



A giant among men lost to the Applegate Valley

On April 8, 2019, with the death of Christopher Bratt, the *Applegater* board lost its longest-standing board member, the *Applegater* one of its staunchest supporters, and the Applegate one of its most outstanding citizens.

Chris worked tirelessly, for decades, on behalf of environmental concerns in the Applegate. In his column in the *Applegater*, “Behind the Green Door,” he kept readers abreast of actions by the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service, never reluctant to state his own opinion, which was always “green.” He ended every column with some version of asking for the reader’s response, which he genuinely wanted. He never shied from a good strong political argument, but he let politics be politics and friendships be friendships.

Chris had used a pacemaker for a number of years. He died peacefully at home with loving family members at his side. He was 88 years old.

An obituary, along with heartfelt tributes to Chris from friends and associates, appears on page 2. Also see Luke Ruediger’s opinion piece, honoring Chris, on page



19. We dedicate this issue of the *Applegater* to Chris. His memory will live on in our hearts.
Applegater Board of Directors
Photo: Tim Daw Photography

Long-time Applegate Valley Fire District officer to retire

BY SANDY SHAFFER



Brad Barnes (center) accepting 30-year award in 2017, with Captain Mike Kuntz (left) and Captain Greg Gilbert (right).
Photo: Applegate Valley Fire District.

Brad Barnes, the Applegate Valley Fire District’s (AVFD’s) longest-serving employee, is planning to retire this November. At that time he will have served our fire district for over 30 years as a firefighter. For

See BRAD BARNES, page 21.

Summer recreation is abundant at Fish Hatchery Park

BY LISA E. BALDWIN

Where the Applegate comes into its own as a mature river, making its final westward run to the Rogue, Fish Hatchery Park, a hidden gem of the lower Applegate, offers excellent opportunities for swimming, fishing, hiking, birding, picnicking, and soaking up the best of southern Oregon. Situated on the lower Applegate, midway between Murphy and Wilderville, the 177.8-acre nature park stretches along both sides of the river and has three points of access: the north entrance (1980 Wetherbee Drive), the main south entrance (2416 Fish Hatchery Road), and the Turtle Lane entrance (260 Turtle Lane), also on the south bank at the west end of the park.

Hikers and birders will especially enjoy the trails at Fish Hatchery Park. The nature trail makes an easy, mostly level loop through the natural habitat on the north side of the river, starting at the west end of the lower parking area. The information kiosk there is usually stocked with copies of a trail guide put together several years



The Applegate River runs through Fish Hatchery Park.
Photo: Lisa E. Baldwin.

ago by park volunteers. The guide is also available online at [co.josephine.or.us/files/fish-hatchery-trail-guide\[1\].pdf](http://co.josephine.or.us/files/fish-hatchery-trail-guide[1].pdf). An updated guide is in the works, but the existing guide is full of good information about the flora and fauna, as well as the river, the mountains, and the Applegate’s history. The Nature Trail is open to pedestrian traffic only, and canine walking partners must stay on leash.

Hikers looking for a challenge should take on the Bolt Mountain Trail, a 3.2-mile multiuse trail that heads to the top of Bolt Mountain with its 360-degree view of the lower Applegate Valley. The trailhead is at the west end of the upper parking area at the north entrance (Wetherbee Road). The trail is a steady climb and rated “Difficult” by the BLM. Bolt Mountain Trail is open to pedestrians, mountain bikers, and equestrians. Nothing motorized is allowed.

Fish Hatchery Park makes a great summer outing for families. Picnic tables are widely scattered under the trees on both sides. The river moves slowly through the park, past shady banks and a sandy beach. The swimming holes are hard to beat; Turtle Lane is a local legend. It is here, near the mouth of Bull Creek, that, in 1863, a ferry service started hauling people and supplies across the Applegate. This old ferry landing is now perhaps the best public beach and swimming hole on the river.

The park takes its name from the fish hatchery that operated from 1912 to 1936 on Jackson Creek at its confluence with the Applegate, the eastern park boundary. The hatchery raised coho salmon and steelhead trout. The lower Applegate still has a decent winter steelhead run, which was particularly good this past March.

Only bank fishing is allowed on the Applegate River. It is illegal to fish from any watercraft, so gone are the days of grabbing a fishing rod and an inner tube

See FISH HATCHERY PARK, page 20.

SAVE THE DATE!

WE'RE TURNING 25!

Join us as we celebrate the *Applegater's* 25th anniversary on Saturday, October 5.

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