



THE CONSERVATIONIST

JACKSON SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NEWSLETTER

FALL 2008 VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

Jackson SWCD Brings Home 2008 Awards!

Congratulations JSWCD!

At the recent Oregon Association of Conservation District (OACD) Annual Meeting and Convention held in Newport, Oregon, Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District received several awards. The District is proud to announce the following 2008 Award Winners.

Director of the Year:

Charlie Boyer

Charlie has been a District Board Member for 10 years. During his tenure he has worked to insure that the District maintains positive working relationships with local watershed councils, OSU Extension Service, and all government agencies in Jackson County. He worked on the development of a 10-week forage resource management class three years ago and is still one of the main instructors.

Charlie opened the door for the idea of the "Jackson County Rural Living Handbook". This handbook has been used as a template by several other counties and has been requested by districts and counties in states such as California, Idaho, Washington, Missouri, North Dakota, and Alaska. The District has dispersed over 13,000 copies and is starting on the third edition. Many activities keep Charlie very busy. He never gets discouraged, just charged up in a way that makes what seems impossible a reality.

(Continued on page 6)



In This Issue:

Director Profile—Niedermeyer	2
Chair's Corner	3
'Have a Green Christmas'	4
Annual Celebration Invitation	5
Japanese Knotweed	8
OACD Essay Contest Winners	9
Getting the Mail to Climax—II	11
Waste to Energy, Heat, Fuel	12

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, Natural Resources Specialist

Heidi Wacker, Public Education & Outreach Coordinator/Grant Writer

Markie Germer, Bookkeeper/Office Assistant

Margaret Meierhenry, Newsletter Editor

Board of Directors:

Charlie Boyer, Chair, Zone 4

Barbara Niedermeyer, Vice Chair, Zone 2

Keith Emerson, Secretary/Treasurer, Zone 1

Marilyn Rice, Director, at Large

Brian Gebhard, Director, Zone 3

Keith Corp, Director, Zone 5

Allan Campbell III, Director, At Large

Associate Directors:

Ed Vaughn Martha Straube

Bob Lozano Margaret Meierhenry

Office Hours:

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:**

Nicola Giardina, District Conservationist

Peter Winnick, Soil Conservationist

Bill Cronin, Irrigation Engineer

Farm Service Agency**Staff:**

Joe Hess, County Executive Director

Diane Rabbe, Program Technician

Donna Finch, Program Technician

County Committee members:

LAA 1 - Suzanne Ginet, Chair

LAA 2 - Mel Morris

LAA 3 - Lori Mefford

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(541) 734-3143
markie.germer@jswcd.org

Director Profile

Barbara Niedermeyer

Vice Chair, Zone 2

Editors Note: This is the fourth in a series introducing Jackson SWCD Board of Directors.



Barbara lives in the Applegate Valley on the Elmore Family Ranch Century Farm where she grew up. She is proudly married to Robert, who is a farmer, and has 3 grown children. She and Bob take care of her 93-year-old mother's flock of sheep.

She has been a 4-H Leader since 1976. Barbara has also been a member of the Applegate Valley Historical Society since 1990 and became Secretary/Treasurer in 1996. She was heavily involved with the Applegate School as a volunteer for 15 years. Barbara enjoys bowling and has been a participant in the bowling league for over 17 years.

Barbara was elected to the Jackson SWCD Board in 1993. She has served as Vice-Chair for the last 2 years. She was elected as the Vice President of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts in 2005, and that term ends December of 2009. For the last few months she has been Acting President of OACD as the President was hurt in a farming accident. He is expected to be back at the helm by February of 2009.

Barbara believes we all are in some way 'conservationists' and that there are lots of good things that people do on a daily basis that go unnoticed. Many people who have grown up out in the country take for granted the beauty of our surroundings. She says, "It is important that we help preserve the beauty of our natural resources for future generations."

Fred Straube Memorial Scholarship Fund for High School Seniors and/or College Freshman

Apply at Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District
573 Parsons Drive, Medford, OR 97701 541 773-3143

Please join us for the Districts Annual Celebration
and Annual Auction

Friday, January 16, 2009 6:00 – 9:00 PM

OSU Extension Center Auditorium, 659 Hanley Road, Central Point

All Auctions proceeds go to the Fred Straube Memorial Fund!
Come and join in the FUN!!

Chair's Corner

By Charlie Boyer — District Board Chairman



First off, I would like to thank all those citizens who called to check Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District out before they cast their votes in the election--November 4, 2008. I always get a good feeling when I have an opportunity to talk about what the District **is** and what programs and services we can offer to the people in Jackson County.

Second, I would like to thank the voters for returning the incumbent directors back for one more term. These board members are dedicated to conservation of soil, water, and all other natural resources in Jackson County and across the state of Oregon. They represent a broad spectrum of experience and ideas on how the District can best carry out its mission helping landowners do the best job of managing their properties to achieve their individual goals. The District Board and Staff work with a broad range of partners; such as watershed councils, Oregon State University Extension Service, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Department of Wildlife, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service.

Third, I would like to thank and congratulate the District Staff for outstanding work and professionalism over the last year. They received recognition from the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts with the **Director of the Year** award, as having the **Outstanding District Education Program**, the **Outstanding District Newsletter**, and **Employee of the Year-District Manager, Randy White**.

The District Staff have earned this recognition for:

- Providing a 10 week intensive training course on how to better manage the forage resources on their land to 18 individuals representing 14 operations; developing and presenting the Smart Horse Certification program to teach horse owners how to manage their animals better to reduce soil movement and keep our streams and lakes cleaner.
- Developing and implementing our landowner assistance program to provide a cost share program to help prevent potential or correct current resource problems that require immediate action.
- Developing a quarterly newsletter that is readable and informative, as well as, sending out monthly post cards to notify people of upcoming events.
- Assisting numerous landowners to develop comprehensive management plans for their properties to be implemented over a period of years to protect natural resources while still providing for economic uses.

Best of all we did it by working as a team with the District Board and our partners.

It has been a great growing year for Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District and we would like to thank each of you for your continued support.

Charlie

Across the City Fence

Compiled by JSWCD Staff



Have a Green Christmas

And Other Ideas for a Low-impact Holiday Season!

Perhaps more than any other time of year, our nation's wealth and prosperity is shown during the holiday season. Even in these uncertain economic times, we enjoy a standard of living that few in the world know. Along with that prosperity comes waste, and often, waste in abundance. Here are a handful of ways to green your holiday season!

Enjoy a living Christmas tree! There's nothing more authentic than a true, living tree. If you plan ahead, your tree can either be planted in your yard or you can plant it at a school or other public facility. (Just get permission first!) Consider what type of tree you want, what size tree you can handle, whether the branches and needles will hang your ornaments, and how you will water it indoors. Remember too that living Christmas trees need to be in a cool location and probably won't last as long as a cut tree. Living trees do require more planning and work, but it's well worth it!



Give gifts a new wrap!

Use newspaper comics, or other used paper, to wrap your gifts. Personalize your gifts by drawing on the paper or mixing and matching different types and color of paper. If you prefer a

more polished look, use gift bags and paper that can be reused over and over. If the wrapping paper can't be reused, Rogue Disposal and Recycling will accept it as long as it doesn't have foil or plastic. Unfortunately, tissue paper can't be recycled yet, so be creative and find other ways of wrapping your gifts, such as a decorated pillow case for a bottle of wine, a nice kitchen towel to wrap a kitchen item, or homemade cloth bags made from fabric scraps. Homemade gifts are always appreciated too!

Think about leftovers! Most of us cook way more food than can be consumed by those at the table. Buy less or have a plan to refrigerate or freeze leftovers so they aren't wasted. Many household magazines contain recipes for leftovers that disguise your sixth straight day of turkey as something you actually want to eat. Plan ahead by deciding which recipes you will use, how much to freeze per container and how to prepare the food to make meal preparation easy.

Take the green to brown—if you haven't already, start a compost pile! The composting process is fascinating, fun and surprisingly easy. What a great way to get rid of produce trimmings, yard waste, and even shredded paper and some types of disposable plates and utensils. Remember the

manure exchange as a source of nitrogen for your pile. If you start now, you'll have great compost for next year's garden and yard. Don't have enough for a good pile? Ask your neighbors to contribute!

Do a gift exchange!

Pull names from a hat rather than everyone getting a gift for every single person. This helps on the budget!

Think durable! Think experiences! Create memories by giving tickets for mini-vacations, give home-made delicacies, or purchase truly useful and long-lasting gifts rather than items that will end up in a landfill or collecting dust on a shelf.

Share the catalogs you get! If you never buy from a catalogue, call and ask to be taken off their mailing list. Most manufacturers have online catalogues that you can browse without the heft of a catalogue. Your mail carrier will thank you too!

Carpool! Share a ride to the mall when you go shopping, to holiday parties, and to relatives for the holidays. Plan ahead so just one trip to the mall will do. Consider mass transit, and you won't have to worry about finding a parking place!

Collect pieces of nature from your own yard to decorate for the holidays! Handmade decorations are more welcoming and much less expensive. Depending on how they are made, many can be composted when the holidays are done.

Think about Lighting! While holiday lights do bring cheer, consider that less can be more (for the environment and your pocketbook!) Plan to put just a few lights where they add visual punch or class. Equally important, put your lights on a timer so they turn on when it gets dark and turn off when most go to sleep. Not only will you save electricity, but also you and your neighbors will sleep better in a darker night. Another thought on the Christmas lights is that you could turn them on a week later than normal (which also allows you and your family to slow down to fully enjoy Thanksgiving!).

Come up with your own great ideas! Don't forget to let us know how you are greening your holiday season.



Here's wishing you a green holiday season from JSWCD!



Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District
 573 Parsons Drive, Suite 102, Medford, Oregon 97501
 Telephone: (541) 734-3143 Fax: (541) 776-4295

YOU ARE INVITED!

Please be our guest at the Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District's

Annual Celebration

When: Friday, January 16, 2009, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Where: OSU Extension Service Auditorium, 659 Hanley Rd, Central Point

Enjoy cowboy poetry by Leon Flick, desserts, awards, and an auction to benefit the Fred Straube Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Our annual celebration is open to all. Please RSVP by January 9, 2009.

541-734-3143

JSWCD Partners with other Agencies

— Working Together for Resource Management



By Gail Grogan Perrotti
 Seven Basins Watershed
 Council Coordinator

Watching a large salmon work its way upstream to spawn is one of the best, and most exciting sights of the fall season. We are fortunate in the Seven Basins watershed to have a great location to view spawning, at Valley of the Rogue State Park.

The Seven Basins Watershed Council hosted the 3rd annual **See Our Salmon** (SOS) event Saturday, October 11 at Valley of the Rogue State Park. This family oriented event provided fun activities and displays for residents and visitors alike to learn about salmon and the watershed



that we all inhabit.

This year's event was better than ever. Games, getting into the water to look for macro invertebrates (water bugs), and of course, viewing spawning salmon was on the agenda for the day. The



Jackson SWCD joined us for the first time this year bringing popular storm water activities and education. Other partners included the Middle Rogue Watershed Council, the Oregon Department of Forestry, US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and Jackson County OSU Extension.

2008 Awards

(Continued from page 1)



His willingness to go the extra mile to help has earned the respect of all the staff and everyone else with whom he works. You may not always agree with him, but YOU ALWAYS KNOW WHERE HE

STANDS on any subject.

Employee of the Year:

Randy White

Sponsor: Jane Keppinger – District Manager, Marion SWCD



Ms. Keppinger says, “Randy White exemplifies what it means to be a district manager. Randy came to Jackson SWCD over 4 years ago, he previously worked as a Jackson County Extension Agent. He brought his years of expertise in natural resources, programs management, and respect for the local community.

Since Randy has been with Jackson SWCD, he has assisted the board and district in passing a local tax rate levy. He assisted in the production of the first landowner handbook (Jackson County Rural Living Handbook), which has been replicated across the state. The horse pasture-training course (SMART HORSE-Stewardship Certification Program) that the district offered fills every time it is offered, and now Randy and his staff are working to share their successful program with other districts across the state.

Randy has a positive get-it-done attitude that makes him a pleasure to work with. It is apparent from the many activities of his board members that Randy inspires the same attitude to others he works with. I know of no other district that can boast two OACD board members and a SWCC board member.”

OACD Cooperator of the Year

—Southwest Basin—:

Margaret Meierhenry

Stan and Margaret purchased their small 15-acre farm in 1974. As their kids went off to college to pursue their own careers, Margaret realized they could use some help in planning a management program that would allow them to stay on the property, but be easy for her to do the work. Enhancing her natural resource stewardship was of up-most importance to Margaret. To do this she worked closely with Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District to develop a Resource Stewardship Plan and now she was ready to start down the road of implementing a stocker operation and practicing rotational grazing.

In addition to her hard work at her own property, Margaret works tirelessly on a volunteer basis for the JSWCD. She has been a JSWCD volunteer since 2001. Currently, she serves as an associate director, is involved in the Forage and Ranch Resource Management group (FARRM), helps manage the JSWCD contact database, and helps with outreach for the district. She has served as the Districts newsletter editor on a volunteer basis for the past four years and always jumps in to volunteer for educational article writing for the publication. For her extensive volunteer and stewardship work Margaret has won the

Watershed Friendly Steward Award in 2007 as well as the volunteer of the year award for JSWCD in 2005 and 2006.



At the age of 65, Margaret’s willingness to change with the times and be innovative in her management practices has helped her and her family achieve their goals for their property. If she can do it you can too!

Her involvements with her community and the JSWCD and the example that she has set have been

(Continued on page 7)

2008 Awards

(Continued from page 6)

invaluable. The JSWCD would like to honor Margaret for her stewardship and involvement.

Outstanding District Education Program

The District’s outreach and education programming is very diverse and has expanded rapidly in the past year. JSWCD focuses education efforts on students and youth, adults, and agencies and partnering organizations. All of the District’s education efforts are strongly aligned with our goals and mission and we feel that conservation education is the key to creating community stewardship values in Jackson County.

The JSWCD strives to bring our education programming to as many people as possible and often involves the local media. Forest and Range Day Camp was covered on local television stations and many of our education events are covered in local

newspapers. Some of the educational programs include the Smart Horse Stewardship Certification Program, the Manure Exchange, Forest and Range Day Camp, a 10-week Forage Resource Management Course, and



a Horses and Wilderness Seminar.

JSWCD’s diverse educational events, which strive toward a countywide stewardship ethic, are an excellent model for engaging education programming. The District worked with several organizations and agencies to put on a countywide weed event called “Let’s Pull Together”. JSWCD was also involved with the 5th Annual Bear Creek Salmon Festival, the

Rap Camp, Rain Barrel Workshop, and presented an interactive education display at the Home Show. The District looks forward to continuing and expanding these programs.

Outstanding District Newsletter

At the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD), our newsletter *The Conservationist* is an important link between the staff and the community that we serve. We use our newsletter not only to keep citizens, other organizations, and interested parties up to date on what we have accomplished and what upcoming events may be of interest to them, but also to provide education and practical stewardship advice that is locally relevant.

The JSWCD newsletter is an important piece in our districts education and outreach efforts. In addition to continually adding to our contacts and mailing list, we bring the newsletter to all events where JSWCD is represented. This quarterly publication includes a relevant sampling of what we have done and what we will offer in the future as a District. *The Conservationist* is a publication that allows new contacts to see what role Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District takes in the community and what role they, the reader, can take in local stewardship.



OACD Essay Contest

Two local students won the “Water is Life Essay” contest for their age groups. Please see page 9 to learn from their essays!

Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*)

has many common names, but no matter the name, this plant is weedy and very invasive. It is non-native and invades riverbanks, wet seeps, and open disturbed sites. Since Japanese Knotweed grows from stout underground stems (rhizomes) it spreads aggressively and sends many shoots up forming large, dense clumps that degrade streamside habitats. This can be a detriment to fish and other wildlife.

The plant grows from six to 10 feet tall in a season then dies back, often leaving the frost-killed bronze colored, upright stems to remain through winter. The bamboo-like hollow stems may have purple speckles, but do have distinctive reddish-brown, papery remnant (a sheath) at stem joints where the leaves attach. The green leaves are large, often six to nine inches long, wide at the base, but tapering abruptly to a sharp tip. The upper surface of Japanese Knotweed has an extremely fine-sandpaper feel. In late summer, lacey-white flower sprays emerge, hence the common name fleece flower.

Japanese Knotweed is appearing across the state. It spreads primarily by broken stem fragments that are easily dispersed by flowing water, although seeds may be spread by water or by birds. The often-dense infestations can restrict public access along riverbanks for recreation and fishing.

If you have creeks, gravel bars, or any wetland margins on your property, be aware of this very invasive plant; also avoid planting any horticultural species of this group of plants. Once Japanese Knotweed becomes established it is very difficult to remove. A herbicide spray may not remove the plant entirely due to the network of roots



(Photo courteous of Elaine Haug @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database)

below the ground. Removing the roots and surrounding soil and bagging all the material may have some success. The disposal site is also critical, so check landfill offices before dumping.

For replanting in wet sites, there are some interesting alternative native plants that do well. Plants to consider are: Red Osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea ssp. occidentalis*), Ninebark (*Physocarpus capitatus*), Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*), and many native willows (*Salix* spp.).



Kitchen Corner

Gingersnap Cookies

These are the best gingersnaps ever. In an airtight container, gingersnaps are crisp--left out, they are chewy. Try some both ways. This recipe was originally found in the Penzeys Spices catalog.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 2 cups flour | ¼ cup molasses-either regular or unsulphured |
| 2 tsp. Baking soda | 1 tsp. Ginger, powdered |
| ¼ tsp. Salt | 1 tsp. Cinnamon, powdered |
| ¾ cup vegetable shortening | ½ tsp. Cloves powdered |
| 1 cup sugar | 1/3 cup granulated white sugar (to roll dough in) |
| 1 large egg | |

Sift flour, baking soda, and salt together, set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat shortening and sugar until well blended. Beat in egg, molasses, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves. Add the flour mixture in two parts, blending well. Shape the dough into a ball, cover and refrigerate overnight or at least 2 hours. Preheat oven to 350 deg. Shape dough into 1 1/2" balls for large cookies – smaller is fine too. Roll the balls thoroughly in sugar, place on ungreased cookie trays. The cookies spread out during baking, so don't crowd them. Bake 15 minutes. Cool for a minute, then remove from cookie sheets. Store in an airtight container for crisp cookies or in a regular cookie jar for chewy cookies.

Yield: 40-60 cookies Prep. Time: 10 minutes plus chilling. Baking time: 30 minutes total (2 sheets @ 15 minutes each)

If you have a favorite recipe to share, send it along to msmeier@jeffnet.org

**Oregon Association of Conservation Districts
Essay Contest Winners!**



Harvesting the Rain

By Claire Glandman

Claire Gladman is 12 years old and in the 7th grade and home schooled – Connections Academy. Her hobbies are reading and riding horses. Claire also enjoys raising and showing livestock for 4H.

I stepped out of the van and into the rain at the Village Green Resort in Cottage Grove. All of a sudden I heard a soft tinkling sound and saw a chain of metal cups hanging from one of the hotel's gutters. Outside every few hotel doors, water was running from the roof and down a chain. It splashed onto the rocks and plants below and made a very pretty picture. The rain chain was enchanting and I was intrigued by its beauty.

When I returned home, I used the Internet to research this apparently new technological invention. I discovered all sorts of things. Rain chains originated in Japan where they are called “*kusari doi*”. They have been used for hundreds of years in Japanese homes and temples to collect rainwater for washing and to water plants. Rain chains come in many forms – some look like chain rings, others like a horizontal string of small copper cups or lotus flowers. The chains are most often made from copper because it is recy-

clable, shines in the sun and ages to a rich patina over time. A rain chain makes a beautiful alternative to a downspout off a gutter. Instead of rain running off your roof and into the storm drain, it can be captured and used again. Rain chains are useful as well as beautiful because you can place a decorative pot or water storage container under your rain chain and harvest rain water to water your plants. This helps save a precious resource. For every inch of rain on a 500 square foot rain catchment you collect 300 gallons of water, and, unlike traditional gutters, rain chains rarely become clogged with debris. As an added benefit, with every rain, a rain chain provides the sight and sound of a vertical waterfall.

On our farm, we raise and harvest many things including; pasture, sheep, pigs, cattle, and eggs. Now we are learning how to harvest our own water with our very own rain chain. Our rain chain is not only mesmerizing to watch and soothing to listen to, but it is helping us harvest the rain.

Water: Our Uniting Factor

By: Mark Gladman

Acqua, wasser, agua, vanduo, eau, nepo, su, water... Every language in existence, throughout the entire world has a word for water. There is not a single living organism that does not require water, and humans are made up of fifty to seventy percent water. Water is soothing to the spirit and provides sustenance to the body; its beauty inspires and is captured in both art and music. We bathe in it, we drink it, we even use it in many rituals and ceremonies. It shapes our planet, and yet the Earth's surface is made up of no more than three percent fresh water. Approximately two-thirds of that water, however, is frozen, and of little use to life in its present state. With the population of the Earth constantly increasing, and pollution becoming a greater and greater threat each year, we are on the verge of a crisis: running out of fresh water.

Unlike many of the plants and animals that have either been created with, or have developed methods to retain water and adapt to changing circumstances regarding hydration, humans are left with a simple truth:

Mark Gladman is a senior at Crater School of Business and attends RCC classes. He plans to attend OIT majoring in computer science next fall.

we need fresh water consistently or we will die. We cannot survive on seawater, we cannot live under

water, nor can we capture rain-water and ingest it through our skin like several desert lizards. We lose water through perspiration, urination and exhalation, and when we breathe out water vapor. Humans are roughly sixty percent water, though men carry slightly more, and women slightly less. Women should drink about three quarters of a gallon of water per day to stay safely hydrated, men should drink about one gallon. In a July 2007 estimate, the world's population totaled 6,602,224,175. With each of these people consuming an average of .80 gallons a day, the amount of fresh water required to sustain human life on Earth is astronomical; not to mention the fact that everything we eat must also be provided with water.



With these numbers, one cannot help but wonder: what can I do to help avert this catastrophe? There are many things anyone and everyone, regardless of age, can do to provide aid. Shut off the sink when you are brushing your teeth, try to limit the lengths of your showers, install flow regulators in your house, turn off unneeded hoses and sprinklers and never leave water running when you do not need it. If we all join together to conserve our water and other natural resources, we will ensure a world that is still alive for our children and grandchildren to inherit. Water is life; conserve water, save lives.

Winter is the time to plan!

As days get shorter and nights get colder, it's easy to get into hibernation mode. But WAIT! Winter is the perfect time to plan. Don't get too lazy, because spring will be here before you know it. With spring come all the opportunities for that new irrigation system, maybe a spring planting or fertilization, a larger pond, or any number of other projects. However, any of those projects requires planning, and planning takes time.

If you already have a plan, winter is a great time to revisit the plan. Have any changes been made in the stakeholders? Do you have less time to devote? Have you met a goal? Do you need to add a new goal or challenge? Remember to share this planning process with family members and/or business partners to ensure that you are all on the same page.

We don't want to be planning when the time is right to be installing the project. The district is here to help you through the planning process, just call us at 734-3143 and we'll help you get started. But do it now! Plan while it's raining so you can make hay while the sun shines!



Forage Resource Management Course

Enrollment Open Now!

Class meets Thursdays Feb 19 - April 24, 2009

With Saturday Field Trips Ending in May

Course Fee: \$175

Learn how to:

- Increase vegetative health and vigor in your pastures
- Reduce soil movement in your fields
- Improve water quality on your property
- Improve wildlife habitat
- Improve livestock health and production
- Improve your bottom line
- Comply with Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Act

Call JSWCD at 541-734-3143 for more information



Links to the Past

Getting the Mail to Climax

—Part II—

By Stan Bennett

Editors Note: This is Part II of the article that appeared in the 2008 Spring issue of *The Conservationist*. This is the story of getting mail to the small community of Climax, Oregon on Antelope Creek from 1892-1992. The first two paragraphs from Part I are repeated to set the scene.

On this July day in 1992, Joanna drove her U. S. Postal Service vehicle four miles further up Antelope Creek than had been her custom. For the residents of Climax, it was a red-letter day. Mail delivery to this community was being restored after a fifty-year interruption.

The area known as Climax in Jackson County, Oregon is in the upper reaches of Antelope Creek approximately seventeen miles southeast of Eagle Point via Rile and East Antelope Roads.

Mail was first delivered to Climax early in 1892 and continued for fifty years until Camp White was activated in 1942. Then for another fifty years the residents in this community were without mail delivery. On July 25, 1952 mail service was restored.

Getting to Climax in the wet weather period could be quite a problem even as late as the 1930's as was related by S. H. Morse, a Postal Inspector, following up on a request to check the Climax Post Office. He relates:

"... I arrived at Eagle Point November 16, 1932 last with the intention of visiting Climax, ... but learned the road to that office was impassable for vehicles of all kinds ten miles south of Eagle Point and the mail was being carried by horseback the rest of the way" (He decided to try later.) "... on the 27th January, 1933 inquiry was again made with respect to the road to Climax and I was told it was closed by deep snow ..." [2]

The tradition of mail carriers is one of service and of public trust. It is one of faithfulness, firmness, integrity, honesty, dependability, and reliability. The inscription chiseled in stone on the façade of the New York City Post Office seems appropriate for Climax.

"Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from swift completion of their appointed rounds." [5]

About 1924 or possibly earlier, vehicles were used coming from Eagle Point along the route as far as the road was passable and then the remainder of the way the mail was carried on horseback. When Elmer Harnish carried the mail for his father Sam, he had several incidents in getting the mail through. One time when Elmer came to the ford across Antelope Creek the water was so high that neither he nor Milroy Charley on horseback on the other side could get across. So they threw a line across and sent

the mailbags across on the line. In another situation the creek was frozen over, but it didn't support the Model A and Elmer got stuck in the ice. A nearby resident, Marion Walter, pulled him out. [6] Gradually the number of residences diminished. When Camp White was activated the number of people living in the Climax community had fallen to four people, Lester and Mabel Wertz, Lloyd Adamson, and Milroy Charley. Access to the area through Camp White was by passes at the guard station. Mail for these people was delivered to the post offices in Eagle Point and Medford.

After Camp White closed down, the land was made available to the public in 1947-1948 and as development progressed the rural delivery was restored in sections. Rural services or extensions of old ones have been traditionally established on the number of families served by travel miles. In 1915, four families per mile were required for a rural route. In 1953, the number was reduced to three families per mile and in 1958 the number was further reduced to two families per mile. [5]

The Army improved Antelope Road during Camp White days to about the 13-mile post. In 1947, Jackson County constructed a bridge replacing a ford across Antelope Creek just before the 13-mile post. In the late '60's the rural route was extended to a point past the 13-mile post at the foot of road grade known as Tenderfoot Hill. At this point the mail was delivered to the row of mailboxes for everyone living further up the creek.

In recent times development continued. More people acquired the homesteads. Parcels of land were divided and homes were built. Driving the road today, one doesn't see all the residences. Most are located away from the creek on the slopes above.

In 1992 Roger and Shirley O'Donal, residents of the Climax area, contacted the Postal Service with the idea of having the mail route extended. With the help of the Postal Service they circulated a petition listing all the people who would be served by the extension of the route. The proposal was approved and the first day of delivery to the Climax community since 1942 was on July 26, 1992.

The mail route now ends at the old Worlow-Hanson-Wertz residence [8] about 17 miles from White City or Eagle Point where a sign announces that you are in the Climax Community.

[2] *Oregon Postal History Journal* 1983 Vol. 111 No. 1

[5] U. S. Mail, Arthur E. Summerfield, 1960

[6] Information furnished by Elmer Harnish, who was Road Supt. for Jackson County for many years.

[8] The residence, the only one left of the early era, was built by Jacob Worlow prior to 1898 and is now occupied by Norma Jean (Wertz) Bennett, granddaughter of N. P. Hanson, and her husband. The old residence was replaced with a new home in 1997.



**Jackson Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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Waste to Energy, Heat & Fuel

Dr. Frank Mitloehner serves as director for the Agricultural Air Quality Center at UC Davis, and is an Associate Professor and Air Quality Cooperative Extension Specialist in the Department of Animal Sciences. He is an expert in air quality and is known for his practical and positive approaches to the problems our society faces.

Date: December 11, 2008
Time: 3:00—5:30 pm
Location: Medford Library

Wood Scraps, manure and other "waste" can create electricity, heat our homes and fuel our cars. Come learn how other communities are using this technology and how we can use it here in the Rogue Valley.



Upcoming Events

December 11, 2008

Waste to Energy,
Heat and Fuel

January 9, 2009

Deadline: RSVP
Annual Meeting

January 16, 2009

Annual Meeting

January 23, 2009

Build Your Own Rain
Barrel Workshop

February 5, 2009

Deadline: Sign up for
Forage Course

February 19, 2009

Forage Course Begins