



THE CONSERVATIONIST

JACKSON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2007

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1

Life on the Bar Diamond R

By Ern Russell — FARRM Member

I turned 50 in September 2005 and thirteen days later, my wife of one year and I moved out of the suburban house that I grew up in and onto 65 acres in Eagle Point. Talk about a midlife change. I went from being at work by 7:30ish until 6:00ish (not including the 45 minute commute each way) to starting work when the sun came up, stopping when the sun went down. But, what a joy! It was great being my own boss, working the land, tending the goats, cows, horse and pony. I was loving every minute of it. I also quickly came to realize that I really did not know what I was doing. Sure, I knew a little about taking care of the animals, but what about the land? When we moved here, all the pasture and hay fields were eaten down to next to nothing. I had water grass, blackberry, wild roses and other weeds all over, especially above the irrigate ditch. What was I to do?

Well, lucky for me, I heard about the Forage Management Class being put on by the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District. During that class I learned about rotational grazing, plant management, soil nutrition and a host of other subjects. Included in the class was a completed plan for NRCS, which I submitted. Many months later, after resubmitting a portion of the application, my projects were tentatively accepted.

In the meantime, wanting to be a good steward of the land, I purchased temporary fencing including fiberglass poles, poly twine, reels, the hooks that go on the poles, an old golf bag to help carry all the stuff (thanks Charlie). I then installed hundreds of feet of fencing and moved my herd (five cows and one heifer plus two of my sister's Simmental) into the first paddock. Talk about happy cows. Grass up to their bellies, fresh spring water and sunshine. Every three to five days, per what I learned in the class, I moved them into a new paddock. It didn't take them long to understand that when I called they were going to new grass and they would come a-running. Boy what a sight to see full grown cows running to you as fast they can, moo-ing all the way.

Well, life was grand but the grass, blackberries and wild roses kept growing and growing and growing and the cows couldn't keep up with it. I also learned that cows don't really like black berries or wild roses. So what to do? Goats were the answer. Not just any goats, but South African Boer goats. I chose Boer goats because they are so friendly, have long floppy cute ears, and are easy to keep. There also is a ready market for goat meat and the Boer goats are bred for this purpose. I purchased three does and their

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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.



Director Profile Keith Emerson—Secretary/Treasurer, Zone 1

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

Keith was born and raised in Riverside, California in a third generation farming family involved in raising navel oranges and avocados. After graduating from college he moved to Chico, California to manage orchard crops. He was employed on a 7,000 acre corporate farm and gradually increased the plantings of prunes, almonds, and walnuts from 500 to 2,800 acres over 17 years. During that time, Keith had the opportunity to work with the local Soil Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension Office, Bureau of Reclamation, and Army Corps of Engineers in various capacities pertaining to farmland development and flood control. He served on land use planning boards to recommend policies to direct urban growth and preserve farmland in the Butte county area.

Keith came to the Rogue Valley in 1995 to pursue an opportunity to manage farms and orchard development for Bear Creek Orchards. He owns a home in the Talent area.

In his current capacity at Bear Creek he is personally responsible for 3300 acres of agricultural property, both in production and fallow, in Jackson County SWCD zone 1. As an agricultural professional, Keith's career depends on judicious use of farmland and an understanding that soil and water are precious resources essential to this industry. His goal in serving on this conservation district board is to expand his knowledge of resource management and to share his experience and successes with others seeking to improve their businesses and the environment of this county.

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 Angela Boudro, Natural Resource Conservationist
 Markie Germer, Bookkeeper/Office Assistant
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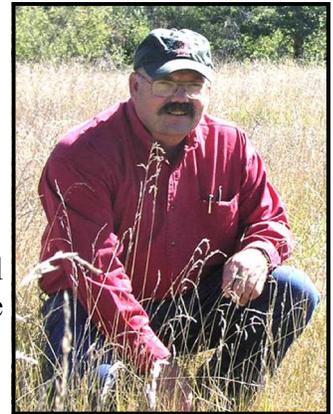
Please think of Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD) if you are interested in donating, gifting, granting, and/or bequeathing items, real or personal property, or monetary contributions for soil and water conservation efforts. Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state 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).

JSWCD depends on funding from grants, donations, County Service Partners, and some State funds to implement, maintain, and/or support soil and water conservation efforts. Your help is greatly appreciated. Contact **(541) 734-3143 markie.germer@or.nacdnet.net**

County Committee members:

LAA1 - Suzanne Ginnet,
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LAA3 - Lori Mefford,
 Vice-chair
LAA2 - Mel Morris,
 Member

Manager’s Message
Randy White
JSWCD District Manager



Summer is here and everything is growing, including your Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our newest staff members. As you know, we hired Markie Germer in March to handle the responsibilities of the front office as Bookkeeper and Office Assistant. Along with all her other duties, she has been very busy organizing District operating programs on the computer, as well as the filing system. We just hired Angela Boudro, on July 16th, as our Natural Resource Conservationist. She was out in the field working with land-owners on her second day! Below, I have included a short biography and photo of both. I encourage you to call or stop by to become better acquainted with Angie and Markie. Also, please contact us if you would like help on natural resource issues and/or production goals on your property. We would be glad to help.



Angela Boudro received her bachelor degrees at Purdue University in Animal Science and Agricultural Communications before receiving a Masters Degree in Animal Science with an emphasis in Rangeland Management from the University of California at Davis. She taught agriculture and natural resource courses at Sierra College in Rocklin, California. Before moving to Medford in 2005, Angie started and operated a 200 head - goat brushing business, where browsing goats are used to control-manage vegetation and reduce fire hazards,. Since then, Angie has helped her husband, Kreg, operate Classic Tile & Stone, Inc.

Markie Germer has lived in the Rogue Valley for 18 years. She was born in New York and moved to southern California while still in grade school. Her formative years were spent in San Jose. Markie enjoys learning and has taken many college courses pertaining to computer, clerical, and book-keeping at various colleges in each city in which she has lived. Prior to working for the District, she worked at a local plywood mill for 10 years as a payroll clerk and office assistant. Markie and her husband, Leonard, have been married for 34 years and have two grown daughters, one grandson and one grandchild due in September. Leonard keeps busy with custom haying and fieldwork. Markie enjoys working in her flowerbeds, needlework, and crafts.



As we continue to grow, we are looking for new and better ways to serve our customers with the newsletter. One of the things we are changing is the advertisement portion of the newsletter. All the advertisements are now on one page, for your one-stop convenience. This section is included in the newsletter to help our clients find products or services they need to continue with production and stewardship activities. It is not all-inclusive nor a recommendation from the District. If you would like to have your business or service represented in *The Conservationist* contact Markie at 541-734-3143.

Randy

Life on the Bar Diamond R

(Continued from page 1)

babies, a pregnant doe and was talked into a bottle baby that was three days old. Those babies were such a kick! They were always running, bucking, jumping, butting heads and just being cute. Of course the bottle baby was a real treat. We had to feed her three times a day: before I took her down to the barn (she spent the nights in a cage in the garage) in the morning, again around noon time and just before bedtime. It did not take her long to know that two legs meant food and she was always hungry. She could suck a 16 oz bottle down in nothing flat. She also learned to play with the dogs (not a good idea in hindsight as we are trying to herd the flock with a dog now and she could really care less), ride in the four-wheeler and just generally be a pet.



To help with the removal of the blackberries and roses, I purchased some portable electric netting. This is the greatest stuff. It comes in 150 feet plus rolls and all you do is stick it in the ground, add a portable charger and you have a pen. I would surround a large area of berries with four or five sections of netting, lead the goats out (me in front with the grain bucket) in the morning then close the netting and turn on the charger. In the evening I would follow them back to the barn. It was always funny watching everyone running back to the barn to get the grain I had put out for them. The babies running, jumping and ears a-flapping, the does going as fast as their fat little bodies would let them, what a sight.

They did a great job on the berries. The large pen area would only last about a week to ten days, then I would have to move it again. Good thing that I have 65 acres to keep them fed. When they were done, there would just be stalks left. No leaves would

remain except where it was too high for them to reach standing on their hind legs. That is another thing that I learned, the older does would stand on their hind legs and pull down branches (the goats also pruned my pear trees) or pull down blackberry vines for the younger ones to eat. Of course, by this time the goats were used to the routine and generally would happily follow me out to their pen but not always. That is why I am training my dog to herd. Sometimes a goat would see some succulent buck brush, rose, poison oak plant or just something that they were interested in and off they would go. The other goats would see this, and not wanting to be left out, would follow the first one. There I would be shaking the grain bucket and calling for them with no response. I would then have to go up them, place the bucket almost under their noses and get one moving with me. Once I got one or two following me again, usually the rest would follow. Of course this always happened when I was in a hurry because I had some place to go. It was very frustrating at times but that is livestock for you, as I have found out. This spring I am hoping that my dog is trained enough to keep everyone together and moving.

Who would have thought that a city boy would have such a great time farming. The Boer goats are friendly and easy to handle most of the time. They do a great job of trimming brush and keeping grasses short – even when the grasses are dry in the summer. Another great aspect of having goats is that they are so small compared to cows that they do not damage the land the way that cows do because of their weight. There is a surprising amount of demand for goat meat, which means that economically, goat breeding can be a profit making operation.



Second Forage Resource Management Course A Success

Nine local agriculturalists from Jackson County completed the second 10-week intensive forage resource management course to be offered by Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District (JSWCD). The course consists of three-hour classes and includes several field trips to area farms currently practicing intensive animal and grazing management. This year's class finished the course with a visit to Cedar Park Grazing at Riddle, Oregon. Cedar Park has been chosen as a final review of the 10 weeks of classroom studies because Kathy Panner and Leonard Gondeck, the owners, and Ton Rietveld, their assistant, have put together a program of growing and finishing cattle and lambs on high quality grass. The successful marketing strategy of their product reaches customers from Ashland to Portland.



Classroom discussion

Randy White, JSWCD's District Manager and Charlie Boyer, a local grazing consultant, along with a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, developed the Forage Resource Management Class in 2005 and 2006. The course covers a wide range of topics including: goal setting, plant anatomy and physiology, soil fertility, animal nutrition, plant identification and management, pasture layout, water and fencing design and layout, livestock management, whole farm planning, marketing, and monitoring for success. Each landowner gets a free on-site consultation to help them on their

way to implementing their farm plans.

Graduates of the two classes can be seen around the valley installing new fencing to get better control of their livestock, improving their irrigation systems for better use of their limited water resources, adding new enterprises to their operations, and generally taking better care of



Randy White and class discussing plant ecology. The Forage Resource Management Course includes hands-on activities in the field by visiting working farms, as well as an assessment of participating student's property .

their resources which benefit all of us. The course will be offered from late February though April or early May. The registration fees cover the textbook, class notebook, all handouts from each lecture and one free on-site consultation. Additional costs include fuel for field trips, any special supplies, and meals. The class size is limited to 15 paid students. Two scholarships are available to local high school students who are interested in forage and land management. If you are interested in signing up for next spring's class, call Markie at the Jackson Soil



and Water Conservation District at 541-734-3143 and give her your name, address and telephone number.

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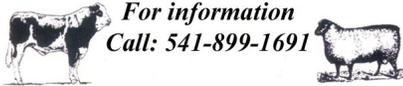
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RAP Camp

Did you know that there is an annual, weeklong, natural resource camp for youth, ages 13 to 18 and it is in your own back yard! **Resources And People** (RAP) camp is held every year at Lake of the Woods.

This year the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District sent three youth who had a great time discovering their heritage found in timber, mountain meadows, high deserts, wildlife, lakes, and streams. They were also able to interact with natural resource professionals to gain career insights, while having fun challenging themselves with "hands on" camp activities. Teachers and students spent a week at Camp Esther Applegate, on Lake of the Woods near Klamath Falls, Oregon, learning about careers managing the diverse natural resources that make up an ecosystem.

Participants spent their days in the field and classroom learning about natural resource disciplines, such as forestry, fisheries, wildlife, range, riparian, geology, recreation, wilderness, and cultural resources. At the end of the week, newfound knowl-

edge and team building skills combined as students and teachers developed and presented a land management plan.

If you are a high school student between the ages of 13 and 18, or have completed 8th grade and are interested in natural resources, then RAP Camp may be for you! We will have more information and registration information in the 2008 spring issue of *The Conservationist*.



"Weed of Distinction"



Pigweed (*Amaranthus retroflexus*)

Beware of toxic weeds! Pigweed, although a common weed found in waste places and cultivated fields across the United States, is toxic to cattle and pigs. This erect summer annual belongs to the amaranth family and can grow to 6 ft. tall. The plant has many hairy branches and small, green inconspicuous flowers are produced in a dense, compact terminal head 2 to 8 inches long. Pigweed produces an abundant amount of shiny black seeds that spreads easily to landscapes and into pastures and hay fields. The shallow taproot is often reddish in color.



All parts of the plant, leaves, stems, and roots are very toxic. Pigweed contains oxalates and is capable of accumulating nitrates, as well as containing a nephrotoxin that causes kidney failure. Cattle and pigs are mostly affected, but goats and sheep can also be poisoned after eating these weeds. Generally, animals will avoid eating pigweed, but if that is all they have to eat or if they are hungry when they are turned into a pasture with pigweed they will consume quantities of the plants. It takes several days before signs of poisoning appear. Affected animals will first show signs of weakness, trembling, and lack of co-ordination followed with eventual kidney failure within 48 hours. To prevent poisoning make sure pigweed is not growing in hay fields and pastures. Spray, or mow plants down, making sure plants are dead before pasturing cattle. Provide supplemental feed if pasture quality is poor, as well-fed animals will avoid eating Pigweed.

Editors Note: Photos courteous of Oregon State Extension Service – Linn County web site <http://extension.oregonstate.edu>

FARM AND RANCH RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Across the Fence

Helpful tidbits shared by FARRM members. This came from Charlie Boyer using "shirt pocket records" with your operation management.



Most farmers and ranchers keep "shirt pocket records." You know the ones written on the little notebook kept in your shirt pocket. Everyone seems to have their favorite type of book from the "little Red

Book" put out by the Oregon Cattleman's Association and OSU Extension Service, small spiral notebooks, moleskin notebooks, small ring binders, and now days some folks use electronic versions.

My favorite is the small Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks because when they fall out of my shirt pocket into the irrigation ditch, the paper doesn't disintegrate and my information is still there. The one drawback with all these little notebooks is that you have to transfer information used annually to the new books each new year. I have a little yellow book for every year for the past 15 years and have never used all of the pages in any book, which leads me to the real topic of this article.

I had several blank pages left in my 2006 notebook, so I decided to use them for 2007. Now, everyone uses their little books differently, but I use mine primarily for production records, irrigation water flow records, occasional design drawings, and notes to jog my memory. I don't keep my telephone list, scheduling calendar, or detailed animal production records in my shirt pocket notebook.

For the first 10 years or so after we moved on to our current farm, I would annually transfer my production record from my little notebook to a computer spreadsheet and review what was going on with our crops and try to analyze why there were differences, if there were any. For example, hay production on our farm was down in both 1992 and 1994. But, if you all remember, both of those years were short water years, especially for those of us in the Eagle Point Irrigation District. Anyway, somewhere along about 2000 I got tied up in a lot of off farm activities so I let my annual ritual of transferring the data from my shirt pocket to the computer spreadsheet slide. Now, I got along just fine, or at least I seemed to be getting along just fine, because when I prepared my income taxes the gross dollar income from our hay production stayed about the same. So I never really worried about the data in the little yellow books for any single year.

However, here's what was happening. Each year our production costs were going up and up and I chose to change some management practices to cut costs so I could keep my prices down for my customers, some of whom have been dealing with us since 1991, when we first moved to Oregon. Due to these management decisions, our production had been going down every year but not in large enough quantities at one time for me to really become overly concerned. Also, there were environmental issues, such as a cold wet spring, or a hot dry spell in May that could have been, and probably was somewhat responsible for some of the changes in our production levels.

However, this year, because I was using the same little yellow book as last year, I was able to do an easy comparison of production, field by field, as soon as the hay was baled. This is when I really saw the light. Bale counts were down from last year and we have some customers I am going to have to send somewhere else for their hay. As a result of seeing the numbers side by side for this and last year, I went back and pulled out the records for the last 7 years and started comparing the data, Yep, right there in my shirt pocket was the information that said we were producing less each year and the reason we were showing the same gross income each year was because there was a small price increase to cover obvious increases in production costs.

Production records are necessary if we are going to maintain or improve the outputs from our farms and maintain some reasonable level of income for our labors. Shirt pocket notebooks are a great way to record your production records at the time the information becomes available, whether you are still on the tractor in the field or in the truck on the scales. But the important lesson to learn from my experience is to take the data out of the shirt pocket and compare it with data from other years and look for trends. Once you find a trend, positive or negative, find out what is causing the change and adjust your management accordingly.

As they say, plan, implement, monitor, and re-plan. The data in your shirt pocket notebook is a vital part of your monitoring program so record the data, then review the data, compare the data with other years, and adjust your management if necessary.

Links to the Past

Seven Oaks Farm Market By Doreen Bradshaw

Editors Note: The history of Seven Oaks Farm continues with how the farm operations adjusted to changing times and began direct marketing their produce to local customers. Growing strawberries will be phased out this year, again changing with the times.

Strawberries sounded like a good FFA project to Leanne Bradshaw, so Dad (Don) gave her a plot, showed her how to run the walk-behind tiller, and helped finance 400 berry plants. Sister Lori (Mefford) helped build a sales stand under a Maple tree using old pallets and a wooden picnic table. Mom (Doreen) helped pick. Thus direct marketing at Seven Oaks Farm was launched.

Brother John inherited the project when Leanne left for Oregon State University. Don and Doreen took and expanded the berries when John also left for OSU. Picking difficulties and weather related problems ended the project after twelve years and the farm began to focus on contract crops and growing, packing, and shipping winter storage onions.

Lori and son-in-law Jerry were managing the cowherd and selling quality “club calves”, which was successful. The onions fell victim to over-supply and foreign competition and contract crops were ‘iffy’ at best. Faced with acres of ripening sweet corn and below cost market, Don and Jerry decided to try roadside sales again. Doreen added excess veggies from her garden and direct marketing took off once again.

Customer response was good so additional veggies and melons were added. Marketing ideas came from joining the Pacific NW Direct Marketing Association and visiting other operations in Oregon, Washington, and B.C. Canada. Don put up greenhouses to get a jump on spring. Seven Oaks worked to provide fresh, high quality produce at decent prices. Because there was no cooler, each day’s produce had to be picked and sold that day. When there was an over-supply it was wholesaled, taken to a growers market, or bypassed. The cattle were good “disposal units” for leftovers.

Fruit was needed but not grown on the farm, so peaches, pears, and apples were purchased locally. Sources were found for berries until planting strawberries, Marion, and boysenberries was put back into production. Soon local honey became available. Now fresh herbs and flowers can be picked most of the summer and people enjoy wandering through the gardens or checking out the old log cabin.

Many other activities on the farm have evolved over recent years. Fall pumpkin sales brought requests for trips to the pumpkin patch, so schools have been invited back on a limited basis. October Pumpkin Patch Days have 4H’ers offering pony rides, cookie decorating, and special kid activities plus offering lunch on weekends. Kids (big and small) love feeding the goats or using the small play area, geared to young children.

Recently, Lorie took over management of the sales stand and wanted to add eggs, jams, and other customer requested items. Since the stand was too small, she and Jerry made the commitment of putting up a new building. Now products can be moved by forklift or pallet-jack. A cooler and storage/work area are in the back. A corner out-front with a sink has been used by the Master Food Preservers to demonstrate safe food handling practices.

Extra summer help is needed, but this is still very much a family operation. Doreen, Lori, or other Bradshaw kids, or grandkids may be found waiting on customers, weeding crops, picking produce, or whatever from June through October. Sweet Corn continues to be the most popular item sold at the stand and many customers watch the progress in the field to see when the corn is ripe or how long it will last. “Panic” sets in when the rows of corn are nearly gone.

Seven Oaks Farm has remained sustainable by changing direction, as needed, by using good growing practices, and by providing fresh, high quality and truly local produce.



First outdoor fruit/veggie stand before the present building.



Pumpkin Patch Days—a special treat on the farm.



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Jackson SWCD **Scholarships**

Forage Resource Management Course

Two scholarships are available to local high school students who are interested in forage and land management. Contact Markie at the District office (541-734-3143 for information on the 2008 spring class.

Fred Straube Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship is awarded to a student planning on majoring in agriculture while attending college.

John Gladman and Thomas White, Crater High School seniors, received the scholarships for 2007. Contact Martha Straube (541-899-1691) for details.



← Mark Your Calendar →

FARRM Annual Tour: Aug. 2-5, Ferndale, CA

Grass-fed Beef/Dairy Operation

FARRM Potluck/ Meeting: Aug. 16, 6 pm JSWCD

Program: Recap Annual Tour, Straube NZ Visit

FARRM Breakfast Meeting: Sept. 20, 8 am

Black Bear Diner

FARRM Local Tour: Oct. 18 or 19, 7 pm

Valley View Winery

FARRM Potluck/ Meeting: Nov. 15, 6 pm JSWCD

Program: Beekeeper-Chemical effect/blooming

NRCS & JSWCD OPPORTUNITIES

Date (TBA): Neighborhood Meeting in Talent

(Contact Jackson SWCD or NRCS)

Sept. 15: OWEB Small Grants Application Due

(Contact Jackson SWCD @ 734-3143)

Sept. 28: Conservation Cost Share List –

Practice Payment Schedule (NRCS Office)

Oct. 15: OWEB Restoration Grant Applications Due

(OWEB Office)

Nov. 30: Application deadline for 2008 Environmental

Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

(NRCS Office)

Jackson SWCD Board Meetings:

3rd Wednesday of the Month — 7:30 pm — All Welcome