

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Opinion Pieces and Letters to the Editor represent the opinion of the author, not that of the *Applegater* or the Applegate Valley Community Newspaper. We are a community-based newspaper that receives diverse opinions on different topics. Letters should be no longer than 450 words, and may be edited for grammar and length. Opinion Pieces should be no longer than 600 words. All Letters and Opinion Pieces must be signed, with a full street address or P.O. Box and phone number. Individual Letters may or may not be published in consecutive issues.

Address Opinion Pieces and Letters to the Editor to:
The Applegater c/o Applegate Valley Community Newspaper, Inc.
 7386 Highway 238 • PMB 308
 Jacksonville, OR 97530
 Email: gater@Applegater.org

Dear Editor:

Many thanks for a superbly entertaining and informative newspaper. My husband and I thoroughly enjoy each issue, reading it from cover to cover. I can't say that is our experience with other local newspapers we receive.

Your paper has been arriving at this address for many years, long before we moved in. But my parents, before our residency, would have enjoyed it as well. So, thank you for continuing to send the *Applegater* to this address probably without anyone contributing support over the years. We are more than happy to be "sponsors" at this time, and possibly next year we can work our way up to "supporters."

Thank you again and please keep up the good work . . .
 Sandra and Rudy

Dear Editor:

I wish it [my contribution] could be more! My husband was the son of Harry Brown, one of the Brown Brothers saw mill in Williams.

Virginia Brown, Grants Pass

Dear Editor:

Though I enjoy most of the *Applegater*, Greeley Wells' "Starry Side" is far and away my favorite part—to the point where I cut it out and save it until the next season's issue comes out. I refer to it frequently. Thanks for your efforts in keeping this valuable local treasure alive. I hope my donation is one of many!

Sue Hall, Grants Pass

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed your piece on embarrassing moments. And I agree with you there is much we should be embarrassed about as a nation. Sometimes I despair—then I go for a walk with the dogs. Or do something constructive with tangible results, like wire an outlet.

And aren't we clever to ignore climate change? A piece from Thomas L. Friedman: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/19/opinion/19friedman.html?ref=columnists>

Neal Anderson, Applegate

Does your lawn mower look this happy?

Goats are the most eco-friendly lawn mower and brush hog ever invented. Every Applegater who can provide a safe, loving home should consider adopting a pair of these fire-prevention and fertilization experts. Nasty weeds like star thistle, poison oak, and blackberries are easy pickings for a goat. Goat pellets are nearly odorless, easy to collect, and can be put directly into your garden to feed your flowers and vegetables. Contact us to schedule a tour of our care farm and meet some of our rescued goats and other assorted farm animals. They'll greet you with a smile!



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OPINION

Climate change is coming

BY CHRIS CRAWFORD

It now appears that humanity lacks the political perspicience to cope with the problem of carbon emissions, which means that climate change will likely continue its accelerating trend. Although we can hope for the best, we should plan for the worst, and the prudent landowner should already be taking future climate change into consideration. In this article, I shall describe how future climate change should factor into your current decisions.

First, a quick summary of climate change as it is likely to affect the Applegate Valley. Over the next ten years, the changes will be tiny, but after twenty years, they will become significant and after fifty years, they will be serious. There's also plenty of uncertainty as to the likely magnitude of these changes. They could be fairly small—but they could also be much larger. I'll present what I believe to be a reasonable compromise between the worst and the best cases.

The first effect, obviously, will be increases in temperatures. Over the next ten years, these will be only a degree or two (Fahrenheit), but after that the increases will come faster. In twenty years, we might well be looking at temperature increases of three degrees, and between five and ten degrees within fifty years. Summer temperature increases will be slightly higher than winter increases, and nighttime increases will be slightly greater than daytime increases.

Precipitation will probably increase—but in all the wrong ways. We'll get more rainfall in the winter and early spring, but less snowfall, and less rain at other times. Thus, we'll be facing greater prospects for flooding in the winter but less available water in the summer (because the snowpack will melt sooner). Factor in the higher summer temperatures and we get parched times in the summer.

What does this mean for you? Here are some recommendations:

First, if you don't have air conditioning for the summer, you'll probably have to get it someday. I doubt that you'll need to retrofit an existing house anytime soon, but if you're building a new house you should certainly install a cooling system. On the plus side, we won't be needing as much heating capacity as in times past; winters will probably be warmer.

If you're planting seedlings, NOW is the time to start changing your species mix. Douglas firs are facing a grim future—they don't fare well in higher temperatures and dryer environments. Scale back planting Douglas Firs. Instead, you should lean towards ponderosa pines and other drought-tolerant species.

Studies show that tree mortality rates in forests in the West have already doubled in the last few decades—figure on this trend accelerating. The picture is complicated because there are several factors at work. Increased amounts of carbon dioxide in the air will encourage faster growth, and the greater net precipitation will increase growth in trees with deep roots. However, shallow-rooted trees will suffer from the increased temperatures. The best guess is that the increasing temperatures will cause an overall increase in the growth of woody species for a few decades, followed by overall decreases. However, warmer winters will mean larger numbers of pine bark beetles, which bodes ill for survival rates of pine trees.

This suggests that we are moving towards forests with smaller trees and more brush. The combination of more deadwood and brush, higher temperatures, and less

water in the summer will yield bigger and more destructive forest fires. Whatever fire protection measures you have already implemented, you'll need to be expanding them over the years. Whatever forest you now have, if you don't thin it, the fires will do so for you—and a lot less selectively.

Figure on less available water for whatever you grow. If you irrigate using water from the Applegate River, you'd better start preparing for reductions in the amount of water you can draw, as river flows in the summer will be much reduced. If you use well water, figure on having to drill deeper and pay higher pumping costs, because everybody else will be pulling more water out of the aquifers to compensate for the higher temperatures. A lot of wells will go dry. Sooner or later (probably later), you'll have to shift to less thirsty vegetation.

There might well be greater flood threats in the winter. It would not be prudent to build anything close to a watercourse—eventually it could be destroyed in a winter flood. Even small creeks will be subject to flooding. The freakish floods that hit this area in 1997 are likely to become more common.

Indeed, weather in general will show more freakishness as the atmosphere adjusts to rapidly changing conditions. This spring, for example, we experienced abnormally cool temperatures alternating with abnormally high temperatures, along with greater precipitation. This kind of meteorological craziness is likely to increase. It's impossible to predict just what kind of effects this might have.

Lastly, you should figure on some sort of political response to climate change; once the realities start to sink in, people will demand that politicians do something—by which time, of course, it will be too late. Still, there will be some responses, which are most likely to include higher prices for all forms of energy. Whatever your energy use is now, you need to think about reducing it over the long term. I'm sorry to tell you that there will eventually be strong political pressure to reduce wood-burning as a source of heat, because it is a particularly egregious emitter of CO₂. Those of us who burn wood in the winter (myself included) are too small a political group to resist the likely pressures, and so we'll likely face regulations eliminating low-efficiency uses of firewood, such as open fireplaces. If you're building a new house, DO NOT install an open fireplace. Put in something more efficient, such as a closed system with forced air.

Climate change is coming. We can't stop it, and it seems unlikely that we'll do much to slow it down. You should start preparing for it. If you'd like to delve more deeply into this subject, you can find information at the following places on the Internet:

United States Global Change Research Program, Impacts In the United States:

<http://www.globalchange.gov/publications/reports/scientific-assessments/us-impacts>

US Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station Report on Western Forests and Climate Change:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/science-update-6.pdf>

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