



# THE CONSERVATIONIST

## JACKSON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

FALL 2007 VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

### Forage Class Helped Landowner to Fall in Love With His Land

*By Angie Boudro — JSWCD Natural Resource Conservationist*

Pat Burch was perfectly happy living in town. He and Marji Luther had a house in Ashland that was within a few years of being paid off, and Pat knew that was one step closer to being able to eventually retire. But Marji wanted horses, so she began searching for rural property. According to Pat, Marji repeatedly dragged him to look at a piece of property north of Ashland. It was winter, cold, and windy, but eventually she won and they purchased the 18 acre farm in the foothills overlooking Ashland.

Neither Pat nor Marji have a background in agriculture. Marji is a school teacher, and Pat is a plumber. The plan was to hire a land manager who would run his cattle on the property and do the irrigation. As time went on, however, the management and the land were in disarray. First he asked for information and help from his neighbors on how to control blackberries and manage his wetland area, and eventually turned to the phone book and found the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). In turn, they asked Randy White of the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD) to respond, and he came to the property armed with brochures and handouts on natural resource management and NRCS cost-share and incentive programs.

As Pat and Marji learned more, they also became more and more interested in managing the land and its natural resources. They enrolled in the Forage Resource Management Class, which is taught every spring by the JSWCD. The class was really valuable to Pat. He says it excited him that he could do something good for the environment and good for the land without having to completely redo it. He learned that an intact, functioning pasture system is a very valuable ecosystem that is good for wildlife, the air, soil, and water and that the grazing animal was an integral part of it. He says the class tours were also very valuable. "It really piqued my interest to be more hands on", says Pat.

Although Pat truly wanted to manage the resources better, he knew that whatever they did on the farm also had to be compatible with his and Marji's goals and interests. She loves to travel, and he loves to raft. Both require being absent from the farm for periods of time, so when he was looking to install a new irrigation system, he wanted the most automatic and least labor intensive system available. He also needed the system to be affordable. In the past, the property was being irrigated with a combination of flood and hand-lines, and neither were systems that were working for Pat. Randy had suggested the pod system, but Pat was reluctant because it would require the purchase of an ATV. Bill Cronin, an irrigation specialist with NRCS, developed a big gun

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*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.*

## Dan Dagget to Speak at JSWCD Annual Meeting and Celebration



The Board of Directors are excited to announce that the District has retained Mr. Dan Dagget to speak at our annual meeting and celebration. Mr. Dagget is the author of *Beyond the Rangeland Conflict – Toward A West That Works*. In this book, Mr. Dagget profiles ten rancher-conservationist partnerships that demonstrate positive methods for creating sustainable ways of inhabiting the land.

He also authored *Gardeners of Eden – Rediscovering Our Importance To Nature*. In *Gardeners Of Eden*, Mr. Dagget's ideas fly in the face of our culture's ancient assumption that humans are separate from nature and of current notions that the best way for us to protect the land is to leave it alone. He demonstrates case after case of positive human engagement in the environment and of managed ecosystems and restored areas that are richer, more diverse, and healthier than unmanaged ones. Dagget's new environmentalism offers hopeful solutions to the current ecological crisis and a new purpose for our human energies and ideals. (The above information about Mr. Dagget's books was gleaned from the following website: [www.ecospeakers.com](http://www.ecospeakers.com))

**The annual meeting and celebration is set for January 18, 2008 at the OSU Jackson County Extension Auditorium.** We will be serving a Tri-tip Bar-B-Q, prepared by Mel Morris. The evening will also include many other fun activities including an auction to benefit the JSWCD Fred Straube Memorial Scholarship Fund. This fund helps our local youth with college expenses. Recipients are selected through an application process.

Please call the office at (541) 734-3143 for more information regarding the scholarship and to register for the Annual Meeting and Celebration on January 18, 2008.

### Jackson

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Heather Tugaw, Outreach/Grant Writer  
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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 17 0(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@or.nacdnet.net](mailto:markie.germer@or.nacdnet.net)**

### Chair's Corner

*By Charlie Boyer*

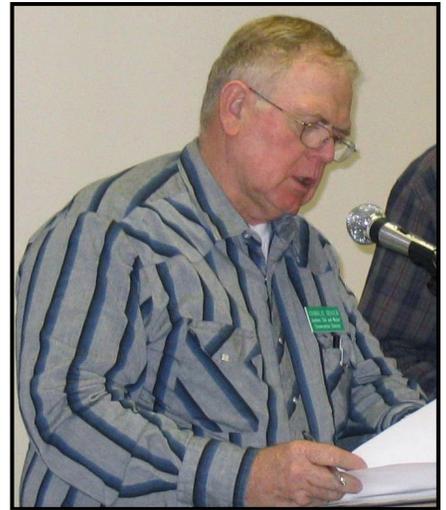
At this time a year ago, the Board of Directors, staff, and Friends of Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District were sitting on pins and needles waiting for the November 7th general election to be over. In question was whether Jackson County voters would pass the ballot measure that would give the District a permanent tax rate. Months of hard work were behind us and the results were unknown.

As you now know, the citizens of Jackson County were kind to us and passed the ballot measure in every precinct but one. It was a strong vote for natural resource conservation and agriculture in our county. That vote forever changed how the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District does business, now and into the future. For the first time in many years, the district board and staff are able to plan on ways of resolving natural resource conservation problems in the county based on the greatest needs, instead of chasing grant monies to work in areas that may not have been as important to maintaining the high quality of life and standard of living for the citizens of Jackson County.

The District will not realize this revenue until sometime this November, but we have not been idle. Guided by the District's vision statement and five-year strategic plan, we began to develop a budget to get the work done from July 1, 2007 until June 30, 2008. We have hired one new Natural Resource Specialist and a full time grant writer/public outreach person. The addition of new staff will allow us to meet all of our commitments to our partners in conservation and to landowners throughout the county.

So, on the anniversary of the passage of our permanent tax rate, I would like to thank the voters of Jackson County for supporting natural resource conservation by voting yes. I would like to thank the District's Board of Directors for their dedication and hard work over the last year to help develop a viable budget and for finding solutions to all of the little, and big, things that came up and needed solutions. I would like to thank our partners in resource conservation for their continued help and support as we go through potential 'growing pains'. And finally, I would like to thank our staff for the endless hours they have put in helping us through this process over the last year to assure that we met all the state budget law requirements and still help the people of Jackson County in implementing conservation practices and protect the natural resources of this county.

*Charlie*



*Angie Boudro  
Natural Resource Specialist*



*Markie Germer  
Bookkeeper/ Office Assistant*



*Randy White  
District Manager*



*Margaret Meierhenry  
Newsletter Editor*



*Heather Tugaw  
Outreach/ Grant Writer*

**JSWCD**

**STAFF**

**Forage Class Helped Landowner**  
*(Continued from page 1)*

system, but it still would require moving nine guns and was far too expensive in Pat's eyes.

When talking with the folks at NRCS, the pod system again came up as the fastest and most economical system. Pat had Ewing Irrigation give him a quote, and the pod system came to approximately one-quarter of the cost of the big gun system. It also is a simple enough system that Pat feels he will be able to train someone else to do the irrigating for him when he and Marji are traveling. An EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) contract through NRCS, which helps in sharing the cost of the new irrigation system, sweetened the deal. This last spring, their pod irrigation system was installed.

The pod irrigation system (frequently called K-Line referring to the manufacturer who developed the original system) is a flexible system where sprinklers are housed in "pods" along a heavy-duty, flexible tube. The tube is analogous to a lateral in other irrigation systems, but its flexibility allows fields of any shape to be irrigated without disconnecting pipes. The number of pods on a tube is variable and is deter-



*"pods" along a heavy-duty, flexible tube*

mined based on the size and shape of the field to be irrigated. Options include pressure compensating nozzles which allow the system to be used on hill-sides. The pods can also be moved while the sprinklers are running, although the driver on the ATV sometimes gets wet!

According to Pat, it takes a while to get the hang of "slinging" the pod lines around behind the ATV, and it is possible to rip the valves out of the ground. However, he's learning how to move the lines better and when to stop, which allows him to concentrate more on spreading water where his



*number of pods on a tube is variable*

field needs it most, and avoiding those areas where water is encroaching from his neighbors fields.

Perhaps the greatest challenge of all has been keeping the filter in his system clean. But even with having to clean the filter twice a day, total time spent irrigating is around one half hour. The system generally runs about \$450 per acre.

Overall, Pat is very happy with his new system. As Pat says, "One huge plus of the pod system is the ability to have livestock grazing in the areas being irrigated. Believe me when I say the horses have tried unsuccessfully to break the pods. Now, if I could just stop breaking things, it would be great!"



*"pod" made of durable material*

## Thinking of Changing Your Irrigation System?

Now is the time to be thinking of changing your irrigation system or considering putting a new one in. The Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District can help plan your system, but it takes time to plan, engineer, purchase materials, and install the system. Start planning now for spring!

Type	Pros	Cons
<b>Flood</b>	Most basic system, easy to understand and operate, low input cost	Low efficiency due to evaporation and leaking may not reach all areas of field
<b>Gated Pipe</b>	Provides water and labor savings —more even water distribution when compared to flood irrigation	More expensive than flood irrigation, but much less expensive than wheel lines
<b>Wheel Line</b>	Provides even water distribution — frequently used for large acreages	More expensive than other systems
<b>Hand Line</b>	Less expensive and provides some water savings—can be permanently set	Labor intensive to move
<b>Pods</b>	Very flexible system, safe around live-stock	May not be effective in tall forage

### **2008 Forage Resource Management Course**

Are you interested in improving the forage in your pastures and other natural resources on your property?

The Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District is again offering a Forage Resource Management Course. This is an opportunity to learn how better forage management can improve pasture health, live-stock health and production, and hay production, which ultimately will improve your operation’s profit margin. Management of natural resources can improve water quality, reduce soil movement from your fields, and increase water retention on your property. Being a good steward of the land has many benefits, including improved wildlife habitat.

The 2008 Forage Resource Management Course will include three field trips and at least one visit by the instructors to each landowner’s property. Course topics include soil, intensive grazing management, your legal responsibilities, and property water rights. The class will explore animal nutrition, Voison’s laws of grazing, grazing effects of animals on pasture, forage budgeting, monitoring, and animal production systems. Learn about current paddock design and layout, water facilities and design, plant identification, and plant physiology and ecology. You will be encouraged to set goals and develop a complete farm plan.

The class will meet on Thursday evenings from 6-9 pm. A pre-class meeting will be held January 17<sup>th</sup>, with classes then held February 28 through April 24. The class is limited to 15 operations and costs \$185 per person. Each additional person from the same operation is \$50, with textbooks and binders extra.

Registration closes December 31, 2007. Call today to reserve your seat! 541-734-3143

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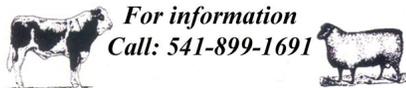
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## A Continuing Saga on the Bar Diamond R — Part 2 —

By Ern Russell – FARRM Member

I was encouraged to write another article on my Boer goats, so here's another chapter in the on-going saga on the Bar Diamond R. As you may remember, I purchased 65 acres in Eagle Point two years ago--land that had been neglected with over-use in places and yet over-grown with weedy plants in other areas. After taking the Forage Management class taught by the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District, I started rotational grazing on my pastures. I quickly noticed that my cows were unable to keep up with the growth of the grass plus they seemed to always be surrounded by a tremendous amount of blackberries, wild roses and other weeds. I happened upon an article about goats and the next thing I knew I was the owner of several South African Boer goat does and their babies plus a doeling (that we bottle-raised). Since the first article, I have sold all my cows and my goatherd has increased to 18.



*South African Boer Goats*

People ask me why I am raising Boer goats instead of cattle? To me, the answer was simple. Since I have to work the livestock by myself, the goats are easier to handle, are not as hard on the land due to their smaller size, eat the browse that the cows don't eat, plus they multiply faster. A Boer doe can have three kiddings in two years. With twins being common, your herd growth rate is fast (I am up to 18 does/doeling after starting with just four does and two doelings (young un-bred doe) a year and a half ago). Also, the market for goat meat is growing. My does cannot keep up with the demand. For the second time, I am all sold out and the babies that I have are not even weaned yet. Speaking of the babies and the market, Boer kids grow at the rate of half a pound or more a day and are ready for market in four to six months. I usually keep mine for a little bit longer to help with the brush control, but as my herd

gets bigger that may change.

So what does it take to raise goats? Since the goats need forage to eat, I am using them as a management tool for brush control, and the way I accomplish that is with portable electric netting and a charger. I put up



*Electrical net fencing*

four to six 150' sections of netting around an area of blackberries and let them browse to their hearts content. After a week or so, I move the netting to another area. When the goats are finished there isn't a leaf to be found. If you wanted to get rid of your



*Before grazing by the goats  
Net fencing in background*



*After 10 days of grazing*

blackberries, now would be the time to go in with your weed whacker, tractor or whatever and cut the canes down. I, on the other hand want to continue using my berries/ roses/ weeds as browse for my animals. I leave it alone for four to six months allowing the plants to re-grow, and then put the animals back on them. I am still figuring out how long I have to keep the goats off of an area to maintain a healthy patch of berries. Yes, I know this

sounds strange, but I really do want my blackberries to grow. Also, with the help of Angie from JSWCD we are trying to increase my goat browse by planting a number of different plant species. This fall I plan on using a no till range drill to plant eight acres of these different browse plants in strips. Once the plants are established, I will rotate the goats through and see which plants they like best.

The other things needed to raise goats beside forage are fresh water, of course, and maintenance care. They need to be wormed every three to six months depending on your worm load. I worm my goats

*(Continued on page 9)*

## FARRM AND RANCH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### Why We Went on the 2007 Annual Tour

*By Charlie and Pam Boyer – FARRM Members*

The Farm and Ranch Resource Management (FARRM) organization, in cooperation with the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District hosted a farm and ranch tour August 2-5, 2007. On the tour 13 local farmers, ranchers, and agency people visited two beef producing operations and two dairies. All four operations were large commercial producers. In each case there was one grass-based operation and one operation that used feed concentrates as part or all of the animal's diet. What an opportunity to compare operational philosophies, differences in how operations are run, and the similarities between operations that produce animal products. At each operation we met knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and articulate owners and managers. They were excited about their operations and were ready to openly share with the members on the tour.

Since our return, some people have asked us why we paid to go on a tour of cattle production operations when we raise sheep and hay? To understand why, perhaps some background information might be helpful. We started taking advantage of visits to other people's farms in the late 1970's. Back then, we were trying to learn about training, showing, and raising Arabian Horses while living in New Mexico. Visiting with other people in the business, looking at their facilities, and learning from their successes and failures helped us to be more successful and certainly saved us a lot of money by making fewer mistakes. One thing we learned at that time was -- even though we were very small operators, we could learn a lot from the big operations, as well as from those who were our size. It was out of these experiences of visiting a variety of ranches and farms that our desire to own and manage our own farm was born.

Since moving to Eagle Point, we have taken every opportunity to participate in farm and ranch tours, both within the Rogue Valley, and across the northwest. We have found that going on the annual tours hosted by FARRM and Jackson SWCD has provided us with new and helpful ideas on how to improve our land management program and the health of our animals. We have increased our production, and as a result, we've increased our income. Our philosophy is why repeat the mistakes others have made, why not use what they found that works for them.

Although we run sheep and most of the operations we visit are cattle operations, we do not see it as a problem. In both cases, we are harvesting sunlight in the form of forage and turning it into meat products for human consumption. It really doesn't matter if you choose to run cattle, goats, sheep, bison, or elk. We each can learn something from the other. This is the attitude we take with us while visiting another farm or ranch operations.

Do we incorporate everything we see into our operation when we get home? NO WAY! Some things just don't work on an operation our size. We use what makes sense for us and pass on the information to others who might be able to use it in their operation.

We also find that we become better acquainted with other folks from the Rogue Valley. We have an opportunity to exchange ideas and for a few days discuss the things we all have seen and heard. This gives us a chance to reflect on our own observations and try to better understand what the host farmer or rancher was trying to tell us. It is a great way to become better friends with our fellow producers who are facing the same problems with raising and marketing agricultural crops in the Rogue Valley. As for the cost, we feel that we have gotten our money's worth every time we have gone on one of these tours.

We hope we have encouraged you to join us for a few days next summer and see how others are overcoming some of the problems we all face each and every day on our own places.



## "Weed of Distinction"



Bob Budes, BLM Weed Coordinator

## Do you recognize this villain?

If you have had a bicycle tire punctured by one of the spiny burrs, then you know it.

Meet Puncturevine -- alias Goatshead!

This time of year is a good time to take action against one of many invasive weeds that are threatening our environment. Puncturevine is one of the worst noxious weeds.

Puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*) is an annual plant growing flat to the ground and has a simple, woody taproot. The woody burrs with sharp, rigid spines always have a point up when on the ground and are strong enough to flatten a bicycle tire. They also harm the feet of pets, and will catch a ride on the bottom of your shoe, establishing plants in a new location. Puncturevine is capable of rapid population increases over a short period of time because of its large seed production and the long-term seed viability.



Steve Hurst @ USDA-NRCS  
PLANTS Database

Puncturevine is a summer annual and will begin flowering in mid-summer and develops seed burrs. In the fall before burrs drop to the ground, pull/hoe and burn the plants. High-intensity heat from a propane weed burner can do a good job of killing the seeds during winter months. This will eliminate a lot of seeds, but follow-up will be needed in the spring for those seeds still left behind. Cultivating just after germination is an effective manual control or spray young plants with a chemical. (See local suppliers for herbicide recommendations.)

Controlling early and sticking to it is the key to stopping many invasive weeds. It may take several years to deplete the seeds left in the soil. Develop a management plan and encourage your neighbors to join in controlling invasive weeds. Contact JSWCD for further information on where to get help with stopping noxious weeds from spreading and getting out of control. Call 541-734-3143.

*(Continued from page 7)*

every four to five months, but I move my goats to different areas a lot. Also, they need to be vaccinated annually and have their feet trimmed. I have found that I trim their feet in late fall and early spring (it is too wet for them to wear down their hooves) and trim as needed in the summer. I have lots of rocks that they walk on that keep their hooves short during the summer. I also provide some sort of shelter for them. This can be something as easy as a tarp hung between trees, a carport that you purchase at the store, to a barn that has good ventilation. I have noticed that goats hate getting wet. They will do whatever they can to keep from getting their feet wet and will not leave the barn if it is raining, until they get really hungry.

So goats are fun and easy to raise; there is a ready market for the offspring and they multiply faster than cows. What more is there to say — why raise cows when, in my humble opinion, goats are better.

**Editors Note:** If you missed Ern's first article about *Life on the Bar Diamond R* that appeared in Summer 2007 issue of *The Conservationist*, you can read it by going to the Jackson SWCD's website [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org) and click on 'Newsletters' then Summer 2007.



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FAX: (541) 776-4295  
On the web at: [www.jswcd.org](http://www.jswcd.org)

If your mailing address has changed,  
please call us at (541) 734--3143 or  
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Jackson SWCD prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital of familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Jackson SWCD is an equal opportunity employer.

**Important  
DATE!**

**FARRM** (Farm and Ranch  
Resource Management) will  
be presenting a program on:

### Bees and the Bee Service Industry

Join us on:

**November 29<sup>th</sup> 2007**

**6:00 pm Dinner**

**7:00 pm Presentation**

Black Bear Diner  
1150 East Barnett Road  
Medford, Oregon



Terry Lew has been in this business for a long time.

Topics covered, but not limited to, will be:

- how diseases are affecting bees and the industry
- how pesticides and herbicides affect the bees
- how to stimulate clover crops by having bees in your pasture

**Please RSVP by November 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Call JSWCD at 734-3143**

### Fred Straube Memorial Scholarship Fund

In memory of Fred Straube  
---Native Oregonian & Local Rancher---

Chosen applicant(s) will be announced at the  
JSWCD Annual Meeting  
January 18, 2008

To apply, you must be a high school senior,  
college freshman or sophomore planning to/  
or attending a college or university  
with a major in agricultural, range science,  
animal husbandry and/or a closely related field.

Applications may be picked up at:  
**Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District Office**  
573 Parsons Drive Suite 102  
Medford, OR 9750 541-734-3143

***Deadline for submitting application is December 20***

### ◀— Mark Your Calendar —▶

**FARRM Dinner Meeting: Nov. 29, 6 pm**

**Black Bear Diner—Bee Industry**

**FARRM Potluck/Meeting: Dec. 20, 6 pm**

**USDA Service Center Conference Room**

**Program: Open Form-current articles/questions**

**JSWCD Annual Meeting: Jan. 18, 6 pm**

**OSU Extension Auditorium—Dan Dagget**