

Notes from a Rogue entomologist Introductions and an update

BY RICHARD J. HILTON

The last couple of years have seen tremendous change in the faculty at the Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center (SOREC).

In the fall of 2016, new scientists working in viticulture (Dr. Alexander Levin) and plant pathology (Dr. Achala KC) came on board. Earlier, in the spring of 2016, Dr. Rich Roseburg took over the helm as SOREC director, moving from the Klamath Basin Research and Extension Center.

Rich had worked at SOREC from 1990 to 2003, so he's an Oregon State University (OSU) veteran, though not as much of an old-timer as I am. In fact, it is a bit shocking to be reminded that it was over a quarter of a century ago when I first met Rich, seemingly a kid, with his freshly minted PhD in



Dr. Gordon Jones, new professor of practice in commercial agriculture at OSU's Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center.

agronomy from Ohio State University, the "other OSU," as we call it (we'll just ignore Oklahoma State University for the moment).

The most recent additions to the SOREC faculty are Lena Hoskins, our new 4-H agent, who started at the beginning of 2017, and Dr. Gordon Jones, who started in June 2017.

Gordon is our new professor of practice in charge of extension programs and activities aimed at commercial agriculture in Jackson

and Josephine Counties. This is a position that has gone unfilled for some time. We have had a program that targets small farms since 2006, and that is an important and growing agricultural sector, but large commercial operations still make up the bulk of agricultural production in the

southern Oregon region. So with some of the funding being provided by our relatively new Extension tax district, this gap has now been filled. Dr. Jones is an agronomist with a PhD from Virginia Tech. While Gordon Jones's doctoral research focused on pastures and hayfields, his varied background even includes some experience with orchards and vineyards, so he is well-equipped to tackle the diversity of agriculture found in our area.

In his current position, Dr. Jones will be involved in the ongoing Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) effort. Gordon will be leading OSU's contribution in collaboration with the Rogue Valley Watershed Council and the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District. Last year, I reported on our local PSP project, and, at the time, there had been no detections of any pesticides above established benchmarks for aquatic health or other risks. However, times change and so has the news.

The results of stream sampling in 2017 were similar to those of previous years in that herbicides were detected much more frequently than insecticides and still no fungicides have been found. However, two insecticides not previously detected were found in the spring of 2017. Diazinon was found twice in March at levels above the benchmark for aquatic health, and chlorpyrifos was detected once in April at a concerning level (80 percent of benchmark). Both of these insecticides are older organophosphate materials that

are "restricted-use pesticides" due to their potential effects on aquatic systems.

Two neonicotinoid insecticides were also detected in 2017. These insecticides had been detected previously, but the benchmark level for one of the materials, imidacloprid (a widely used insecticide in both agriculture and backyards), was significantly lowered last December. All detections of imidacloprid now exceed this new benchmark, whereas none had exceeded the previous benchmark.

Finally, an herbicide, oxyfluorfen, was found at a level exceeding the aquatic benchmark in one sample. Oxyfluorfen has the lowest benchmark level of all herbicides that have been found in the course of the Middle Rogue PSP sampling effort to date, so perhaps it is not too surprising that it is the first herbicide to be detected at a level that certainly raises concern.

In light of all these new findings, it is apparent that an expanded effort to educate local pesticide users is needed. As the PSP continues to engage with the community in a variety of ways to increase awareness and directly address the ongoing issue of pesticides in our streams, the addition of Dr. Jones to the PSP team is a welcome and positive development.

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Changes on the river at Provolt Seed Orchard

BY JAKOB SHOCKEY

When I was a kid growing up in this valley, I first noticed Provolt because its red-painted store seemed to have more Christmas lights than any other structure in the valley. Right at the terminus of Williams Highway at Highway 238, the little "town" of Provolt occupies that space between the Williams Valley and the greater Applegate Valley. While Provolt is comprised of spread-out buildings—the community church, the humpback bridge wayside, the store, the old community grange, and the scattered private residences—most of the property between and surrounding these spots is actually public land.

Historically this area was a working ranch for cattle and hay before being converted to

the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Provolt Seed Orchard, which has provided fir and pine seeds all over Oregon for a variety of projects ranging from wildfire restoration to environmental studies. Now the BLM is working with partners and the public to determine the future of the site and hopes to provide a space that will capture the true community value of the area.

On April 20, kids from Ruch Outdoor Community School met with the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council (APWC) and members of the Medford District BLM at Provolt Seed Orchard to plant trees and take an active role in restoring the Applegate River



Ruch Outdoor Community School students and BLM and APWC representatives planted trees at Provolt Seed Orchard to help restore the Applegate River Watershed.

Watershed. Close to 50 students learned to tell an incense cedar from a ponderosa pine seedling and where and how to plant both species. The APWC has been collaborating with the BLM on a large-scale riparian restoration project at this site for several years, and these young tree planters helped replace some of the plantings that didn't survive last summer's hot blast.

As we transition the Provolt Seed Orchard's riparian area from a thick mat of blackberries into a more functioning riparian forest, this active seed orchard is also transitioning into something new. If you are interested giving input to this process, please contact Sarah Mathews, outdoor recreation planner for the BLM Grants Pass Resource area, at samathews@blm.gov.

Improving the wildlife habitat at this site in Provolt and managing its public land access is a long process that's just begun. We would like to thank the students and

participating parents of Ruch Outdoor Community School who came out to plant trees that they and their communities can revisit for years. We would especially like to thank Ryan King for all that he does in getting kids outside and involved, and Christina Beslin and Sarah Mathews from the BLM for helping with this event. A big shout-out to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for funding this work and to Allen Bollschweiler for his robust support of this and other restoration work in our watershed. Finally, this project is only a success because of the talent and hard work that Applegaters like Tommy Maddox, Tim Sexauer, Cody Jones, and Russell Jenkins contribute.

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