

COLESTIN VALLEY BUZZ

Jan/Feb 2008



Coming in March...

SEARCHERS 2.0

A benefit for the Colestin Rural
Fire District

SEARCHERS 2.0, the latest film of the Colestin Valley's own filmmaker Alex Cox (REPO MAN, SID AND NANCY, THREE BUSINESSMEN, REVENGERS TRAGEDY...among others), will be screened as a benefit for the Colestin Rural Fire District. Tickets are \$10 and all proceeds go to the Fire District.

- **Wednesday, March 5**
- **7 p.m.**
- **The Meese Auditorium in SOU's Center for Visual Arts.**

For more information and/or advance ticket reservations, call Tod Davies at 482-5106, or email her at tod@exterminatingangel.com.

SEARCHERS 2.0 (www.searchers2.com) is the hilarious story of two out of work actors who take a road trip to Monument Valley in search of revenge against a screenwriter who tortured them when they were kids. It's already screened at the Venice International Film Festival, and the AFI Festival in Los Angeles, and will play at Lincoln Center in New York, in February. Here's your chance to see the film, celebrate the coming of spring, catch up with your neighbors, and help your fire department all at the same time. Talk about multitasking!

Round up your friends and family and come enjoy this fun & unique event.

Word Gamers Do Good!

Like to workout your vocabulary?
Check this website out!

<http://www.freerice.com/index.php>

For every correct definition, the United Nations World Food Program donates 20 grains of rice. Now that's not a whole lot of rice, so play on! It's fun and feeds hungry people.

Super Duper!

SEE NEXT PAGE
FOR IMPORTANT
ACTIONS FOR
NEIGHBORS TO TAKE
IMMEDIATELY IN ORDER
TO STOP OUR VALLEY
FROM BECOMING A 3500'
WIDE POWER CORRIDOR!

DEADLINE FEB 14TH!

West-wide Energy Corridors Routes Planned

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Departments of Energy, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense have issued a draft plan proposing over 6,000 miles of energy corridors through public land in eleven western states – “with a width of 3,500 feet unless otherwise specified.” (3,500 feet = two-thirds of a mile wide) Thousands of acres of public and private Rogue Valley and Siskiyou Crest lands are in the draft plan’s cross-hairs.

Released in mid-November, the October 2007 “**West-wide Energy Corridor Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**” (DPEIS) -- <http://corridoreis.anl.gov> -- proposes huge swaths of corridors through hundreds of thousands of acres of public land (including national recreation areas, monuments, wildlife refuges, and more) to “accommodate multiple pipelines (such as for oil, gas, or hydrogen), electricity transmission lines, and related infrastructure, such as access and maintenance roads, compressors, pumping stations, and other structures.” The Energy Policy Act of 2005 gives energy companies functional powers of eminent domain to push these multiple pipeline and power line corridors through thousands of miles of private land as the energy companies “connect the dots” between far-flung segments of public land.

Preliminary June 2006 maps showed a 3,500 foot wide energy corridor bisecting the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument by “expanding” existing 100 and 200 foot power line rights-of-way. Public outcry and congressional subcommittee hearing testimony by the Soda Mountain Wilderness Council has apparently caused the interagency **plan to now route the two-thirds-of-a-mile-wide pipeline/power-line corridor around the Monument**. Difficult to discern maps in the DPEIS now show “Corridor #4-247” crossing the Siskiyou Crest from Oregon into California just west of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument – and then heading east through Redding BLM’s Horseshoe Wildlife Area across Jenny Creek Falls to a Klamath River dam substation. The marks in pink highlighter show the proposed route – this is the best map provided although it lacks any substantive detail.

ACTION

☛ **February 14 is the deadline for public comment on the draft plan.**

In response to the interagency October 2007 “West-wide Energy Corridor Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement” (DPEIS), below are some comments upon and arguments in opposition to siting an energy corridor through the Siskiyou Crest and Colestin Valley area. Please use whichever of these resonate most with you or other arguments you derive. Feel free to rework the comments into your own language, as carbon copy letters will not have the same impact as letters written in all our varying voices. Keep in mind that this comment period relates only to the designation (siting) of energy corridors, so comments are best that stay on topic. Sharing concerns with elected officials and public lands managers about the merits or otherwise of the plan itself may be in order, but are a separate exercise that I comment upon in “Editor’s Letter to the Editor”.

A COMMENT FORM can be found online: <http://corridoreis.anl.gov/involve/comments/index.cfm>. You may fill it in digitally (either by composing a short message in the space provided or by attaching a Word or PDF document) or print a paper copy and then mail or fax as below.

Mail: West-wide Energy Corridor DEIS
Argonne National Laboratory
9700 S. Cass Avenue – Bldg 900, Mail Stop 4
Argonne, IL 60439

Fax: 866-542-5904

Procedural and cultural arguments:

- Object to the “pieces” on the DPEIS map, identified as “Corridor #4-247,” being called a “federal corridor” at all – since the widely separated public parcels are being used as a pretext to build on far more acres of private and state lands by condemnation. In Oregon, only 62% of the proposed corridors are on existing utility and transportation Rights of Way!
- Complain about the vague and inconsistent maps in the Draft PEIS and the lack of a local public meeting for a federal project proposing such huge impacts to our local region. Indeed, for many of us, this is the first we are hearing of a plan that could profoundly change our region.
- A corridor 2/3 mile wide, compared to the usual under 200 feet, would take up something like 1/5 of the Colestin Valley width, completely destroying its unique character and obviating many of the current private uses of the land. As a corollary to that, one disaster with the energy corridor would inescapably impact the entire Valley and all its residents.

Geographical and geological arguments:

- Describe that the Colestin Valley and Siskiyou Pass, and the corridor down to the Rogue Valley, amount to a geographic and geologic hazard, as well as a natural bottleneck creating the following concerns:
 - The area is famously unstable, with slumps, shifts and collapses occurring frequently. The word "Siskiyou" has been described variously as having been translated from Native American language, "moving mountain," "mountain that moves" and other similar phrases. For example, as a consequence, Colestin Valley now has to employ a receiver to rebroadcast telephone signals because the cable was rendered un-usable by earth movement along its route.
 - Even if aboveground, locating a corridor here presents problems, not the least of which is that it parallels Interstate 5 through a very narrow area. Interstate 5 carries vast amounts of toxic wastes, including nuclear waste, and essential supplies up and down the coast. Any sort of pipeline break, spill, or sabotage would not only disable the pipeline but also endanger Interstate 5 traffic for an indefinite period.
 - Despite a vigorous volunteer effort, there simply are not enough emergency services here to handle any crisis occasioned by mega electrical corridors or oil, gas or hydrogen pipeline problems. And, because of the location, adjacent emergency services would be very unlikely to reach the site of the problem in a timely fashion, if at all, depending on how serious the accident, spill, break, toxic or vehicular disaster. Our recent blizzard is enough evidence to prove that, while we love it, our area is subject to natural forces out of our control and becomes nearly inaccessible when they occur.
 - This stretch along Interstate 5 is the longest stretch of 6% grade on the interstate system. Along with the instability and bottleneck problems, the expense of siting a bunch of lines across the Siskiyou Pass would be enormous. Someone sitting in an office saw this on a map and decided it would be a good connecting point. They really needed to have some geologists and engineers tell them what's what. For that matter, just a few long-haul truckers would have set them straight. There must be hundreds of less problematic and expensive locations to route a corridor like this. Surely a steep, narrow, high mountain pass subject to extreme weather and instability cannot be a prudent nor cost-effective choice.
 - A corridor that wide (2/3 mile, compared to the usual under 200 feet) would take up something like 1/5 of the Colestin Valley width, completely destroying its unique character and obviating many of the current private uses of the land. As a corollary to that, one disaster with the energy corridor would inescapably impact the entire Valley and all its residents.

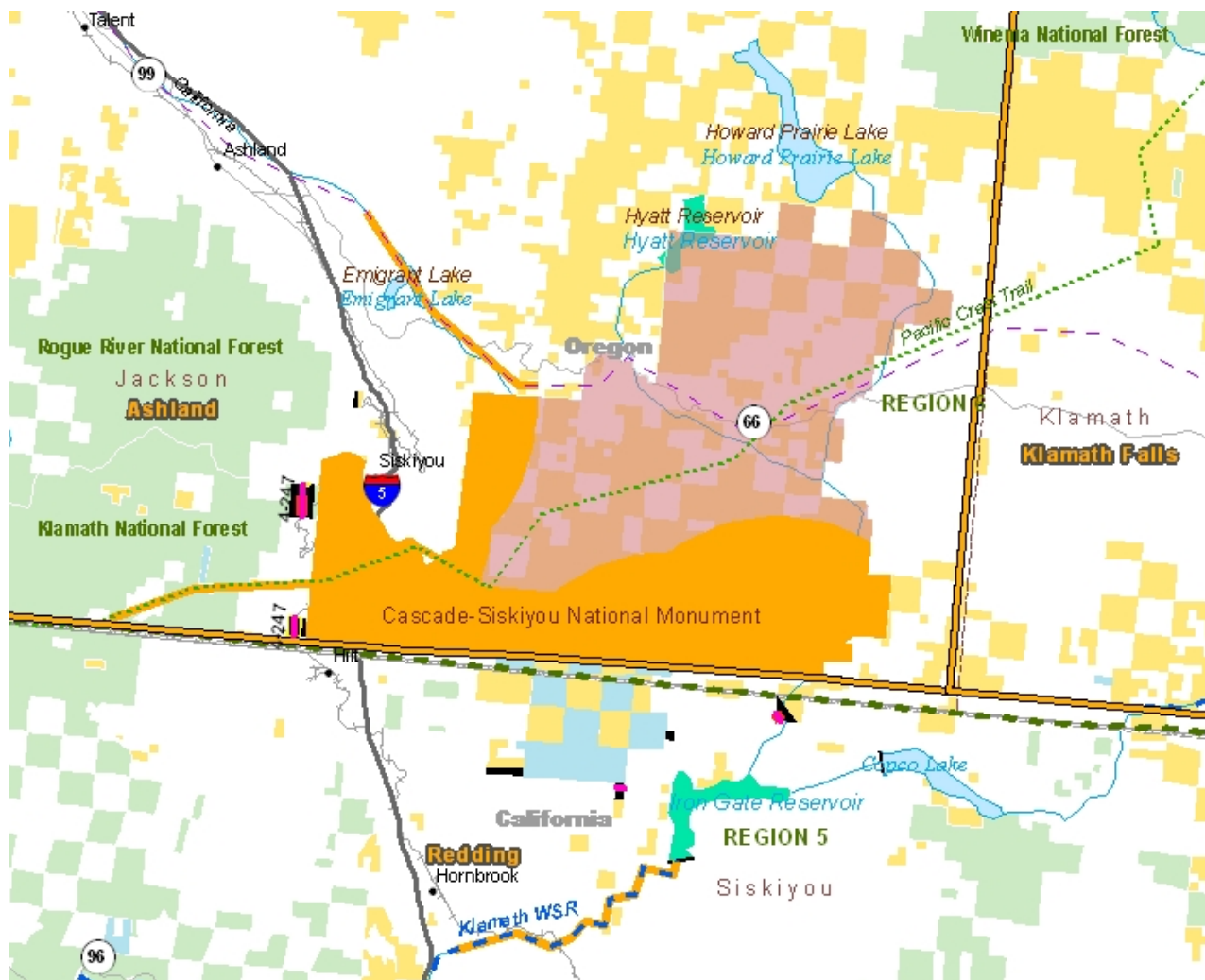
Environmental arguments:

- Thank the federal agencies for moving the proposed 3,500 foot wide energy corridor route out of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. But, make clear to them that the ecologically important Cascade-Siskiyou biological corridor of the Siskiyou Crest would *not* be enhanced by a 3,500 foot wide energy facility corridor compounding the already serious negative ecological impact of the I-5 transportation corridor. The adjacent Federal land involved is a national monument created by Presidential Proclamation to, among other things, protect objects of

scientific interest and facilitate east-west migration along the only high-to-high migration corridor in the Northwest. A huge break in that corridor not only could defeat the purpose of the National Monument but also raise legal problems regarding the violation of a Presidential Proclamation. Why not seek a flatter, less ecologically sensitive route that does not transit alongside a National Monument created to protect sensitive species and routes?

- Inform the agencies that by making a Klamath River dam substation a destination for their proposed energy corridor, they are targeting a substation connected to a dam that may soon be dismantled when court-ordered priority concerns for Klamath River salmon prevent re-licensing of Klamath River dams.
- Remind them that California's state-and-federally managed Horseshoe Wildlife Area, just south of Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, is considered by hunters and wildlife biologists to be the "best of the last" deer winter range in the region.
- Tell the agencies that the energy corridor segment proposed for California's Jenny Creek Falls is a Redding BLM Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

Thanks to Dave Willis and Nancy Ames Cole for supplying most of the information shared in the Buzz.



The encircled bits apparently represent the proposed route for Corridor #4-247. Not much to go on, especially in California, but clearly proceeding north along the west edge of the Monument right up the Colestin. It is up to us to inform the people making siting decisions that the Siskiyou Crest area may appear feasible on paper but ground-truthing will demonstrate persuasively that it is not a suitable route.



FIGURE 2.2-5 Unrestricted Conceptual West-wide Energy Transport Network Following Step 1 of the Corridor Siting Process

This map is the proposed grid for all 11 western states. Note that Corridor #4-247 doesn't even appear. It is difficult to really understand what is being planned when the public information is both vague and inconsistent.

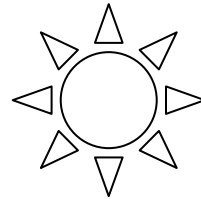
EDITOR'S LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In speaking with neighbors, there seems to be broad consensus that a huge swath of "energy corridor" running the length of the Colestin Valley is not something we support. It may seem like a long shot that this could ever come to pass, but on the other hand, I didn't know the first thing about the entire West-wide Energy Corridor Plan authorized by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 only 2 years ago. It passed without my comment at that time; I surely would have opposed the plan had I been alerted to it's intent.

To my mind, centralizing our power distribution system further is a deeply flawed strategy for our energy supply future. Does it make sense to concentrate multiple vital transportation, communication and energy sources all along one route? I believe such concentration makes the energy supply much more susceptible to sabotage or terrorist attack and increases impact on larger populations. Accidental or intentional disruption of the Siskiyou Pass area could easily lead to blackouts and fuel shortages for hundreds of miles up and down the west coast.

I favor increasing **de**-centralization and focus on conservation measures and alternative sources of power. It struck me as ironic that there is a massive energy corridor planned through our area in which off-the-grid, passive solar, highly energy efficient homes are so heavily

represented. A wide power corridor populated by multiple electrical, oil, propane, and hydrogen gas lines is going to be a hard sell to people who are already in the forefront of energy conservation and who have a relatively light carbon footprint relative to average Americans.



Instead of Washington bringing their fossil fuels to us in a continuing march to exacerbate global warming and associated destruction linked to non-renewable fossil fuels, let's take alternative power and conservation to Washington! My lifestyle, of course, has an impact, I too use propane and gasoline, but I have also made many efforts from small to large to conserve energy as well. If every American household pursued a similar course, the problems we face would be that much more manageable.

For my part, I am going to write my various congressional representatives suggesting that the Energy Corridor Plan be dumped. Yes, planning for our energy future is critically necessary, but forward thinking approaches, rather than massive expansion of the fossil fuel delivery system, are the keys to a sustainable energy future.

Trees And Electrical Lines Don't Mix!

Recent snowstorms have brought many winter safety issues to the attention of the Colestin Volunteer Rural Fire Department. On several occasions, the Fire Department responded to calls of downed electrical service lines, also known as drop lines or service drops. These are the wires that run from the pole down to your home. **It is the responsibility of the homeowner to keep trees clear of these lines.** According to Seattle Light's website, nearly one-third of power outages can be traced to tree interference.

Trees that grow into the power lines can cause problems in three ways:

- **Safety:** First, trees directly touching power lines put constant stress on live wires and cause branches to burn and fall to the ground, sometimes causing fires in trees. *Locally, CRFD noticed signs that fire may have resulted had the snow not been so heavy.* Second, the electricity in power lines poses no danger to you until it comes into contact with a ground or something touching the earth - like a tree. A grounded contact provides an alternate path for electricity to flow through, creating a safety hazard and a potential outage. The potential for electrical shock exists if a person causes a limb to touch a live wire or if something they are carrying, like a pole pruner, makes contact.
- **Voltage loss:** Trees touching power lines drain electricity off the electrical system resulting in voltage loss. Low voltage can damage motor-driven appliances such as refrigerators or washing machines, and sensitive electronics such as computers.
- **Storm-related outages:** Wind, snow and ice often damage trees. Branches, limbs and entire trees can fall on power lines, tearing down energized lines, transformers and poles. The resulting power outage can rob you of heat, lights, communication and refrigeration. During very severe storms, outages can last for days. *Many folks here can attest to the truth of this – living without heat, water pumps, telephone service, lights etc for several days during this last storm.*

Although the drop line is not a high-voltage line, using a professional is recommended to clear any dead, dying and living branches that are in the clearance zone around power lines. 10'-15' is a good minimum to consider. **LOOK NOW at how your trees are behaving under snow load.** Next spring and summer when you are considering pruning trees back, you may not really recall just how low the limbs can go when weighted down with snow. Also consider line sag, which happens to power lines in hot weather, and the effect of wind causing both trees and lines to sway. The clearances are meant to hold in all weather conditions.

General info from Nevadapower.com, Sierrapacific.com, and Seattle.gov.

CRFD has spoken with Aardvark Tree Service in Ashland (488-5177), which will offer a discount for clearing work around drop lines if several folks want work done. All Clear Brush (488-7969) are also interested in working with us and are ODF trained and have multiple other certifications.

CRFD WINTER SEASON ALERT

SNOW PROBLEMS

Our district's driveways, back-roads, and even the main roads have been difficult-to-impossible to use lately with the heavy amounts of snow, with limited resources to open them up again. Yet for emergency access, *these roads still need to be kept cleared of snow as much as possible*. We are aware of the hardships many of our residents are having with this, yet recent incidents force us to reiterate the truth - that if we can't reach you during a fire or medical situation, we may not be able to help you at all. Also, if there isn't enough width on your road now for two vehicles to pass, even a few *strategic turnouts* would help. *Turnaround space* at your residence is likewise needed.

Recently, *downed trees and tree limbs across access roads* are also presenting problems. Not only do they interfere with your travel plans, but they also prevent timely emergency access to you. While you have likely taken care of what has already fallen in your path, we urge everyone to *look at trees and branches near or over driveways or access roads* that could still fall, should we get more heavy snow, *and to try to eliminate any potential hazards by trimming and thinning where it is needed and safe to do so*. **Caution:** If power drop lines are involved, call us first. Power companies are NOT responsible for these - property owners are - yet drop lines are dangerous and need special handling. We will try to assist you to locate a qualified professional to do it.

Home Heating Issues

Already this winter, we have had some serious incidents because of a lack of wood stove maintenance and other related problems. Please heed these **reminders**:

- Keep your stove pipes clean.
- Use ONLY a metal bucket for ashes, and locate it in a safe place, free from combustible material, for at least 24 hours before further disposal.
- Do not leave your stove unattended while the drafts are still open.
- Keep combustibles (clothing, shoes, paper, etc) at least 30 inches away from your stove, fireplace, or other heating unit.

Appliance safety issues

- Do NOT leave home with the clothes dryer still on. Overheating is an all-too-common problem. To lessen this fire danger, clean your dryer filters often, and clean the dryer duct at least once a year.
- Make sure that all electrical appliances are turned off before you leave your residence for any length of time.

Preparedness and prevention are your best defense.

For further information, see www.crfd.org or call us at (541) 488-1768.

For Sale

Sears Pro Form 725 treadmill.


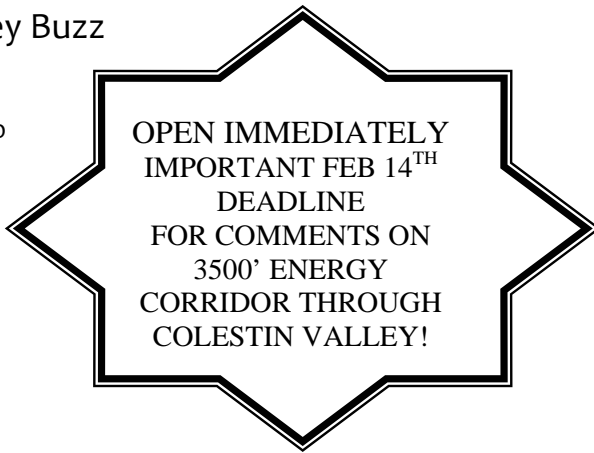
It works, has a relatively new board and runner but is not easy (for current owners) to lighten the belt. Goes to the Best Offer and you haul. 541-821-8291

Wanted

After school driver needed (M-F). Ashland to Hilt. Generous compensation.
Please call 541-621-2705.

Colestin Valley Buzz

Lisa Buttrey
1211 Colestin Rd
Ashland, OR 97520



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March 15, 2008

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