

# COLESTIN VALLEY BUZZ

## March/April 2005

### Get Involved with Citizen Science!

by David Cothran

The Colestin Valley is on the map (the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Great Backyard Bird Count map, that is)! Our local count of 40 Band-tailed Pigeons (plus four more observed elsewhere in our zip code) was the 7<sup>th</sup> highest total observed at any locale in the nation during the four days of the recent GBBC (Feb 18-21)! This is particularly exciting because these large, handsome pigeons are thought to be declining significantly throughout their North American range and GBBC observations from the past five years shows that their presence and abundance in our state is quite irregular. Nationwide, the amount of information gathered in these four days is amazing. Great Backyard Bird Count observers across the country contributed over 50,000 checklists, recording more than 6 million individual birds of 613 species!

The Cornell Lab's GBBC is an example of citizen science, a popular new tool for collecting broad-based information for scientific research projects. Many scientists today are faced with the difficult task of gathering very large amounts of information, over long periods of time and across broad geographic areas. This is particularly true of researchers in conservation and ecology, fields which are of great importance to the general public but perennially under-funded. Along with the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has taken the lead in showing that enthusiastic amateurs can lend a huge helping hand to studies of this kind by regularly observing and contributing useful information from all around the country. In the past five years or so this effort has really taken off and now citizen scientists from all over the world are helping professional researchers to achieve their goals in many different fields of study.

Getting involved in a citizen science project is easy and a lot of fun. You can help with research efforts on topics ranging from monarch butterfly migration to disease in songbirds, from global warming to lichens and air pollution. You can even help to study neighborhood speeders or commercial cookies! Projects range from simple and easy to quite advanced and most can be performed by an individual or shared among groups or classrooms. Many citizen science studies are particularly suitable for home-schooling projects, providing both guided study and links to excellent background materials.

A good place to start is on the web. The next Great Backyard Bird Count won't take place until February 2006, but in the meantime the Cornell Lab's web site lists several other possibilities. Try this link: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/hofi/> to join a study of conjunctivitis in House Finches and American Goldfinches, or (if you're handy and like to build things) this link: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/index.html> can get you involved in the Birdhouse Network, a nationwide birdhouse monitoring project. After a little experience with easier studies like these you might want to join the Birds in Forested Landscapes project at:

<http://birds.cornell.edu/bfl/index.html>. This is a very wide ranging study which includes observations of birds and careful characterization of the forests where they live.

A quick search on the web will reveal a wealth of similar opportunities, sponsored by many different organizations. A personal favorite of mine is the Bat House Project, found at the Bat Conservation International site: <http://www.batcon.org/>. Like the Birdhouse Network, this project both provides much needed habitat for the study subject (bats, in this case), and studies the results with the goal of making the habitat enhancement more and more successful in the future. Another excellent place to look is Pathfinder Science, at: <http://pathfinderscience.net/>; this site is an online citizen science community, with many different projects to choose from and excellent resources for teachers, mentors and parents.

Regardless of what kind of citizen science you choose to get involved in, the rewards are great. Most projects are conducted outdoors and give the observer a chance to learn about the environments around their home in new depth and detail. And the information you gather is truly valuable! In the field of conservation particularly, good policy to protect natural habitats and species must be informed by good, thorough science. Scientists need your help to get it done! Whether you are a keen birdwatcher eager to share your knowledge of local birds with researcher and other enthusiasts across the country, or a home-schooling teacher helping to train tomorrow's scientists, citizen science is a great way to have fun, learn, and make a positive contribution to the future of our valley and our world.

## **PICK-IT-UP! COME ON DOWN ! PICK-IT-UP! COME ON DOWN !**

WHAT: The Mt. Ashland Access Road Clean-up Day

WHERE: Meet at the bottom of the Ski Road in the big parking area.

WHEN: Saturday April 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9 am - 12 noon, followed by a BBQ.

WHY: Everybody knows that the roadways get trashy over the course of the winter. Last year for the first time, local residents teamed up with Mt. Ashland folks to work together picking up the accumulated garbage. It was truly a big success with many volunteers tidying the roads all the way from the I-5 Interchange to the Ski Lodge! After all the hard work, Mt. Ashland Association rewards all volunteers with a fun BBQ at the ski area. If we somehow receive a bunch of snow during that time, we will reschedule.

Hot Tips from the book, The Best Kitchen Quick Tips

by the editors of Cook's Illustrated Magazine

- Transfer brown sugar into a large Ziploc bag for storing. The next time you need to measure out brown sugar, dip the measuring cup into the open bag, press sugar into the cup through the plastic – no pouring, spilling or sticky hands.
- An avocado is ripe when you can flick the small stem off easily and see green underneath. If the stem doesn't come off or you see brown underneath, the avocado isn't ripe yet.
- Mix 2 teaspoons of baking powder with 1 C hot water. If there is an immediate reaction of fizzing and foaming, the baking powder is still potent. If the reaction is at all delayed or weak, throw it out and purchase a fresh supply. Baking powder begins to lose its leavening ability after six months and should be discarded after a year.

## **DUST ABATEMENT ON PUBLIC ROADS**

Info from Jackson County Roads Department flier with price updates from Dale Petrosic.

Every year, Jackson County Roads & Parks Services accepts requests from residents to apply lignin to roads for dust abatement. The county shares the cost of this service with residents on county roads. On local access roads, the full cost of dust abatement is charged to residents.

Beginning in May, road crews grade the roads to prepare them for treatment. Application of lignin takes place in June. You can expect traffic to be delayed for up to two hours while the lignin is being absorbed into the road surface.

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **Q: What is Lignin?**

A: Lignin is a liquid solution derived from tree sap that is widely used as a dust retardant. The composition of materials is: 53% water, 27% tree pulp and liquids, 12% sugar, and 8% ash.

#### **Q: How effective is lignin and how long will it last?**

A: One application is usually effective to some degree for the entire summer. By fall, most of the benefit of the lignin has been realized. However, if the treated road requires regrading due to potholes or excessive roughness, the dust abatement qualities of lignin will decrease substantially. Additionally, rainfall and high volumes of traffic will decrease the benefits of lignin.

#### **Q: When should I make arrangements for dust abatement?**

A: Arrangements, including payment, must be concluded by approximately June 1<sup>st</sup>. (Actual deadline for 2005 TBA) Applicants are encouraged to contact Roads & Parks Services during the months of April and May. Contact them at: 200 Antelope Road, White City, 97503, (541) 774-8184.

#### **Q: How much does dust abatement cost?**

A: The prices vary on an annual basis and depend on the status of your road and the length that needs treatment. The prices for 2005 are 46¢ per foot for 500'-1000', 39¢ per foot for 1001'-2500', and 30¢ per foot for 2501' plus.

#### **Q: How do you collect the money that is used to pay for the application of the lignin?**

A: This is entirely up to the people receiving the benefit. A common method is for one or more persons to acquaint their neighbors with the facts concerning lignin, its advantages and disadvantages. Those persons also collect the money for the purchase and application of lignin.

#### **Q: Is there a minimum length required?**

A: For effective dust control, it is recommended that a minimum coverage of 1,000 lineal feet be applied. Jackson County will apply lignin to areas no shorter than 500'. The reason for this is that dust from untreated portions track onto treated areas, reducing effective coverage on each end of treated sections by approximately 250'.

#### **Q: Where can I find more information on lignin?**

A: Both the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U. S. Forest Service have used lignin as a dust retardant. Environmental concerns may be addressed to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

## For Sale

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**Large tubular cages for plant protection:** 14 gauge galvanized wire mesh, 4" x 2".

Large cages are 48" high x 20" diameter, 66" circumference.

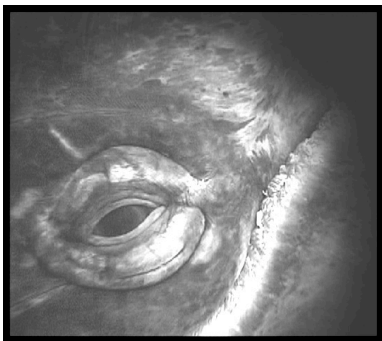
Cost to build \$3.58 each + labor, sell for \$1.80 each.

Small cages are 36" high x 15" diameter, 47" circumference.

Cost to build \$2.08 each + labor, sell for \$1.00 each. Call 530-475-3726

## F.Y.I.

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Local naturalist and photographer, David Cothran, announces the debut of his new website:

[www.wandering-eye.com](http://www.wandering-eye.com)

Please enjoy photographs from his travels around the world! Prints, postcards, T-shirts and other gifts are available.

## Upcoming Events

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### **Mt. Ashland Access Road Clean-up Day**

April 2nd, Saturday, from 9 am - 12 noon. Meet at the bottom of the Ski Road in the large parking area. A BBQ at the Ski Lodge for all volunteers will follow.

### **Latex Paint Disposal Event**

April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at Rogue Disposal recycling transfer station  
8001 Table Rock Road. 8am-4pm. Free.

### **Rogue Disposal Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Days**

Acceptable material: cleaning supplies (window cleaners, drain cleaners, bathroom cleaner and any products containing bleach or ammonia), old pesticides and insecticides, swimming pool chemicals, weed killers not currently approved for use, old lead and oil-base paint, old paint removers, old or toxic wood preservatives, fluorescent light ballasts, batteries, thermostats containing mercury.

May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> at the Fairgrounds/Expo Park, 8am-4pm  
Cost: \$5. Please, no waste in containers larger than 5 gallons.

## How To Build Community

Turn Off Your TV ☼ Leave Your House ❁ Know Your Neighbors Greet People ☼

Look Up When You're Walking

Sit On Your Stoop ❁ Plant Flowers ◆ Use Your Library

Play Together ● Buy From Local Merchants

Share What You Have ❁ Help A Lost Dog

Take Children To The Park ❁ Honor Elders

Support Neighborhood Schools ✧ Fix It Even If You Didn't T Break It Have Pot

Lucks ★ Garden Together ◆ Pick Up Litter

Read Stories Aloud ○ Dance In The Street

Talk To The Mail Carrier ✕ Listen To The Birds • Put Up A Swing Help Carry

Something Heavy ❁ Barter For Your Goods

Start A Tradition ❁ Ask A Question

Hire Young People For Odd Jobs ★ Organize A Block Party

Bake Extra And Share ▪ Ask For Help When You Need It

Open Your Shades ❁ Sing Together ❁ Share Your Skills

Take Back The Night ❁ Turn Up The Music

Turn Down The Music ☼ Listen Before You React To Anger Mediate A Conflict ❁

Seek To Understand ▪ Learn From New And Uncomfortable Angles ★ Know That

No One Is Silent Though Many Are Not Heard ☼ Work To Change This

Text by Syracuse Cultural Workers, [www.syraculturalworkers.com](http://www.syraculturalworkers.com), 315-474-1132

# Colestin Valley Buzz

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