

Applegate Trails Association is a year old

BY KEN CHAPMAN AND DAVID CALAHAN

One of the joys of living in the Applegate is how quickly we can be enjoying a variety of outdoor activities. One year ago, four Applegaters—David Calahan, Michelle LaFave, Tom Carstens and Judi Stratton—decided that there was a need for more hiking trails in our valley. They were motivated by the Siskiyou Upland Trails Association when they reopened the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail and proposed the Jack-Ash Trail from Ashland to Jacksonville. The group decided to explore the possibility of creating the Applegate Ridge Trail (ART). The ART would run primarily on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands along the northern rim of the Applegate Valley from Jacksonville and the Jack-Ash Trail to Grants Pass.

The proposed route has spectacular views of the Applegate Valley, the Rogue Valley and all of the big, beautiful mountains that surround us. While much of the route is on existing roads and trails that have been open to multiple use for years, the Applegate Trails Association (ATA) is particularly excited about two portions of the trail that are appropriate

for a nonmotorized designation. The first section starts near Sterling Creek Road and goes west across the bald face of the ridge on the north side of Bishop Creek and Woodrat Mountain. From there, a hiker can see Mount Ashland, the Red Buttes and get a bird's-eye view of Ruch. The other potentially nonmotorized section is on the boundary of the proposed Wellington Wild Lands, a 6,000-acre area encompassing Wellington Butte that has never been logged or disturbed by significant human activity. Hiking the ART above the Wild Lands has incredible views of Forest Creek, Humbug Creek, Thompson Creek, Grayback Mountain and Mount Isabelle.

A lot has happened since our founding group met for the first time. All of the necessary organizational work for the formation of the ATA has been completed, including filing for nonprofit status. Reviewing the detailed ART proposal was the main topic of our last meeting with the Medford BLM. Adoption of other potential hiking, biking and equestrian trails was also discussed. The groundwork has been laid for a long-lasting, mutually

beneficial partnership between ATA and both the Medford and Grants Pass BLM offices.

Board members and our growing group of volunteers have taken numerous hikes to determine the route of the ART and potential connector trails. Additionally, other trails in our valley have been scouted to see whether they might be considered to be part of the trail network supported by the ATA. The trails identified to date include the Mule Mountain Trail and the Hinkle Lake Trail. Both of these trails are most appropriate for hiking, biking and equestrian use and deserve our support and protection.

Visit our website

The best way to stay updated about ATA activities is by visiting our website: www.applegatetrails.org. It has a wealth of information about our organization and maps showing the approximate route of the ART. Check out the regularly scheduled hikes on the calendar and the growing list of day-hikes on the hike page. The detailed day hike descriptions allow one to discover



Hike with the ATA to Hinkle Lake on June 30, 2012.

some of our valley's trails on your own.

What can you do? The first step is easy. Just getting outdoors can do wonders for your overall health. We also invite you to join us on a hike or take a hike on your own. Volunteering or financially supporting the ATA is also great for your mental well-being. The one-year-old is already walking and we invite you to walk with us.

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Are you missing the regular "Applegate Outback" by Bob Fischer and "Dirty fingernails and all" by Sioux Rogers? See them online at www.applegater.org!



"Please send in a few dollars to support the GATER. I love to read it and chew it, and it was my favorite paper for potty training."
Barney McGee

APPLEGATE TRAILS ASSOCIATION—GUIDED HIKE SCHEDULE FOR 2012

Spring is in the air—let's go for a hike! Additional details about each hike can be found on our website calendar. Any changes or cancellations will also be posted here: www.applegatetrails.org. The distances below are estimates, and the ratings of E (Easy), M (Moderate) and D (Difficult) are merely guides—one person's "moderate" may be "difficult" for another. All hikes have elevation changes. Remember to wear appropriate footwear and bring plenty of water. Please leave your pets at home unless otherwise stated. Check out the website "hike" page for the growing list of personal day hikes.

For more information, contact any of the Applegate Trails Association board members via the website or call David Calahan, chairman and frequent hike leader, at 541-899-1226.

DATE	HIKE	MEET AT 9 AM	DISTANCE	RATING
May 6	Applegate Ridge Trail above Balls Branch (Humbug Creek tributary)	Bunny Meadows staging area	3 miles	E to M
June 2	Mule Mountain Trail	Ruch Plaza	5 miles	M to D
June 30	Hinkle Lake	Ruch Plaza	4 to 6 miles	M to D
July 15	Steve Fork to Sucker Creek Gap in the Red Buttes Wilderness	Applegate Store (gravel lot)	6 miles	D
Aug 19	Clover and Enchanted Forests Trails, Wine and Dine at Schmidt Family Vineyards after the hike	Applegate Store (gravel lot)	4 miles	M
Sept 7	Isabelle Spring Trail	Bunny Meadows staging area	2 or 4 miles	E
Oct 21	Car Tour on Applegate Ridge Trail via Savage Creek (off Rogue River Highway, Grants Pass)	Applegate Store (gravel lot)	60 miles	E
Nov 2	Wellington Wild Lands shuttle-thru hike, off trail	Bunny Meadows staging area	3 miles	D

Bob Thomas Automotive celebrates 15 years

BY SALLY BUTTSHAW

Bob Thomas Automotive, Inc. is a full-service automotive repair facility serving the Rogue and Applegate Valleys. They are celebrating 15 years in business on May 12, and will be offering free lunch and giveaways.

Their friendly and knowledgeable staff will help you get your vehicle running perfectly. With all of the technicians being ASE-certified, some as master technicians, you can rest assured your vehicle is in good hands. They are proud of their reputation of professionalism and honesty. Stop in and experience the advantages that their independently owned service center can offer you.

Bob and his wife Lori opened their business in 1997. Bob had prior experience working for a local automotive dealership, and Lori had a background in banking and business employment. Now she takes care

of all back-office operations.

They have fleet business capabilities and a recently added 6,000-square-foot fleet shop. With twelve bays and seven technicians, they will keep your fleet of vehicles in stellar condition. Special pricing is available for companies with more than five vehicles.

For more information, be sure to check out their website at www.bobthomasautomotive.com. Bob Thomas Automotive is located at 535 Rossanley Drive in Medford near the intersection of Sage Road. The phone number is 541-734-3743.

Call them for any questions regarding your vehicle's maintenance and operation. They will be happy to help. And they offer shuttle service and a senior discount.

Sally Buttshaw
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