

COLESTIN VALLEY BUZZ

SEPT/OCT 2007



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Hello Good Neighbors! A few announcements.

Firstly, I confess I have bungled my record keeping and had to rebuild my accounting records. Your "Paid Thru" information on the mailing label may be inaccurate. Please contact me if you find it in error. In general, I have added time to subscriptions when there was any question, but I surely have made mistakes so don't hesitate to call with any concerns.

Secondly, I received an email via the Southern Oregon Small Woodlands Association with an interesting post-fire analysis of the Angora Fire, which occurred at South Lake Tahoe. I have included the report as a Special Insert in this issue of the Buzz. Stephen Fitzgerald noted that, "portions of the fire area had received fuel reduction treatments prior to the fire and it appears those efforts changed the behavior of the fire." There is no doubt that the issues of forestry practices both historical and contemporary, of consequences of increasing human population in wildlands, and of fire behavior itself are all very complex. I believe that people from many sectors are doing their best to tease out reasoned conclusions leading to plans for management of humans and forests. We have a lot to learn, which is why I wanted to share this report with Buzz readers. It is another piece to add to the puzzle as we continue to develop our understanding of human beings, forest, and fire.

Letter to the Editor

On behalf of the Colestin Rural Fire District Board of Directors, I want to clarify some points with respect to the recent Forest Service Project that occurred in part of the Colestin Valley.

The US Forest Service approached Chief Steve Avgeris who took the issue to the Board. Since many communities across the country have been ravaged by fire, often as a result of the urban/rural interface of the past decade or so, the Forest Service discussed a pilot project that would reduce fuel loads in the forest area in the more urban/rural areas in order to reduce the fire danger to people, property and the forest itself.

The CRFD Board was very excited about the possibility of having this service provided to our community, free of charge. We were, of course, mindful that the community needed to be made aware of the possible project and provided an opportunity to raise any concerns and ask any questions.

At 6:30 pm on April 15th 2004, a community meeting was held at the Hilt Church with representatives of the Forest Service and Chief Avgeris. Very, very few people attended and there was no opposition to the project at that time.

As a result of that, the Board voted to move forward with the project and encouraged the forest service to provide "before and after" pictures or video so that not only our

community could see the results but it might serve as a model for other communities faced with similar issues.

As many of you know, in the past the forest "cleaned itself." Fires would start and undergrowth and dense areas of forest would burn. Of course there were few if any people in the area so lives and property were not threatened. As we move into the forest we bring with us the potential for the natural fire process to effect the lives and property of the community. We also bring the responsibility of our presence, which can be a "downside" of the rural/urban interface. For example, in 1981 one thousand (1,000) acres burned by a fire started by people. It burned private forested land and some structures as well as the surrounding forest. That can happen again if we don't take steps to prevent it.

As an elected Board, we believe our job is to provide the best fire prevention to our community. Our job is to help Chief Avgeris and our volunteer firefighters prevent fires or if any start, to keep them small and to contain them as swiftly as possible. Reducing overgrown and indefensible fuel loads is one means to this end.

For us to do any differently would make us derelict in our duty as a Fire Department. At all times we want to consider the environment and

to thin responsibly and have the job done professionally. But, ultimately, we will support reasoned efforts to prevent fires in the Colestin Valley.

We always welcome any member of the community to our monthly meetings, which are the second Friday of the month at the Hilt Church beginning at 6 pm. The minutes of these meetings are posted on our website www.crfd.org. We are fortunate to have The Buzz available to our community and Lisa publishes information on the fire district and associated issues. There was such an article in the November/December 2006 Buzz. Even after that, we received no comment from any member of the community.

Again, we invite people to attend our meetings and if you have an interest in serving on the fire district Board, please consider running for one of the seats in the open elections that have been held every other year for the past 25 years.

Peggy Moore
Board President
Colestin Rural Fire District

Letter to the Editor

I'm writing in hopes of reassuring Mouna Wilson and your other readers that while this summer's US Forest Service hazard reduction project along Colestin Road definitely changed the project area, there are some helpful ways to evaluate such projects and get involved in future planning. Better understanding may make these projects less upsetting, or at the very least minimize the sense of helplessness it appears some neighbors experienced this summer. It is very likely that similar projects will be undertaken in coming years throughout

Southern Oregon, so it's best to be prepared to see more.

If you've never seen or heard logging, thinning and road repair up close, the whole enterprise

can definitely be startling. In fact, they can be so shocking and noisy that Jackson County now requires anyone requesting a forestland building permit in to sign a disclaimer stating they know that forestry operations will occur in their neighborhoods.

Speaking as a member of the Oregon Department of Forestry's SW Regional Forest Practices Advisory Board, and having taken a look at the project after reading the last Buzz, I can reassure Ms. Wilson and your readers that this particular effort was fairly typical of forest hazard reduction operations throughout the West. These are undertaken primarily because the forest is no longer in a natural condition. As a result, any accidental forest fires would not affect the forest in a natural way.

There are two easy ways for someone without a technical forestry background to evaluate recently completed forestry operations. The first is to take photos now, and again each year for about ten years. Ideally, one would also have photos taken before the operation. Forests, unlike gardens or farms, operate on a time scale of decades if not centuries, so one or two years will not give good information on the quality of any forestry operation. This is especially true in high, dry, shallow soil areas such as our area.

If, in a few years, the trees are mostly healthy and thriving, wildlife habitat is apparent, nearby streams are not disrupted, silted or overheated, grasses and forbs are recurring in natural patterns without undue invasion of non-native species, and the soils are stable with good protective layers and evidence of active soil organisms --- the planners and workers most likely were competent and can be applauded.

If, on the other hand, there are fewer healthy trees or more unhealthy ones than before, the roads and soils are washed out, noxious weeds abound and there is an obvious absence of wildlife - complaints to the landowners are in order, at the very least.

The second way to evaluate a project is to compare it to the way Nature would handle the same problem.

In our case, our natural fire cycle for large fires (more than a few acres) ranges from every ten to every fifty years, with most local areas falling in the 10 - 25 year range. (Biologists with core samplers and good boots have checked tree

rings in this area to see how often older trees burned over the past centuries). So, in the case of a fuels reduction project, the best comparison is not between how it was before the project and how it was after, but how it looks after the project versus how it might look if a fire had gone through there for the same purposes.

Nature (and the Native Americans here) routinely burned through our type of forest to clean out the underbrush, thin the trees, kill disease and encourage species such as Ponderosa Pine to open up their cones and spread seeds. The Forest Service, BLM and the Southern Oregon Historical Society all have some photos of similar forests after various fires. One can compare one's personal series of photos to how a similar area recovered after enduring fire, rather than human intervention.

Some argue that Nature should be left to do the job, which outside the urban-rural interface (that's us) may be a worthwhile approach, particularly on pristine forests that have never been logged or otherwise experienced much human intervention.

In our own neighborhood forests, it is difficult and expensive for humans and machines to replicate Nature's fire cycle because, having protected landowners for decades by putting out fires, we have huge amounts of biomass in our forests that Nature would have cleaned out years ago. It's as though we just left stuff in the family attic for six or seven generations - it's a mess and no one really knows what to do about it. The trick is to prevent a huge conflagration fire that would kill more trees and disrupt more wildlife than human intervention, while doing it in ways that do minimal harm to overall ecosystem health.

Perhaps the ideal way to accomplish what Nature might have done if left to her own devices would be a program of systematic human-lit burning that would also protect homes and optimum amounts of wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, three factors make such undertakings unlikely if not impossible. The first is that the fuels buildup prevents

controlling such fires, so expensive mechanical projects have to be done first to make a "cool burn" (yes, that's the term) possible. The second is that even if preliminary cleanup is done, fires can get away and destroy homes and pastures, streamside vegetation and so forth, leading to litigation that further reduces an already stretched forest management budget. The third is that clean air rules put foresters in conflict with the DEQ, EPA and the American Lung Association who are not particularly interested in returning to natural forest cycles if someone's lungs and general health are at risk. Even the EPA cannot control Mother Nature, but if a human lights a fire the liability and policy issues are daunting.

Both the US Forest Service and BLM are more than willing to put any citizen who asks on their

mailing list for notification of projects. I routinely receive plans for the next year or next quarter, notifications of new plans being concocted, and reviews of last year's forestry activities for public lands. That way, if a project is being considered, I can read the proposals and go to the meetings in time to affect the plan. I strongly encourage all of your readers to get on those mailing lists for the US Forest Service, and, if you live on the east side of the valley, BLM. That will give us an opportunity to discuss among ourselves what is proposed, get involved in planning and be prepared for projects that are scheduled in our area.

Nancy Ames Cole
Siskiyou Pass

Looking For Laptops

Great Shape Inc is a non-profit group working to improve the lives of Jamaican children with focus areas in dental health and literacy. A local friend of mine is requesting laptops to outfit a school in Jamaica to which they have made a pledge of assistance. If any of you good neighbors are willing to donate your laptops to this good cause, please contact me, or Gretchen at 301-5619. You can check out their website at <http://www.gsjamaica.org/>, though it may not really give you a sense of the dedicated group of local Oregonians who's service is improving the lives of the poorest of Jamaicans.

Wine Tasting and Jewelry Party

Enjoy a relaxing afternoon tasting a variety of local wines while being inspired by the unique jewelry designs of Wild Grace. Wild Grace features handmade jewelry at wholesale prices by local artist Martine Baker.

She specializes in natural gemstone designs inspired by nature. Please mark your calendar to come by for a visit on November 10th at 3 p.m., 1894 Colestin (at the ZabaraH dance studio).

For more information, please contact Martine Baker
at 541-301-5273.

Abundant Apples & Pears

Come enjoy Indigo Ray's extremely bountiful apple and pear harvest! Pick all you want, Oct 10-21. Choose from *Fuji, Braeburn, Red Delicious, Mutsu, Spitzbergen, Sierra Beauty* and *Spartan* apples and sample *White Doyenne* pears.
For more info, 541-482-4939.

Stray Cat

A youngish, tan cat with tail, forelegs and face slightly darker in color has been hanging around for several weeks in the Hilt end of the valley in the area of Wagon Trail Road. Please call Taylor if you know anything about this cat. 530-475-3726.

The Woodsman

All Phases of Tree Care – Fine Pruning to Large Scale Removals,
Timber Felling, Small Scale Logging
Dave McNeil 541-890-4290 or 541-488-2377

Bulking up the Governor

By Mary Shaw, Culinary Educator at Ashland Food Co-op, July August 2007 Newsletter

During "Hunger Awareness" week in April, Governor Ted Kulongoski challenged Oregonians to join him and live on an average food stamp budget of \$21 per person for the week.

He wanted to raise awareness of the difficulty 425,000 Oregonians face using food stamps to provide family meals at home. I have no idea how the governor could create meals with his purchases, but I suspect he ate a number of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Canned Progresso soups at \$1.53 were too expensive so he settled for two Cup-O-Noodles, some canned beans and three boxes of Mac and Cheese, a total of \$2.95. At the Co-op he could have purchased ingredients for a pot of chili that would have made three satisfying meals. The nutritional advantage of the homemade chili over the Governor's choices speaks for itself.

In response, I decided to see if it was possible to shop for nutritious, complete meals for a week

Governor's Shopping List

(Items Purchased at Salem Fred Meyer)

3 bananas	.66
2 zucchini	1.10
2 Cup-O-Noodles	.67
1 gallon milk on clearance	1.00
1 can garbanzo beans	.79
1 can kidney beans	.49
1 10-lb bag potatoes	.99
1 can tomatoes	.59
1 jar peanut butter	2.50
1 jar grape jelly	1.89
1 quart plain yogurt	1.25
1 small chicken	1.25
3 boxes mac & cheese	1.00
1 pkg imitation cheese slices	.99
1 loaf bread with coupon	1.00
1 box granola	2.99
Total Bill	\$20.97

at the Co-op spending only \$21. I also wanted to take full advantage of our bulk aisle's nutritional value and savings. My only ground rule: no sale items and no coupons. I wanted to shop the basic, everyday prices offered. Before shopping, I made a weeklong menu with recipes using whole grains, beans, and vegetables. My shopping list came from the menu.

See [menus](http://www.ashlandfood.coop/common/news/store_news.asp?task=store_news&SID_store_news=10&storeID=NSCQXNHREBAA8KT2UQ5PBQVVBD4T73P3) at http://www.ashlandfood.coop/common/news/store_news.asp?task=store_news&SID_store_news=10&storeID=NSCQXNHREBAA8KT2UQ5PBQVVBD4T73P3

Mary Shaw's Shopping List

(Items from Ashland Food Co-op)

1 lb bulk rolled oats	.55
1 lb bulk organic long grain brown rice	.97
1 lb bulk organic whole-wheat spaghetti	1.55
2 lbs bulk organic pinto beans	1.00
1 lb bulk organic lentils	1.09
3 organic carrots	.52
3 stalks organic celery	.24
2 organic yellow onions	1.28
1 bunch local organic kale	1.69
1 bulb organic garlic	.45
2 organic bananas	.60
¼ C sunflower seeds	.16
¼ C flax seed	.10
¼ C raisins	.35
1 28 oz can diced organic tomatoes	1.89
2/3 lb Monterey Jack cheese	1.81
½ C organic extra virgin olive oil	2.00
½ C red wine vinegar	.11
Assorted herbs, spices and sea salt	.65
¼ C organic red chili powder	.95
Total Bill	\$20.73

Making beans and whole grains the center of each meal kept me within my \$21 budget. The best bargain nutritionally and financially was rolled oats. For only 54¢, I purchased enough to make four breakfasts with flaxseeds and bananas. Two pounds or 5 cups of pinto beans made about 15 cups of cooked beans to incorporate into recipes for the week. A dollar's worth of lentils was a change from the pinto bean menu items, and an additional dollar's worth of whole grain rice complemented both the bean and lentil dishes, and made delicious refried rice with eggs. Choosing between whole grain pasta or tortillas, I decided pasta was more versatile. Buying quality herbs and spices in

bulk created very tasty recipes. The chili powder was the most expensive at 95¢ for about 3 tablespoons, but it is in two recipes that created 5 meals. Other helpful bulk purchases were olive oil and red wine vinegar in amounts just needed for the week's menus. Buying vegetables challenged my tight budget! The best nutritional buy was local kale at \$1.69 a bunch, enough for at least two meals. Three carrots at 52¢ made carrot sticks all week or a grated salad with sunflower seeds or raisins. I wanted to buy another bunch of greens but I had to choose between that and the onions needed for many of the week's recipes.

A recent USDA study by the Economic Research Service looked at how people make food decisions. Results showed that we make choices based on immediate gratification, hunger, or because we are distracted by packaging or the environment in which we shop. Having a week's menu plan and recipes to support that plan would provide a focus for impulsive, distracted shoppers. Using this method, I do believe that it would be possible to shop on \$21 a week at the Co-op, but I would certainly include some other options like gardening, buying marked down produce, using the weekly sales flyer to include sale items in my menu, and coupon clipping from the Co-op Advantage coupon books.

Road Bumps: Why dirt roads develop a washboard surface

Julie J. Rehmeyer, Science News Aug. 18, 2007; Vol. 172, No. 7

Driving on a dirt road can rattle the bones. Every foot or so, a ridge of dirt up to several inches high lies in wait to jolt passing cars and trucks and their hapless occupants. In many places, road crews battle this "washboard" effect by frequently scraping the roads with bulldozers. But as soon as more vehicles pass, the ridges, phoenixlike, return.

Now, a team of physicists has explained why a washboard forms, and their research has a dispiriting message for road crews: Scrape often, or give up. Washboard is inevitable.

Most previous theories of washboard formation involved relatively complex dynamics. Some focused on the bounce of a vehicle's suspension and tires. Others suggested that differences in compaction between the bottoms and tops of bumps were essential. Still

other theories invoked the tendency of dirt to segregate according to grain size. Many an engineer has tried to design washboard-resistant road surfaces, but the ridges keep rising.

Stephen W. Morris of the University of Toronto and his colleagues Nicolas Taberlet and Jim N. McElwaine of the University of Cambridge in England aimed to find the simplest possible explanation for the phenomenon. They built a circular turntable that they could cover with dirt or sand, and positioned a hard rubber wheel above it.

After smoothing the dirt, they turned the table at varying speeds, allowing the wheel to run over the surface. Then they watched the washboard form. The researchers varied the experiment in every way they could think of. They compacted the dirt. They used sand grains of

varying sizes and mixtures, and they even tried substituting rice. They used wheels of different sizes and weights as well as a flat plow-wheel that didn't spin. Some of the variations changed the pattern, spreading the ripples or packing them closer together, but the ripples always formed.

The team reports its findings in the Aug. 10 Physical Review Letters.



The researchers found one, and only one, solution: Slow down. A lot. "The critical velocity below which [the surface] would remain flat is about 5 miles per hour," Taberlet says.



Washboard on coarse grains of sand

The researchers then created a computer simulation to model the movements of individual grains of sand so that they could see precisely how the ripples formed.

Any bed of dirt or sand, even a very smooth one, has minuscule irregularities that slightly jog a rolling wheel. Each time the wheel hits a bump, the computer simulation showed, it pushes the dirt forward a bit, enlarging the irregularity. Then, as the wheel passes over the top of the bump, the force of its descent pushes dirt forward into the next bump. Repeat these actions a hundred or more times and the familiar pattern of ridges appears.

Douglas Kurtze of Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia says that this is the first time anyone has studied washboard formation using a controlled experiment. Although it won't eliminate washboards, it lets scientists "get down to the essentials of what the mechanism is," says Kurtze.

Nicolas Taberlet has a website with more information about the study at <http://perso.ens-lyon.fr/nicolas.taberlet/washboard/>.

You can watch videos of the experiment at <http://www2.physics.utoronto.ca/~nonlin/>.

Autumn Romance

Hills wrapped in golden fur,
A shiny brass sunset
slips into the valley.
The ground aches for a drink,
waiting passively.
Heaven knows what could happen.
All along, the dark green trees
change their minds to orange
and finally blushing
the leave let loose
to swoon and fall.

*Julie Rogers
Coleston Valley*

Audubon Society's "Audubon at Home"

In line with providing materials based on regionally appropriate bird conservation priorities, Audubon has put together an initial "Birds to Help" online resource that provides information on how landowners can help specific species in urban, suburban, and rural properties. These initial 30 species are those that 1) people can most easily help in these landscapes and 2) need help to thrive in these landscapes. Future editions will include regionalized urban, suburban, and rural suggestions that include additional WatchList and other priority species when appropriate.

In addition to a somewhat short list of birds we here in the rural west can help to thrive, there is information about "Healthy Yards", plants for birds and wildlife, and keeping birds safe. Check it out! <http://www.audubonathome.org/birdstohelp/>

Colestin Valley Buzz

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