

SUTA suits us, and ATA is at it again

BY DIANA COOGLE

With recreation trumping timber for bringing money into the Rogue Valley these days, the two trail-building organizations in the Applegate, the Siskiyou Upland Trails Association (SUTA) and the Applegate Trails Association (ATA), have important roles to play. And the roles are looking good!

ATA just received a \$10,000 grant from REI to build the East ART, the first section of its Applegate Ridge Trail. This trail will connect Cathedral Hills trails in Grants Pass to the Jack-Ash Trail, which SUTA is building between the Applegate and Ashland and thence to the Pacific Crest Trail. SUTA's plans are also moving along well, with the imminent completion of the BLM's Environmental Assessment. Some time in the not too distant future, hikers will be walking from the California border to Grants Pass along the scenic ridges above the towns of the Rogue and Applegate valleys. It promises to be a popular route, bringing hikers to the area who will happily spend their money here. (Just think how glad they will be to spend a night in town after all those nights in a tent.)

One big step toward completing these ambitious trail systems was SUTA's recent suggestion to the Motorcycle Riders Association (MRA) that they work together. "The MRA was shocked," said Hope Robertson, SUTA president. After all, motorcyclists and hikers are historical enemies.

Recognizing that as an unproductive attitude, SUTA and MRA, under its new president, Jack LeRoy, started looking for, and soon found, common ground: trash concerns, shooting ranges along their trails, potential shared parking lots and kiosks, shared "policing" of trails. Chuck Steahly of MRA and Hope worked out a formal Memorandum of Understanding that allows the two organizations to address those concerns together.

Then they started working on the biggest issue: trails. SUTA is strictly

nonmotorized. MRA, of course, uses the motors SUTA wants to avoid. How, then, could they share trails?

By taking turns making accommodations for each other, Hope said. For instance, SUTA wanted to use an old BLM road up Anderson Butte currently used by motorcyclists. MRA expressed its concern about that plan in a meeting with SUTA. Consequently, SUTA, working with the Medford BLM, has proposed a different nonmotorized route, adding one and a half miles to the total mileage of the trail, but allowing the motorcyclists use of the old road. In another place, SUTA may use an historic hiking trail currently used by motorcycles, and the MRA can consider building a new route for their use. Decisions can be made on the basis of best usage. For instance, a very steep motorcycle trail, challenging and fun for motorcyclists, is too steep for horses so might as well remain motorized. "Besides," Hope pointed out, "when the weather is too dry, motorcyclists can't use the trails, and when the trails are too wet, hikers don't want to."

"It was the only way to go," Hope said. "Otherwise, it's all fights." Jack added that the agreement would benefit "all forms of recreation in our forests."

SUTA has also been putting in the last of the 22 directional signs and installing several interpretive signs on the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail, using Title II funds. Thanks to a grant from REI, they will construct a small bridge across Deming Creek on the north end of that trail and add an interpretive sign about the historic flumes found along the ditch.

ATA is hoping that the scoping document for the East ART will be ready in early summer. While they are waiting for BLM to unravel the red tape, they're turning their attention to the trails at Cantrall Buckley Park. Last year ATA volunteers opened a loop trail to the north along the river. This spring a group of volunteers cleaned and prepared the trails at the south end of the park, along the river and then above it. Bushes were cut back, horsetail ferns and blackberries cleared away, trails widened and strengthened, cairns built on the rocks to mark the path, and 14 fiberglass trail-post signs installed.

Cantrall Buckley is the only place in the Applegate with a public trail along the Applegate River, and it is lovely.

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SUTA board member Joy Rogalla, and Duane Mallams, the consummate trail finder for SUTA and ATA, prospect for the Jack-Ash trail route on the north side of the Anderson Butte ridge complex above the Grub Gulch trailhead.



Handcrafted 'Applecrates' for sale

Beautiful planters or multi-use boxes called "Applecrates," built with donated local wood and volunteer labor, are for sale. All proceeds will help sustain the *Applegater*.

You can see these sturdy, useful and long-lasting Applecrates at Applegate Valley Realty at 935 N. Fifth Street in Jacksonville. We are looking for additional outlets in the valley to display and sell our Applecrates and for customers to buy or order them.

The price of a stock planter box (see photo), 12" wide x 22" long x 14" deep, starts at \$40. Applecrates can also be customized. To buy one, get more information, or volunteer to help, call Chris Bratt at 541-846-6988.



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Discovering Pacifica: A garden in the Siskiyou

BY GABRIELA EAGLESOME

I love Pacifica. I love hiking among its madrones, manzanitas, and pines. I love its vistas of Grayback, its ponds and hills and meadows with horses, its ceramics and other classes, family night, Caterpillar Programs for kids, and the caring, tending, and planting on the property. Pacifica hits many of the built-in receptors in my psyche that make it feel like it's home, the way life should be.

Ray and Peg Prag are humble

about having established this wonderful place. As Peg says, "We didn't know what we were getting into."

After graduating from the University of California, Davis, in the 1970s with an MS in horticulture, Ray, with his wife, Peg, moved to Williams to establish Forestfarm, a primarily mail-order plant nursery. With an emphasis on nurturing local varieties and providing long-term jobs for people in the area, their business flourished.

Not having children, Ray and Peg began thinking of a different kind of legacy, one that would preserve the 7,500 varieties of plants they had cultivated over the years—a botanical garden, perhaps, and an educational and plant-preservation facility that would also serve other purposes to benefit the community.

In 1998 this vision found fulfillment. At the same time that the



old Messinger Farm was going into foreclosure, with the possibility that the 420 acres would be subdivided, a person close to Ray and Peg came into a large sum of money that he wanted to donate to a nonprofit organization. This combination of events resulted in Pacifica.

Now, Forestfarm itself has been donated to Pacifica. The process is almost finished. Fifteen employees keep their jobs at the nursery, and the 7,500 varieties of plants have found a

home at the new Water Gap Road site.

The land is open to the public, and classes and other educational opportunities are offered free of charge or for a minimal fee. It is wonderful to see this confluence of vision and goodwill fulfilled. Everyone benefits.

It takes a lot to maintain the property and to offer low-cost programs to the public. Donations and volunteer efforts are always welcome.

If you have not been to Pacifica, come soon to enjoy its many events and activities or even its solitude. If you have been to Pacifica, please come again! The address is 14615 Water Gap Road, Williams, OR. To learn more, visit www.pacificagarden.org and www.forestfarm.org.

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Pacifica's Summer Day Camps

Give your kids a summer to remember! You've seen the big green science-exploring machine, "The Caterpillar," traveling to your elementary schools for the past 14 years! Your friendly Caterpillar teachers are once again offering exciting day camps at Pacifica. More information: Vanessa at 541-621-6278 or vanessa@pacificagarden.org.

- **Camp Botanica (ages 6 - 12)**, June 22 - 25. For young plant enthusiasts.
- **Family Herbal Project Day ~ Calendula-Lavender Sunscreen**, June 26.
- **Crafty Crafters Camp (ages 6 - 12) ~ Ready, Set, Sew**, July 6 - 9.
- **Game and Story Camp (ages 7 - 13) ~ Players and Plots**, July 13 - 16.
- **Kitchen Camp (ages 6 - 12) ~ Cookin' Up a Storm**, July 20 - 23.
- **Nature Camp (ages 6 - 13) ~ Surviving the Great Outdoors**, July 27 - 30.
- **Awaken Camp (ages 8 - 15) ~ Chi/Prana Fusion**, August 3 - 6.
- **Acting Camp (ages 6 - 12) ~ Dramatic Adventures**, August 10 - 13.
- **Music Camp (ages 6 - 12) ~ Camp Jam**, August 17 - 20 with Grammy-winning engineer Dennis Dragon.
- **Art Camp (ages 6 - 12) ~ Imagine, Create, Discover**, August 24 - 27.

Get published—and support a good cause!

We're excited about the submissions we have received so far for *From the Heart of the Applegate: Essays, Poems, and Short Fiction by Applegate Valley Writers!* We're still looking for more, so send us your literary masterpieces by the June 30 deadline.

Here are the details:

- Writers must be current Applegate Valley residents (including Williams).
- Submissions can be in three categories: poetry, short fiction, and creative nonfiction.
- Writers may submit up to three poems and/or one prose piece. Prose pieces should fall between 800 - 2,500 words.
- Submissions should include an author's bio and photo.
- Photographs to accompany the submission may be included but are not required.
- Photos must be of commercial print quality (high resolution).
- There is no restriction on the topic.
- Previously published works are not eligible for inclusion.
- Copyright reverts to the writer after publication.
- Email submissions to gater@applegater.org.



All proceeds will help support the *Applegater*. If you have any questions, please email gater@applegater.org. We look forward to receiving your submissions and getting this unique book out to the world!