

APPLEGATE OUTBACK: MY OPINION

World War III

BY BOB FISCHER



Let it be known throughout the Applegate Valley (at least on my property) that the common gopher and mole have been added to the endangered species list. My peaceful 13 acres has become a battlefield. It is man versus gopher and mole. Human intelligence pitted against animal instinct, modern technology against primitive rodent behavior.

I shall overcome. I shall adapt and claim victory in the end! This whole conflict started last November. The gophers were partying in our south pasture. The moles were sucking on worms in the garden. Then it happened: the moles pushed up mounds of earth in my front yard. The gophers did the same, but tossed in a few rocks for good measure. Little did I know that ignoring them was a big mistake—they were digging bunkers. Mashing the mounds with my boots, leveling the earth and raking only brought on more enemy trenches. The defiling work of those subterranean diggers erupted almost daily.

This gentleman's war turned ugly. I resolved to gain the upper hand in the conflict. First, I purchased traps in assorted sizes. I modified a push lawnmower by putting a long metal tube into the exhaust; I bought gopher bombs and highway flares. I had an enormous amount of gear and red-painted stakes to help locate the bunkers in the high grass.

I outfitted my lawn tractor (my tank) and trailer to haul the stuff. The wife

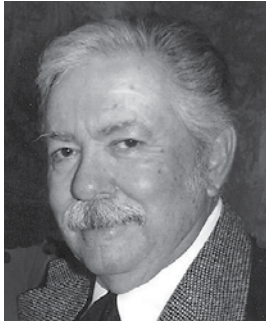
swore I went off the deep end when I put my camouflage hunting clothes, complete with side arm. General Patton would have been proud. I had to dig enormous holes to set the traps but the moles simply tunneled around them showing their contempt with fresh dirt piles. I tried poison but they tossed it out like three-week-old bread.

My next mode of attack was gas. I brought my sputtering old mower into the battle. I pumped the exhaust into as many holes as I could find. The area took on the appearance of a geothermal tourist attraction with wisps of caustic fumes belching forth from the earth. Earthworms writhed to the surface in panic.

It was a thorough routing. The enemy fled in panic from the field. For a time that is. A week later they returned while I was in a therapy session for Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome and resumed their work. I envisioned them wearing little ear plugs and gas masks to mock me with fresh mole turnpikes zigzagging across my patchy grass.

Winter has set in; all is quiet on the western front. Traps are put away. My tank is in the barn. Camey's are hung. The score is.....17 gophers and 6 moles. The moles and gophers and I will fight again, I am sure. Maybe by June I will have enough fur to make the wife a coat—her birthday is coming!

Bob Fischer • 541-846-6218



Bob Fischer

Disaster Preparedness Area Workshops Planned

If a wildfire strikes in the Applegate Valley do you know what you will do with your livestock? Where will you take them and how will you get them there? What about your pets? Have you thought about the landscape around your home and what you can do to minimize the damage from a wildfire? These are important questions and information to assist you in preparing to protect your homes, your pets, your livestock and yourselves is coming to you!

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and the Applegate Animal Disaster Preparedness Committee are hosting free community workshops this spring to discuss the issues surrounding disaster preparedness.

The first workshop was held last month at Pacifica in Williams and involved ODF, Oregon State University Extension staff, Williams Fire Department volunteers and members from the Animal Disaster Preparedness Committee. Topics covered were burning and fuels reduction, grant opportunities, the Applegate Fire Plan, noxious weeds and large and small animal evacuation.

Other community workshops will be held from **6:00 to 8:00 pm at the Applegate Lodge on April 7, Schmidt Winery on April 20 and another at the McKee Bridge Restaurant in May (date to be determined). Food and beverages will be available.** Invitations will be mailed to you for the workshop specific to your area.

These workshops are designed to not only be informative but also useful in promoting local discussion among neighbors about action we can take now, before we smell the smoke. Let's find out how we can work together to protect what we all value.

For more information please contact Michele Brown-Riding, 541-846-1460 or email at michele@apbb.net.

Logtown Cemetery Cleanup April 30 starts at 10 am

Volunteer help is always welcome. Please call Janeen Sathre 541-899-1443 Logtown Cemetery is a non-profit historical cemetery

Public Announcement:

Annual Board Meeting of the Logtown Cemetery Association May 15, 1:00 pm at the Jacksonville Library. Members of the Association includes anyone who owns a plot at Logtown or has a family member buried there; all members are welcomed at the meeting.



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Support the Applegater Newspaper

Attend our 2nd Annual Spring Benefit Barbeque Chicken Dinner, Sunday May 1, 2-6 pm

Enjoy Wine Tasting, Silent Auction, Live Music and more. Held at the Applegate River Ranch Lodge & Restaurant.