the number of applications received far exceeds the amount of funding available.

EQIP and WHIP are voluntary conservation program to help farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forestland owners improve and enhance the condition of water, soil, and other natural resources on private working lands. These programs also offer additional assistance for beginning, historically underserved and limited resource farmers, ranchers and forestland owners.

Based on local input and the funding available, NRCS will be working together with our partners to prioritize efforts on identified resource concerns. For the 2011 funding cycle in Jackson County, application priority for:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) will be given to: Forest management practices in the Applegate, Seven Basins, and Ashland Community Wildfire Protection Plan areas; and to practices to improve Water Quality in the Bear Creek and/or Applegate Agricultural Water Quality Management areas. This may include improved irrigation, grazing, and cropland practices.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), funds will be targeted at oak woodland restoration projects in the Colestin Valley, Greensprings area, and/or the Bear Creek drainages.

NRCS invites agricultural, forestry and livestock producers to apply before the **December 15, 2010 deadline** by contacting your local USDA Service Center. If you have not participated in USDA programs in the past it is important to contact your local office as soon as possible to ensure you have the time needed to make decisions, meet eligibility requirements, and complete the application process.

In addition to EQIP and WHIP, other Farm Bill programs may be available later in the fiscal year to help Oregon agriculture. Organic farmers can take advantage of a special EQIP program for use only with certified organic growers and those wanting to transition to organic production. The 2008 Farm Bill also authorized a special program to help agriculture producers with air quality concerns. NRCS will put out more information on the organic and air quality programs during the coming months.

Additional information on these and other conservation programs can be found on the Web at www.or.nrcs.usda.gov or:

CONTACT: Erin Kurtz, District Conservationist, Medford OR erin.kurtz@or.usda.gov (541) 776-4276 ext. 108
Peter Winnick, Soil Conservationist, Medford OR peter.winnick@ca.usda.gov ext. 109

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

NRCS, is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

A warm welcome to Erin Kurtz, the new NRCS District Conservationist!

Erin Kurtz has joined the staff for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Jackson County as the District Conservationist. Born and raised in rural upstate New York, she received her degree in Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Studies from The Evergreen State College in Washington State. Erin has previously worked as Soil Conservationist designing conservation plans with landowners in the Sierra foothills and Central Coast of California. She now resides in Ashland with her husband and their son, and enjoys hiking, camping, and sailing.



landscape in an efficient and strategic way, bringing continuity to the various programs that NRCS offers.

She looks forward to connecting with the local community and applying conservation based on their directives and priorities, and continuing NRCS's function as a service agency.

In the coming year, Erin plans on working closely with landowners and conservation partners to apply conservation to the

Contact her at:
573 Parsons Drive Suite 102
Medford, OR 97501
Phone: (541) 776-4267 ext. 108
Fax: (541) 776-4296

JSWCD Offers Soils Class

JSWCD recently offered a class on **Understanding and Managing Your Soils**. Different topics were presented by JSWCD staff as well as representative experts in their respective fields.

Topics included a history of soil and its management effects on old and present cultures. Civilizations have developed and fallen by how the soil was cared for. Then the subjects became more specific for our growing area. Texture, structure, geology, and how to take and interpret soil samples were all discussed. Our own soils samples were tested for type

and texture—yep its clay soil!

The best way to know if you are missing nutrients or need amendments for your soil is to have a professional lab test and from the results recommendations can be implemented to correct deficiencies.

Teresa Matheson from Benton SWCD presented a discussion of Soil Biology—Soil Food Web via a Skype connection and her slides were showing locally. Soil quality is key for success in growing any crop. Another resource at our disposal is the NRCS Web Soil Survey. <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>



Another class JSWCD offered was on Irrigation.

After the first of the year, an in-depth Pasture Management class will begin. Something you don't want to miss.

If you would like to know more about any of the classes, contact Dan at 541-776-4270 ext. 114. Attending these classes is a great opportunity to learn and ask questions specific to your own needs.

Jackson Soil and Water District is here to help you!

“Weed of Distinction”

Bull Thistle—*Cirsium vulgare*



Dealing with an obnoxious weed can be frustrating and time consuming and in some scenarios expensive. A weed often found in recently or repeatedly disturbed areas, especially pastures, overgrazed rangelands, roadsides and logged areas is the common Bull thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*). The biggest problem with controlling bull thistle is how it reproduces and spreads.

First, let's look at the growth habit of this pesky plant. This species of thistle is a biennial.

Bull thistle has a two-year life cycle.

First year plants are rosettes of green, sparsely hairy leaves. Growth the next spring is the elongation of the flowering stems and bud development. Most of us have encountered a thistle plant at some time—the flower head base is covered in spine-tipped bracts and the tips of the leaf margins have sharp spines—one “feels” its presence. The flowers are attractive heads of purple-pink and the plant grows from two to five feet.

Bull thistle plants are not hard to identify because of their biennial nature and the leaves are ‘spiny hairy’ above and ‘cottony’ below. Canada thistle, a close look-alike plant, is much more aggressive and the seedling develops a perennial growth habit producing new shoots from buds on the root system. Canada

thistle leaves are smooth, almost shiny on top, and smooth to hairy on the bottom. Both thistles are natives of Europe and have become invasive throughout North America, both having been introduced as a seed contaminant. Management practices of each thistle are also very different. Aha—subject for another ‘weed of distinction’ article some time.

Bull thistle plants usually flower from June until the first frost. Mature plants are capable of producing 4,000 seeds per plant. Each seed is capped with a circle of white hairs that act like helicopter blades—lifting, catching the wind, and blowing long distances. However, they often travel just enough to cross the fence into your property or vice versa onto your neighbor's.



Seeds germinate in the spring and fall and those close to the soil surface are viable for only a year. If the seed has the opportunity to penetrate deeper in the soil, they may remain viable for up to three years.

Good management practices focus on preventing seed production.

Since Bull thistle produces only from seed, small infestations can be controlled by hand pulling or digging up the first year rosette seedling and/or the mature plant before it flowers. The idea is to prevent isolated or small populations from spreading into larger infestations. Bull thistle does not compete well in areas with thick, tall grasses and forbs.

Pastures with good grazing practices and management of grass and forage species will reduce a bull thistle infestation.

Good preventative measures against bull thistle are preserving good soil and plant health and avoiding overuse or constant disturbance. Cultivation is also an effective control tool.

- Manage grazing areas by
 - a) promoting grass and plant vigor and
 - b) rotating animals in a uniform manner and avoid grazing when the soil is too wet--minimize soil disturbance.
- Manage hay field areas by
 - a) mowing plants at the pre-flower stage—avoid cutting the plants in full flower and
 - b) continue cutting the plants throughout the season prevent re-flowering.

Large infestations of thistle may require other strategies. Herbicides should be used only after reading the label and following the recommended rates.

Apply herbicides on warm, dry days with low air movement and allow treated mowed areas enough time for the chemical to penetrate into the plant system. Over the next few years, continue to monitor a treated area for new plant germination. Spot spraying can also be a good strategy and less harmful to multi-specie growing areas. Biological control with the seed head gall fly (*Urophora stylata*) has been successful in mostly large infested areas. Grazing goats will eat seedling, rosettes, and flower heads, reducing the number of bull thistle plants.

Early detection and prevention are key tools in controlling and preventing the spread of Bull thistle.

(Continued on page 11)

Lake Creek Store

(Continued from page 7)

Many of the past owners will be remembered for the ‘helping hand’ they extended by picking up supplies in town or giving rides to folks in need. In years gone by, and even with the present more modern style features, the store remains a vital community center in the lives of the country folks of Lake Creek, Oregon.

Acknowledgements:

Barrow, Helen E. “Lake Creek Store: Uncertain origin, rich history” *Eagle Point Independent*, 17 November 1981, 5(45), p. 6 (first of two-part series)

Barrow, Helen E. “Lake Creek Store: A county store becomes a community center” *Eagle Point Independent*, 24 November 1981, 5 (46) p. 6 (second of two-part series)

Barrow, Helen. “Heart of the Community” *The Lake Creek Letter: A Publication of the Lake Creek Historical Society*, (Spring 1997), 7 (1) p. 5-6

Bull Thistle

(Continued from page 10)

Acknowledgements:

Best Management Practices—Bull Thistle—*Cirsium vulgare*
King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Water and Land Resources Division
Noxious Weed Control Program

(seed picture)

Patrick J. Alexander @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

(flower picture) from wikipedia
D. Gordon E Robertson
Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*),
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
11 September 2005



Local JSWCD Board Members Lead the Way for Oregon Conservation

This year marked the 62nd Annual Meeting and Convention of the Oregon Association of Conservation

Districts. The program took place on October 27-30 in Deschutes County. Natural resource professionals, conservation leaders, and Soil and Water Conservation District board members from across the state gathered in Sunriver, an alpine community that lies adjacent to the Deschutes River and near the base of the central Cascade Mountains.

It is worth mentioning that three of our very own Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District board members in attendance also currently fill state level positions that represent not just local conservation, but lead the way for supporting conservation affecting all Oregonians. The State Association is led by President Charlie Boyer, an Eagle Point resident and locally elected board member for Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Zone 4. The State Association Secretary is Barbara Niedermeyer, an Applegate resident and locally elected board member for Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, Zone 2. Central Point resident Marilyn Rice, Director at Large for Jackson SWCD, was also present. In addition to local board representation, she serves on the statewide Soil and Water Conservation Commission, a four year appointment from the director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Katy Coba. We are very fortunate to have such quality representation from SW Oregon at the state level.

The conference focused on the theme “Oregon’s Conservation Future”. Well over 20 individual speakers shared insight on “futurizing” strategies based on recent projects and accomplishments. It was a great opportunity to advance conservation ideas, share stories, and recharge for the next round of natural resource challenges to come.



*Congratulations
Larry Martin, newly elected
JSWCD Director, Zone 1
will be joining the
JSWCD board in January 2011*

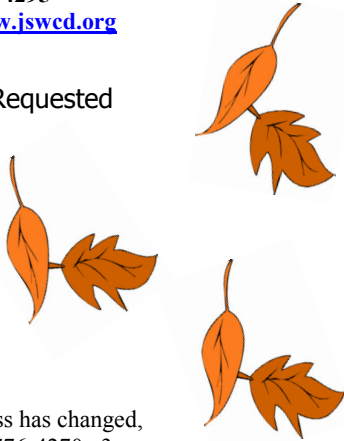


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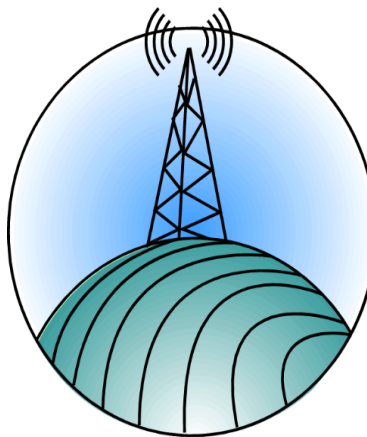
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AM RADIO KMED—1440

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with Lori Tella, our staff
Urban & Community
Conservationist
learn and discuss

**BACKYARD WILDLIFE
DECEMBER 4TH
10 AM**



TELEVISION CABLE CHANNEL 9 TUNE INTO A LIVE DISCUSSION

(topic to be announced)

**ON
DECEMBER 14TH
6 PM**