

■ JEWEL OF THE APPLGATE

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and helps move dirt. Other people buck downed trees and clean up the wood.

Shipley and others convince Paul Korbolic, the parks program director, to enter into a mutual agreement that would permit the community to run the park. Initially skeptical, Korbolic takes a leap of faith and helps draft a memorandum that the county commissioners sign in a park ceremony in the summer of '97.



Jack Shipley, Applegate Partnership founder.

The Cantrall Buckley Park Committee is formed under the aegis of the Applegate Partnership. Korbolic remembers a feeling of “deep relief” that this beautiful park had been saved.

Cantrall Buckley becomes the only rural park in Oregon (and probably the nation) entirely managed by an unincorporated community without a supporting tax district. The members of the Park Committee have their work cut out for them. They hold several community meetings to figure things out and recruit volunteers. A \$10,000 grant from the Carpenter Foundation helps them get started. They hold fundraising events, and donations from the Applegate community pour in. The Park Committee hires a resident park ranger.

The following year, the Park Committee finds a more suitable home under a new nonprofit with a tongue-twister name—the Greater Applegate Community Development Corporation (GACDC). By this time, Jackson County has pretty much washed its hands of Cantrall Buckley. Being on the Park Committee starts to feel pretty lonely.

2000 - present: Survival and rebirth

In 2001 Rick Barclay, a local logger, replaces Terry Mitchell as park ranger. Rick starts things off with a bang when he innocently applies for a septic permit. That’s when he discovers the morass of county and state agencies he’ll have to deal with. Rick gets a lot of help from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Laird Funk, a retired wastewater manager in Josephine County.

In 2004, the Park Committee, under the leadership of Dave Laananen, develops a Park Master Plan, funded by BLM and fulfilled during the next ten years with grants totaling over \$600,000. Jackson County lends a hand.

By the end of 2007, the park has a new state-of-the-art wastewater treatment system. A highlight is the “Vegetative Submerged Bed,” or VSB, suggested by DEQ. This cattail “swamp” naturally cleans the park’s wastewater before it is pumped back to the campground for irrigation. The next year sees the redesign of the park’s freshwater system and new campground restrooms.

New educational trail signs are installed throughout the park. Kids from Applegate and Ruch schools clear blackberries, seed pollinator gardens, and bed native riparian habitat, and more. A consortium of neighbors on North Applegate and Kubli roads purchases new barbecue grills. Applegate Trails Association restores all the park trails.

In June 2016, the community celebrates the twentieth anniversary of its salvation of the park. The well-attended event includes the dedication of memorial benches to Shipley and Laananen and the official opening of a new playground and playscape designed by the “Applegate Moms” and their kids, led by Michelle LaFave. The playscape includes the park’s first piece of art—Tuffy the Turtle—crafted by local artist Jeremy Criswell and named after Tuffy Decker, who donated his construction labor. Almost \$60,000 has been raised from throughout the community.

The following year, Jackson County offers to take back responsibility for managing the park. A Greater Applegate (AGA), the renamed umbrella nonprofit originally called GACDC, accepts the offer in a unanimous board decision. The new Park Enhancement Committee (PEC) continues the mission of putting the community stamp on the park. In the works are an art walk designed by renowned metal artist Cheryl Garcia, a tile mural on the new playground restroom, a children’s interactive sundial display, fresh landscaping by the restrooms, more pollinator gardens designed by local school kids, new park benches designed and built by the Grants Pass High School metal shop students, and a large array of solar panels—all funded and lined up. The PEC is planning a host of future projects, including a science learning center, a water-play area, and more native plant restorations.

For its part, Jackson County Parks just finished renovating the day-use restrooms and repairing the irrigation system. They will soon begin seeking funds for an expensive RV upgrade to the campground. The partnership is in good shape.

Golden Jubilee celebration in July

To celebrate the park’s history, the AGA is planning a Cantrall Buckley Park Golden Jubilee. This big event, on Saturday, July 14, exactly 50 years after the park opened, will celebrate the history of the Applegate Valley and the community spirit that has kept Cantrall Buckley Park alive. (See more information on page 1.)

Tom Carstens • 541-846-1025
The author thanks the following park old-timers for their help in compiling this article: Rick Barclay, Bud Childers, Jack Duggan, Bob Komody, Paul Korbolic, Neil Ledward, Ellen Levine, and Joe Strahl. All photos provided by Tom Carstens.

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*Memories of
Cantrall Buckley Park*
From long-time patrons

“I surely cannot recall the number of times I took my children to that beautiful place to dip in the river, climb the barrels, and explore the magical little walkways near the playground.”

“The best part of volunteering in the park was the association with such great people. I’ve never felt more alive than when I was working to make our park better. What a gem!”

From Bonnie Rinaldi, former GACDC chairperson. “What made the experience a privilege was the opportunity to work with and get to know Dave Laananen, Laird Funk, Tom Carstens, and Rick Barclay. Each of these men gave generously and tirelessly of their time and talents to improve the park and make it a place that the Applegate community could enjoy and be proud of.”

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Note: There is more to this history article, which was shortened due to space constraints. Visit applegater.org to read the complete article and many more memories and view more photos.

Moving upstream: APWC assists fish and farmers on the Little Applegate River

BY BARBARA SUMMERHAWK

As an extremely important tributary of the Applegate River, the Little Applegate River provides cold-water refuge for rearing habitat for juvenile salmon and other aquatic species, as well as irrigation for privately owned agricultural farms. In cooperation with private landowners connected with the Upper Phillips Ditch water users, the Applegate Partnership and Watershed Council (APWC) is working on

improving irrigation systems and fish passage at the Upper Phillips Dam, which blocks fish and other aquatic species from high-quality cold water crucial to their survival over hot summers.

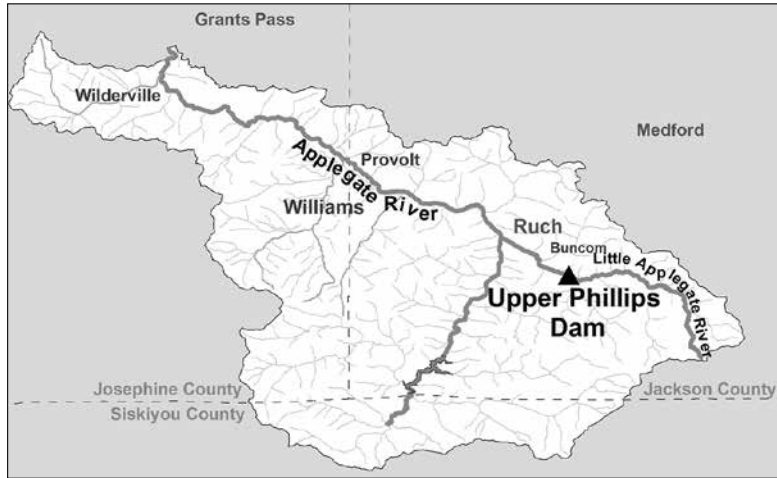
According to Rogue Basin Watershed Management Plans, impeded access to habitat due to barriers has contributed to a decline in fish populations. This project would improve access to habitat and fish screening for endangered species, including coho, Pacific lamprey, steelhead and cutthroat trout, and will provide the water users of the Upper Phillips Ditch with an efficient, improved water-delivery system. A combination of a new head gate and ditch piping will allow water users to increase agricultural production, improve water quality by reducing ditch runoff, and leave conserved water in streams. Peter Salant, local landowner and water user, said, “We are hoping that the work can be started by 2019.”

Improved fish passage at Upper Phillips Dam, through work on a secondary channel bypass around the dam, will allow access upstream for cutthroat trout, lamprey, steelhead, and coho. “It’s especially important for juvenile fish to be able to escape the heat by going up tributaries to colder water,” said Julie Cymore, fish passage program manager for APWC. The bypass was designed with support from a technical assistance grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

The Upper Phillips concrete dam is approximately five miles upstream from the confluence with the Applegate River. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) fish presence surveys have recorded Chinook to river mile 2, steelhead to river mile 19, and coho to river mile 6. Summer low-flow conditions reduce habitat connections, resulting in mortality. This project is listed on the ODFW 2013 Statewide Fish Passage Priority list as one of the top priorities for the overall Applegate basin and indicates that barriers are limiting for the Little Applegate River.



Upper Phillips Dam during summer flow. 2014 photo: Joey Howard, Cascade Stream Solutions.



Location of Upper Phillips Dam. Map: APWC.

APWC has developed the bypass and ditch piping plans through a partnership with the landowners and water users, OWEB, ODFW, Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Jackson County watermaster, Bureau of Land Management, Middle Rogue Steelheaders, and Trout Unlimited. It has been working together almost 10 years on various projects, including installation of measuring devices as required by the Oregon Water Resource Department’s Significant Point of Diversion Program, according to Janelle Dunlevy, executive director of APWC.

The project began with research on what issues irrigators were having and what would improve the irrigation system. The current ditch loses a large quantity of water through evaporation and seepage. It was determined that a new head gate and piping would allow water users near the end of the ditch to receive their water rights. “With improvements to the head gate and with the piping, we can increase efficiency for water delivery. This water supports small family farms in the area,” Julie explained. Marion Hadden, an instrumental landowner and water user for the development of this project, said, “This project will improve the habitat for fish and improve the water supply for us. It has been a joy working with APWC’s Janelle Dunlevy.”

Designs for fish passage began with discussions with the irrigators and fish biologists from different agencies and were drawn up by a local engineering firm. APWC is currently applying for grant funding that will cover the entire cost of the project. The result is a mutually beneficial project, one in which the water users will have an upgraded irrigation system and fish will be able to reach upstream habitat.

Barbara Summerhawk
barbara@ic.daito.ac.jp
Board Member
Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council