

THE CONSERVATIONIST

JSWCD NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2010 VOLUME 6 ISSUE 4

WWW.JSWCD.ORG

Turning Natural Resource Concerns into Opportunities

NITRATE IN GROUNDWATER – A PROBLEM IN JACKSON COUNTY?

Have you had your well water tested lately?

Many households in Jackson County use well water for their primary drinking water. Protection from groundwater contaminants is important as it can affect our health. One such contaminate is nitrate.

Nitrate may be found in groundwater for a number of reasons; sometimes it is naturally occurring, but high nitrate levels in well water may also indicate contamination originating from over-fertilization, leaking septic tanks, overstocked pastures, or poor pet or live-stock manure management. Drinking water that is high in nitrate can have serious health consequences, especially for babies, young children, pregnant and nursing women, and people with compromised immune systems. High nitrate levels in drinking water have been associated with blue baby syndrome known as methemoglobinemia. Elevated nitrate levels in drinking water are also tied to thyroid hormone disruptions, diabetes, acute respiratory infections, spontaneous miscarriages, and a variety of cancers.

State law requires property owners to test their well water for nitrate, coliform, and now arsenic when the property is being

sold or changing hands. An analysis of the nitrate levels reported from sales indicates that some areas of Jackson County may have a problem with nitrate in groundwater. Groundwater nitrate values over 3 mg/L are considered to show some impact from land uses, and any values above 10 mg/L are considered potentially dangerous. Data from property sales between

Free nitrate screening for participants will be offered at the CWMA Weed— Let's Pull Together Picnic at Touvelle Park on June 19th. To have your well water tested, bring a small sample (~1/2 cup) in a clean, watertight container to the picnic. (See page 4)

1989 and 2008 showed that at least 117 wells in Jackson County had nitrate levels above 7 mg/L. It is important to note that only those wells involved in a real estate transaction were included in this data set. Many properties did not change hands during this time, and it also appears that not all sellers complied with the law Requiring reporting. The narrow scope of the data makes it difficult to

estimate the actual number of wells that may be contaminated, and where in the county they are located. The nitrate level of any given well may vary throughout the year, so a well that tests negative at one point in the year may actually have a high nitrate value during another part of the year. In addition, at this level, nitrate has no detectable color, odor or taste and will not be detected by water users without a nitrate test.

Because nitrate contamination is thought to be a problem in Jackson County, those who depend on a well for drinking water should regularly have the nitrate levels tested to ensure that their family's health is not at risk.

Free nitrate screening will be offered to participants at the CWMA Weed— **Let's Pull Together Picnic at Touvelle Park on June 19th**. To have your well water tested, bring a small sample (~1/2 cup) in a clean, watertight container to the picnic. The test takes about 5-10 minutes.

For more information on the CWMA Weed —Let's Pull Together (see page 4), and nitrate testing, go to www.jswcd.org or call 541-776-4270 ext 3.

Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District is your gateway to natural resource assistance. Board members and staff work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to ensure educational and on-the-ground technical assistance opportunities take place which help the landowners of Jackson County.

Jackson

Soil and Water Conservation District

Staff:

Randy White, NRS/District Manager
 Angie Boudro, Senior Planner
 Vickie Simpson, Urban & Community Conservationist
 Dan Scalas, Natural Resource Engineer, EIT
 Paul Showalter, Natural Resource Technician
 Markie Germer, Administrative Secretary

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Monday—Friday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Board Meetings: All are welcome to attend!
 October-March 4 PM April-September 7 PM

USDA

Natural Resource Conservation Service

Staff:

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 Peter Winnick, Soil Conservationist
 Bill Cronin, Irrigation Engineer

Farm Service Agency

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Joe Hess, County Executive Director
 Diane Rabbe, Program Technician
 Donna Finch, Program Technician

County Committee members:

LAA 1 - Suzanne Ginet, Chair
 LAA 2 - Charlie Boyer, Member
 LAA 3 - Lori Mefford, Vice Chair

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**
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 541- 776-4270 Ext. 3 FAX: 541-776-4295

Web site: www.jswcd.org



David Gladman with winning poster!

We would like to introduce you to **David Gladman** along with his winning poster and award. David entered the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Poster Contest for 2009 and we were pleased to honor him in the Winter 2010 JSWCD newsletter. Unfortunately, the incorrect name was mistakenly used in the article.

David Gladman is the young man who did all the work demonstrating both knowledge of conservation practices and his ability as an artist. David’s poster won the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts state award, a U.S. savings bond, and was eligible for the national level—receiving a Certificate of Appreciation. Jackson SWCD is very proud of David. Keep up the good work!

2010 Poster Contest

The National Association of Conservation Districts—2010 Poster Contest theme is "Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats." Only posters judged at the local and state level are eligible for the national contest. Categories include: Grades K-1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-6, Grades 7-9, Grades 10-12. Check <http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster/#2010> for more details. Each year, the poster contest starts at the district level. Individuals and teachers with questions regarding district contests can contact Markie at JSWCD. (541-776-4270 ext.101) District winners advance to the state level. Finally, state winners advance to the National Contest. National winners are recognized each year at the NACD Annual Meeting.

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Around the Stump – new seedlings grow!

By Allan Campbell –JSWCD Chair

“In the beginning” (i.e., somewhere back in time), soil and water became fundamental resources upon which all life forms (as we know them) would be dependent. Enter the human life form (i.e., still somewhere back in time) and our propensity to increase our population levels all over planet earth (e.g., like bacteria in a petri dish). So, not too far back in time, we (i.e., some of us) began to learn that the care – the conservation – of these two resources (i.e., soil and water) are forever linked to the health and well being – to the survival – of people around the world.

Examples of wise use (i.e., good management practices; stewardship) and unwise use (i.e., waste; destruction) are easy to find. The need to increase our knowledge of good conservation/management practices has never been more apparent. The time to share the knowledge, by providing assistance to landowners and managers, is NOW. Enter — Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD).

JSWCD staff members share their professional expertise with landowners and managers (and the general public) in a variety of ways. As stated in the JSWCD Mission Statement, their work is designed “to help landowners improve the management of their land by:

- Providing technical support
- Seeking grants and other financial assistance
- Providing one-on-one, on-the-ground site visits
- Developing workshops and classes
- Assisting in the development of individual landowner management plans and projects”

As a means of fulfilling the JSWCD Mission, the Annual Work Plan for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 identifies six (6) “Goals”, containing a total of 49 tasks (3 typed written pages), to be accommodated by one or more staff members. The stated Goals are:

1. Provide rural and urban landowners/managers prompt, reliable technical and educational assistance and provide assistance in seeking financial aid to implement sound natural resource conservation practices on lands in Jackson County.
2. Develop and maintain working relationships with natural resource agencies, conservation organizations, local government, special districts, educational institutions, etc.
3. Develop and implement conservation education programs for the youth and adults in

- Jackson County.
4. Build District capacity to expand the professional and effective administrative operations to implement educational and technical assistance in Jackson County.
5. Develop and implement a District marketing plan, five-year plan and Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
6. Conduct daily operations and District fiscal administration.

That amounts to a pretty full “work load“ for our very awesome JSWCD Staff, who’s track record demonstrates total dedication.

One final thought to keep in mind: We (all of us) must always be proactive

in our approach to fostering understanding and care of the most critical (and much manipulated) of our renewable resources – namely the men, women, and children of Jackson County. Why? Because the sustainability of all other resources depends on what we do for, and with, each other!

The time to share the knowledge, by providing assistance to landowners and managers, is NOW. Enter – Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD).

Let's Pull Together: 2010 Weed Event

- ◆ Pull invasive weeds
- ◆ Food & drinks
- ◆ Music & door prizes!
- ◆ Free T-shirts

Choose your site:

- Prescott Park on Roxy Anne
- Lower Table Rock
- Denman Wildlife Area
- North Mountain Park
- Valley of the Rogue State Park

Choose your site and meet at **9 am June 19th**

Following the weed pull, volunteers will enjoy a free picnic, music, meet other volunteers and browse educational booths at **Touvelle State Park**, on Table Rock Road.

Free nitrate screening of well water will be offered to participants.

Sponsored by the Jackson County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)
A coordinated effort to promote effective weed control.

For information call Markie: 541-776-4270

Connect with us at www.jswcd.org

Visit JSWCD Website and find:

- Up to date news and a calendar of events.
- Signups for paper or electronic newsletters.
- Photos of some of our latest projects.
- Our educational publications and past issues of *The Conservationist* newsletter.
- The Manure Exchange (to get fertilizer or post a manure source.)
- And more!



Mark Your Calendar

- June 5th, 9-5, Horses and Wilderness
- June 19th, CWMA Weed—Let's Pull Together (see page 4)
- June 21 – 25, Natural Resources Camp (see back page for more details)
- August 5-8 JSWCD Annual Tour (see page 11)

"Weed of Distinction"

Garlic Mustard

Several years ago a new, very invasive noxious weed garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) was located for the first time in the Rogue Valley at Valley of the Rogue State Park. Gale Grogan Perrotti with the Seven Basins Watershed Council and the staff at Valley of the Rogue SP began eradication efforts with volunteer weed pulls and contract spraying.

Brought in as a culinary herb, garlic mustard has become quite widespread in many places in the U.S. including the Portland and Columbia Gorge area of Oregon. It crowds out native plants and wildflowers and is reported to release a chemical into the soil that kills fungus vital to native plants. In the eastern U. S. this weed has wiped out the under-story of some forests.

It was speculated that more garlic



mustard plants would be found somewhere along the river, but it wasn't until this year that plants were located outside the park's boundaries--below Gold Ray Dam. This find initiated a more wide-spread survey. Through the efforts of an early detection rapid response (EDRR) effort and with much help from Mike Meredith (Jackson County Cooperative Weed Management Area member), more plants were located from the Kelly Slough area to Rand Visitor's Center below Galice. Many sites are small and scattered, but in the vicinity of the

Kelly Slough area at least two patches of approximately eight acres each have been located.

To help in planning eradication efforts, additional surveys are being done upstream to see where sites might be located farthest up the river. With the help of expert river guide, Dave Roberts, the stretch of the Rogue River from Shady Cove to Dodge Bridge was surveyed. No garlic mustard plants were located, but during that survey another noxious weed Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) was located. (More about this plant in the next newsletter.)

So far, garlic mustard sites have been found in the vicinity of the Rogue River, but more could be lurking out there. If you raft the river or hike river trails and happen to see this noxious weed, please contact Barbara Mumblo 541-899-3855 or Gail Grogan Perrotti 541-261-7796.



Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

Introduced – naturalized —very invasive—

Plant: erect, biennial, 12"-40" tall, forming large, dense mats, first year plants an evergreen, basal rosette; stems mostly unbranched, hairless

Leaf: alternate, coarsely toothed, stalked, strong **garlic smell** when crushed; lower **kidney shaped**, upper triangular

Flower: white, 4-parted, 1/3" wide, petals rounded at the top, narrowing towards the base; inflorescence a **short**, terminal **cluster** of stalked flowers; blooms April-June

Seed: long, thin, 4-angled pods, both horizontal and pointing upward

Habitat: partial shade, shade; moderate moisture to moist; woods, woods edges

Report sighting: Call Barbara Mumblo, 541-899-3855 or Gail Grogan Perrotti 541-261-7796



Jackson SWCD Partners in Conservation Education

— Opportunities for youth—

By Marilyn Rice—JSWCD, Director at Large

Envirothon 2010



For the third year in a row the Crater High School Envirothon Team brought home the third place FFA Banner. Overall the

four freshmen and a returning sophomore placed tenth of twenty-four teams competing April 30, 2010 at The Oregon Garden in Silverton for the opportunity to represent Oregon at the annual Cannon Envirothon Competition. The

high school environmental education competition

highest scoring FFA Team qualifies for the National FFA Environmental and Natural Resources Career Development Event.

Envirothon participants gain valuable knowledge and training in ecology and natural resource management principles and practices. Combining hands-on activities with traditional classroom experiences makes learning more fun. Working with natural resource professionals in the areas of aquatic ecology, soils/land use, forestry and wildlife leads some students to pursue careers in natural sciences, natural resource management, environmental studies, or environmental law. Team collaboration, problem solving, and oral presentations focused on current topics, helping develop skills needed



Third Place FFA Banner—
Sutton North & Mitch Garvin

by tomorrow's citizens. Benefits include personal recognition and scholarship opportunities.

Three Pennsylvania soil and water conservation districts started Envirothon in 1979. By 1988, the idea had caught on and the first national contest was held. In 1993 Nova Scotia became the first of ten participating Canadian provinces. Cannon U.S.A., Inc. became the official sponsor in 1998. Caring corporate citizens, non-profit organizations and government agencies partnering to sponsor the 2010 national program are National Association of Conservations Districts (NACD), USDA National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Forest Service, Alcoa Foundation, American Electric Power, Inc., and Mead Westvaco Corporation. For more information about North American Envirothon go to <http://www.envirothon.org/>

Oregon Envirothon was initiated in 1996. Marion Soil & Water

Conservation District (Marion SWCD) accepted the leadership role in 2001 and in 2003 developed a partnership with Julie Woodward at Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI). Since then the yearly competition has been held at The Oregon Garden. Marion SWCD Education Coordinator, Ron Crouse, assumed coordination in 2006. These two individuals have put many hours into guiding the training available to advisors and students, developing materials, and organizing the competition. In 2009 it was

determined that to improve and expand the program additional support should be sought. Oregon Envirothon became established as a 501c3 nonprofit corporation which began to recruit a board of directors, technical advisors and both public and private sponsorship.

Combining hands-on activities with traditional classroom experiences makes learning more fun.

The first training session began on a rainy March Monday when six FFA individuals from Crater High School, departed for The Oregon Garden to tour the competition site. OFRI forestry instruction included tree identification, map reading, learning to estimate tree size, calculation of board feet, harvest laws, forest products, and wildlife habits at varied stages of growth. They returned home after a long damp day excited and functioning as a team.

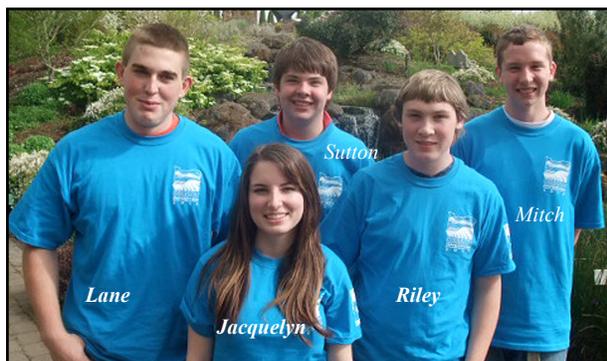
Another hands-on experience took

place at the Denman Wildlife Refuge. ODFW biologist, Steven Niemela, shared tips on mammal identification using skulls, pelts, teeth, horns and tracks. Game laws and hunter safety questions were asked and answered. Jackson SWCD Natural Resource Engineer, EIT, Dan Scalas, came to the Crater Ag Lab to help the group practice a soil scientist’s method for determining soil texture and its sand, silt, and clay content. He showed them how to use the Web Soil Survey mapping and information system. The small group interaction with these professionals and the materials they work with made printed materials come alive.



Teams of five students train and compete in the areas of Aquatic Ecology, Forest Ecology, Soils and Land Use, Wildlife Ecology, and a Current environmental issue relating to a particular ecosystem.

The 2011 current environmental issue is “SALT & FRESH WATER ESTUARIES.” Salt-water estuaries are semi-enclosed areas where salt water and freshwater mix. Freshwater estuaries are regions where lake and river waters mix. Estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems on earth and



Crater FFA Team Members

This young Crater Team —Lane Auguston, Sutton North, Riley Callahan, Mitch Garvin, and Jacquelyn Brown— really appreciated the help from the above named people and look forward to working with them next year. Others who contributed to the Team’s success were the PARENTS, FFA advisors Kristin Kostman and Jesse Warntjes, DEQ’s Heather Tugaw, and the JSWCD Staff and Board.

have been considered by some to be second only to rainforests in productivity. If vacation travels take you to the Oregon coast, check out the exhibits at South Slough for the forests, soils, aquatic, and wildlife habitat found there. If these natural resource concerns stimulate interest for any teenager you know, encourage them to learn more about CANNON ENVROTHON (<http://www.envirothon.org/>) and contact the Ag or Environmental instructors in your high school.



The winning team with Marilyn Rice, JSWCD-Director at Large & Education Coordinator

One Oregon Team will earn the right to compete July 22 – 28, 2011 at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada.

For more information regarding local teams and the Oregon Envirothon contact Jackson SWCD. (541-776-4270 ext.3)



Across the City Fence

By Vicki Simpson, Urban & Community Resource Conservationist

How Does Graywater Fit into Our Future?

Graywater is the lightly used wastewater from your bathtub, sink, shower, and washing machine. In Oregon and a few other states, graywater is also the wastewater from your kitchen sink. In the near future, Oregonians will soon be able to use all this graywater to irrigate trees and plants in their yards.

People have been reusing water for years. Not very long ago, old ringer clothes washers were used outside on a porch and as the clothes were soaped and rinsed, the wash water was poured onto plants in the yard. Today, there are home washing machines, as well as large commercial laundries, which reuse the rinse water from the last load to soap the next batch. After that, the graywater goes down the drain to the sewer.

Up until now, in the Oregon codes, the only legally sanctioned way to use graywater has been with a small system under the bathroom vanity which treats sink wastewater for use in flushing the toilet. But a law passed last year, called House Bill 2080, made using graywater for outdoor irrigation legal. The law states that the new rules for using graywater must minimize the burden of permit requirements on property owners. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is directed to develop these new rules.

A fifteen member Citizens Graywater Advisory Committee is looking into possible health and safety issues involved in graywater use in order to make recommendations to a DEQ rules-making committee. The final rules should be approved about a



year and a half from now when the process of deliberation, public input, and final approval by the Environmental Quality Commission is completed.

In 2009, Oregon House Bill 2080 made using graywater for outdoor irrigation legal. The DEQ is directed to develop new rules—minimizing the burden of permit requirements on property owners. Final rules due out in a year and a half.

What is involved in Graywater use?

At your home or business, you have to collect the graywater in some way, decide where you want it to go on your landscape, and figure out how to distribute it to those places.

Collecting graywater can be as simple as using a bucket to empty the tub or as complicated as installing a sand filter-pump/underground-drip system. There are many options in-between. The simpler and less expensive the system, the more likely it will be easier to maintain and use. You can start with a “laundry to landscape” system where you re-plumb your washing machine drain so that you can turn a valve to switch drain water either to outdoor irrigation pipes or to the sewer if you are washing dirty diapers. You can plumb a single fixture such as the shower to drain outside, sending graywater along a mulched furrow to irrigate plants or trees. With more thought and planning, you can install a dual plumbing system under your house that collects the graywater from all fixtures (except the toilet, of course) and sends it through pipes to different parts of the yard.

Gravity is an important point to consider. It is best to avoid using pumps to distribute graywater if you are trying to keep your energy use down and keep your system as simple and inexpensive as possible. So, you need to consider how to collect your graywater so that it exits the house uphill of your landscaping. A solution may be to plumb several fixtures so that they deliver water to the landscape on one side of the house. Then plumb the rest of the fixtures so that their wastewater exits the opposite side of the house; thus irrigating the landscape using gravity for delivery on both sides.

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Graywater

(Continued from page 8)

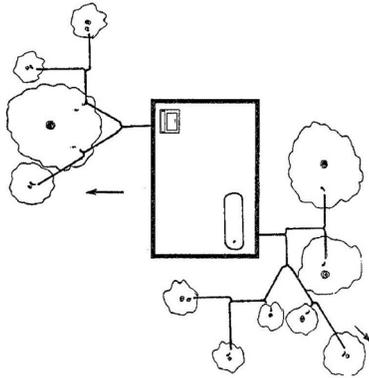


Illustration by Oasis Designs/Art Ludwig

Cautions about Graywater Use

It is important to minimize animal and human contact with graywater, because it can contain organic matter or potentially pathogenic microorganisms. For that reason, graywater pipes have to be clearly marked “non-potable water--do not drink”. In some states, purple pipe is used. Graywater can be stored in a tank or drum to let it cool down enough to be delivered to the landscape later. However, graywater turns to black water after about 24 hours and smells bad, so it is best to store it only for a short time.

What goes down your drains will affect your plants and the health of your soil. You will want to avoid putting any harsh chemicals down your drain. The kind of soap you use is also critical. Salts which act as fillers in most powdered detergents accumulate in the soil and hamper the ability of plants and organisms to take up nutrients. Liquid soaps are generally better to use because they contain less salts. There are some soaps on the market that are especially suited for graywater use.

Some people are concerned about the use of kitchen sink graywater because it does contain more patho-

gens than graywater from other areas of the house. Kitchen sink water also contains oils and fats that can clog pipes and soil. There have never been any reports recorded in the United States of adverse health effects from use of graywater. A Canadian study done last year found that, although untreated kitchen graywater does contain higher levels of fecal coliform and fecal streptococci, no significant difference was found between crops irrigated with tap water and those irrigated with untreated kitchen graywater--both were safe. Using different size screens can remove large particles of food waste before the kitchen graywater goes out to the landscape. There are also grease traps that can be installed under the sink or an enzyme grease remover called a “Grease Gremlin”. But, people who use plants to treat graywater in “mini wetlands” or “living machines” say that the grease

Graywater is discharged at least 2" above the surface of the mulch, into which it quickly disappears. Requires the most fall, but is much simpler to maintain and the added health risk is minimal.

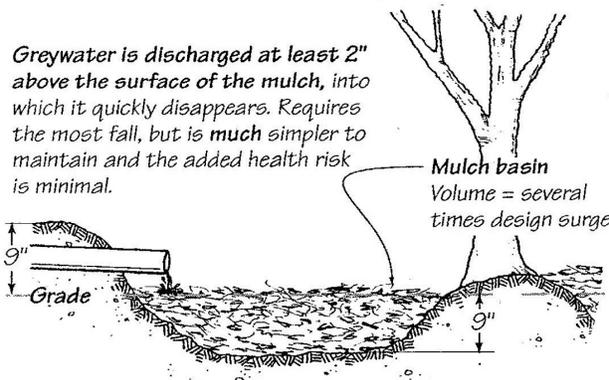


Illustration by Oasis Designs/Art Ludwig

and oils are a welcome addition of nutrients that increases the plants ability to filter graywater.

Graywater use is a hands-on activity. The system needs to be checked regularly for obstructions and leaks. Also, you want to know how your plants are doing; are they getting enough water or too much?

How Much Graywater Does A Family Generate?

Art Ludwig, a graywater guru with 30 years of experience around the world constructing graywater systems, says that you can expect to cover about 35% of your irrigation needs with graywater use. An average family of four in Oregon uses about 100 gallons of water per day per person. About 60% of that amount is usable graywater. So that family would generate about 240 gallons of graywater a day that could be used for irrigation purposes. You can look for Art Ludwig’s books and DVD’s at <http://www.oasisdesign.net/>, as well as, find many other online sources for information on graywater systems.

The Graywater Advisory Committee continues to discuss graywater issues, such as setbacks, proximity to water table, permitting, volumes of use, etc., you can add your comments to the discussion by contacting me either by email vicki@jswcd.org or phone 541-776-4270 ext. 120.

Let me know what you think and I will take your comments to the next meeting or post them on our Advisory Committee website.

We can get Oregon on the right track by reducing our demand on potable water, surface water, and groundwater by making rules that allow everyday people and businesses to utilize graywater to their best advantage..

See page 11 for information about a film that can be checked out from JSWCD on a graywater system.

Links to the Past

Old Iron—a tractor of times past!

By Ralph McKechnie

When I moved to the country, it was the culmination of a dream--both my own and that of my father. Both my grandfather and great grandfather owned farms, but both were gone by the time my dad turned six years old. So, my grandmother, with four kids to raise and very little income, did the only prudent thing. She sold the farm and the gun collection, the two things that really mattered to my father. It was tough times in those days, and a depression didn't help that much when they were already struggling.

I don't know how many times I heard of the farm while growing up, but it must have stuck with me, because as soon as I could, I moved from the city to the farm. It's no great acreage, but there is room enough to keep a dog or two, and grow a few things. It didn't take long, once here, to find that the riding lawn mower wasn't going to keep weeds and brush down, so I bought an old tractor. It was a 1946 Case Orchard tractor, but by golly, it was a real tractor. I also bought a Brush Hog rotary mower from a friend and I was in business.

The first season went fairly well with only minor inconveniences, so I bought a Disk Harrow, hoping to plant some wheat. Now, those old tractors have a maximum of 16 horsepower and that isn't at the drawbar, but on the belt pulley. So pulling something as heavy as the tractor itself, proved to be a bit of a challenge.

During the following year, the tractor didn't run quite as well and I

found that there were a lot of things I didn't know about tractors. My intent when buying the tractor wasn't to be a mechanic, but to till the earth.

Well, that changed quickly. First, the distributor had to be overhauled and then I wasn't getting any spark



to the plugs. That took a full year to figure out and it came about as the result of an accident. I wiggled one of the wires to the generator and it would work intermittently, but at the next startup it would just run the battery down. So the generator had to be overhauled—but only after replacing all the wiring.

There was a bad spot on the fly-wheel where the starter engaged, so it had to be rocked if it happened to stop in the wrong position. Often, the starter drive would stick so the starter had to periodically be removed to clean and lubricate the shaft. The hydraulics on those old tractors was a thing of beauty. They worked OK, but mine had been removed and replaced with a larger cylinder, also of questionable parentage. Then it finally gave up entirely. A friend rigged the Brush Hog so it was

useful, but the fix involved chaining the mover to the tractor.

Then I got another disk, and more trouble came with it. It was even heavier than the old disk, and when adjusted to do serious work it became almost impossible to pull.

Next, I bought a tractor for the parts and scavenged the manifold, the distributor, and a radiator only to find that the parts didn't help that much.

On a particularly hot day, the radiator blew and ordering a new one caused another long delay. I even paid for one, only to find that there was none left in the entire country. Eventually, I did find one in Minnesota,

which may have had some mysterious parentage, but it came and a couple of friends volunteered to put it on for me. It is still sitting under the carport—waiting for them to show up. It's been two years since it arrived.

In the interim, I had to hire the neighbor to mow the fields. His tractor, a big green and yellow machine did the job quite well. And it only cost me about what a down payment on a good tractor would have been.

During this last period of inactivity, my wife suggested that a "more modern" tractor might serve the purpose a little better. Armed with her blessing, I purchased a new Red tractor and—guess what? It has been working for the past two years

(Continued on page 11)

Old Iron

(Continued from page 10)

without any problem. I can pull the disk, grade the road with my blade, mow my fields in about one tenth the times it took previously—not counting the time for old tractor breakdowns. The new tractor starts even in cold weather.

I've used it to stretch fencing, pull posts—as well as drive posts, plow, mow, and a lot more. This Red tractor came with a loader on the front, a handy device when I've had to move dirt and assorted trees that have fallen to my chainsaw.

The moral to the story is: if you love to be a mechanic—get the old iron; if you need to do farm work—get a real tractor. The added cost has more than offset the anguish caused by the breakdowns of the old tractor. I guess you just have to decide which is more important.

I should add one more point that may be of interest to those with more experienced bodies—such as myself. Perhaps it's just me, but it seems those new padded vinyl seats make it a lot easier to “ride, boldly ride.”



*Jackson Soil and Water
Conservation District
Is here for you!
Give us a call!*

JSWCD Annual Agricultural Tour

August 5-8, 2010

The tour will focus on Holistic Management and will include sites in eastern Oregon and Washington. Tentatively, one and a half days will include instruction in Holistic Management.

Cost will range around \$250-\$300.
Deadline for \$100 down payment is July 3rd

*Important
DATE!*

Films Available for Checkout!!

Jackson SWCD has some informative films available in the office for checkout! For more information, call Markie at 541-776-4270 Ext. 101 or come by the office at 573 Parsons Drive, Suite 102. Check the list of titles available, especially the film regarding graywater systems.

Laundry to Landscape

Would you like to have your plants grow healthier? Or put that water from your washing machine to good use? This film explains the basics of easily doing both by having a “graywater system” connected to your house. In this film Art Ludwig explains in detail why water used in the sink, shower, washing machine, and dishwasher is safe and works well as a water and fertilizer for plants. He explains how to easily hook up some hoses and pipe to make a system appropriate for your property. This film is insightful and recommended if you are into saving money off your water or power bill, you would like your septic tank to be pumped less often and if you would like an innovative and possibly healthier way to consistently water plants around your home.

**Graywater legislation was signed into law in June of 2009, but final rules have not been developed. If you have experience with graywater systems or*

have concerns/ideas you would like the Graywater Advisory Committee to hear, please contact Vicki at vicki@jswcd.org or 541-776-4270 ext. 120.

The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil

Imagine farming with an extreme oil shortage. Many people in Cuba have done it with fascinating results. They have relatively high yields in crops and gained a much higher quality of life. This true story follows the old adage that necessity is the mother of invention in an amazing way. It is a microcosm and encouraging example of what steps can be taken to be able to live well, and farm well when oil becomes too expensive.

A Family Legacy: Succession Planning for Ranch and Farm Owners

The passing on of property can be an emotional and logistical challenge, but if the succession is not set up before hand the results can be disastrous for all those connected to that land. This informative film discusses why planning for the future of your farm or ranch is necessary and beneficial for children and employees of the property. This film raises hard questions that property owners and their successors benefit from hearing; it also directs people to the proper resources to deal with this often procrastinated task. The film may be lacking in the acting, but is highly suggested to anyone who owns a farm or ranch.



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e-mail markie.germer@jswcd.org

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2010 — Natural Resources Day Camp

For kids with an interest in the natural world, the Jackson Soils and Water Conservation District offers a weeklong educational day camp for youth entering grades 5-7. This is an outdoor education program focused on forestry, rangeland, and farm management. Campers will leave the camp with a sense of stewardship for our natural resources and will have acquired valuable skills and knowledge through hands-on learning and activities.

Camp Dates: June 21-25, 2010
Registration closes: June 11, 2010
Cost: \$50

- **Show** your strength moving irrigation hand line
- **Calculate** how much forage rangeland produces
- **Catch** beetles to learn how beneficial insects keep pests under control
- **Dig** into soil to see how water keeps plants alive
- **Learn** how your vegetables are grown
- **Build** a model of a home that harvests rainwater to irrigate edible landscaping
- **Watch** the sun's path to learn about solar heat gain and shading
- **Look** into a beehive and learn about pollination and honey production



Be sure to register by June 11th

Come and have fun!