



Annual Maintenance Overturns Murphy's Law

from Tami Quinn Hollenbeck

The Murphy's Law for wells & pump systems is - they will cease to function primarily at a time when the need for them is the greatest.

This same law applies to the family car, and if you think it makes you mad to be without transportation for a time, you don't even want to know how it feels not to be able to get a drink of water, a shower, or (even worse) flush the toilet. Oh, did I mention that this usually happens when you have out-of-town guests in your home? An annual maintenance check and service for your well's pump system can save you a lot of unhappiness.

Similar to the annual tune-up for your vehicle or regular oil changes, the annual pump maintenance helps to ensure the smooth functioning of your water system. A qualified service technician should examine the pump, check to see that it is functioning properly, make certain that the amperage is neither too high or low, and check the points on the motor. Such annual maintenance can help avoid future problems and should also reveal whether the pressure tank is waterlogged.

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Next deadline:

May 1

Upper Applegate Demonstration Treatment Units

BY DON BOUCHER

On December 9, 2016, personnel at the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest gave Applegate residents a tour of the Upper Applegate Demonstration Units so they could review and discuss the treatments and study methodology. Over 20 people attended the field trip.

The Upper Applegate Demonstration Units were designed to evaluate fuel and restoration treatments in a statistically creditable way. Crossing the boundaries of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service (USFS) land, these demonstration sites serve as locations for tours to engage stakeholders.

On these sites, four treatment alternatives were replicated

eight times on ten-acre units in a blocked experimental design. Units and permanent plots were established and measured in 2005 with noncommercial treatments completed between then and 2016. Planned merchantable tree removal will be completed in spring 2017, and plots will be measured after treatment. This work overlaps the Upper Applegate Road project on USFS lands, approved by the National Environmental Policy Act. These demonstration units will provide opportunities for public engagement, dialogue, and understanding of alternative fuels and

restoration treatments with carefully designed, side-by-side examples.

The field trip in December stimulated many informative and valuable discussions regarding the demonstration units. Some comments focused on overall management of USFS lands. We heard that, in general, Applegate residents support active management with a strong preference for comprehensive restoration that includes attention to the understory, invasive species control, and native plant seeding. Field trip participants wanted treatments to focus on meeting fuel-reduction and restoration objectives while minimizing impacts. Additionally, participants expressed a strong desire that we review and monitor past units where thinning has occurred.

The protection and retention of legacy trees (including hardwoods) was widely supported, and there appeared to be some support for a skips-and-gaps approach to treatments. The herbaceous monitoring component of the demonstration plots was of interest, especially the preservation of the herbaceous understory in clumps.

The use of plastic to cover slash piles

was another topic of discussion. Several people were quite adamant that the use of plastic could be a "wall" to community support and suggested that the USFS test the efficacy of alternatives such as Kraft paper or no cover. The USFS recognizes that public support depends on careful project implementation and contract oversight for cleanup of polyethylene and the prevention of undesirable impacts. Participants expressed the importance of burning piles within two years and removing plastic from any piles left unburned. Testing different methods fits well with the concept of adaptive management, and we will be looking at ways we can address the concern of plastic-covered slash piles.

The USFS will finalize treatment prescriptions

for the various demonstration units this spring. Then a comment period will allow the community to review and comment on the prescriptions and on the designation of trees to be cut. Some time in March,

The Four Treatment Alternatives

Control

No treatment

Fuels Thinning

Thin from below
Retain consistent canopy cover

Minimal Fuels

Thin only fuels <7" in diameter at breast height

Ecological Restoration

Restore fire resistance
Promote early seral tree species
Emphasize spatial patterning
Thin to reference densities

the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest will hold a workshop to explain how the trees are designated and offer the community another chance to review and comment on the marking of trees. The USFS also hopes to give community members a chance to do some sample marking so they can experience the process of deciding which trees are cut.

The plan of the demonstration project includes using some abandoned ditch lines as trails for access to the units to facilitate review of the treatments, though there is currently no formal decision in place to do so. An environmental analysis would be needed first. Comments during the field trip suggested that the USFS needs to consider how to prevent motorized use of these trails.

We are hoping to implement the demonstration units

in the late spring or early summer. During implementation, we will provide opportunities for community members to view operations as well as to review units post-treatment. We are in the process of preparing a website where background information and monitoring results will be available.

If you have questions, comments, or other thoughts, please feel free to contact me.

Don Boucher

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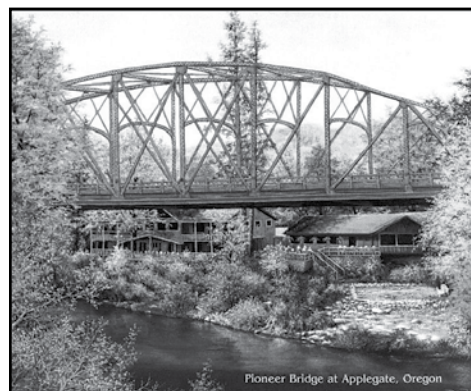
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