

Lyford wins statewide award

By
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IVN Contributing Writer

Longtime Illinois Valley resident Gordon Lyford was recently recognized by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as the 2013 “Ray C. Davis Volunteer of the Year” for Western Oregon. David Gross was also honored representing the eastern half of the state at the annual awards dinner held in Portland a month ago.

Molly Dougherty, Director of Oregon Volunteer Programs said, “I congratulate David and Gordon and offer sincere thanks for their dedicated support. Our success is only possible because of people like them.”

Founded in 1951, the Nature Conservancy works in over 35 countries, and every state in the union. TNC has over one million members, and has protected more than 119 million acres of land and 5,000 miles of rivers worldwide. The organization also operates more than 100 marine conservation projects globally.

In earning the recognition, Lyford contributed over 1,000 hours of work at the Conservancy’s Rough and Ready Creek Preserve and other locations in southwest Oregon over the past six years. Among other interests, he is dedicated to the eradication of one of Oregon’s most threatening invasive plants, Yellowtuft Alyssum. Rough and Ready Creek is very important in terms of botanical resources, which is why the acreage was purchased by TNC.

While TNC owns 110 acres for the Rough and Ready Creek Preserve, only three acres in the

field were planted to Alyssum in 1998. The Alyssum later spread out of the planted field, which was discovered by Suzanne Vautier in 2006. The plant was declared a noxious weed by the state in 2008.

At the I.V. Airport, about 50 acres were planted to Alyssum in a failed experiment in extracting nickel from the soil. Former Josephine County commissioners approved this use of county property, which was opposed by area environmentalists at the time. Alyssum was also planted at other sites around the valley including Sawyers Flat.

Lyford also attends public meetings on behalf of the Conservancy, leads crews to scout and remove plants, and propagates native grasses, rushes, and flowers to replace the noxious weed. His re-vegetation efforts have served as a model for other landowners and agencies.

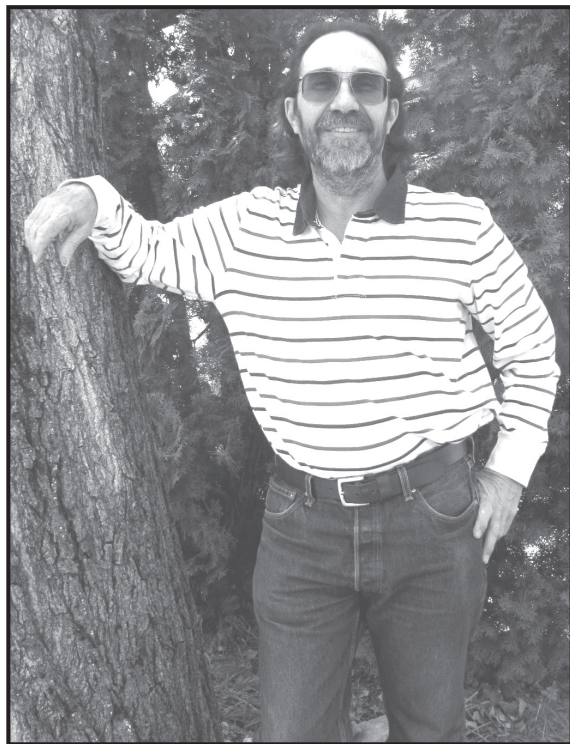
Lyford works with other volunteers at the airport including Scott Taylor and Wes Brown to hand-pull both the alyssum and Barbed Goat Grass. When the three-mile perimeter fence was built around the airport, special practices had to be used to clean equipment and boots during the construction phase. All new plants now found at the sites are from seed that fell before 2009.

Lyford also serves on two boards in the area, the IV Soil and Water Conservation District and the IV Watershed Council. Both organizations work with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to restore salmon habitat and toward other goals established by Governor Kitzhaber during his first administration.

Lyford earned a degree in agricultural engineering from Arizona State and worked for the federal Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento, Ca-

lif. for 16 years as an irrigation and water rights specialist. Interested in moving to southwest Oregon, he found a position with the BLM in Merlin and worked there for another 15 years before retiring in 2007.

In response to receiving the award, Lyford said, “After 31 years of service with the Department of the Interior, this is a chance for me to give back. It’s fun working with volunteers and TNC staff who have similar interests in restoring the natural habitat.”



Farmer ...

Continued from A-1

A supporting SLC activity is the annual Spring Seed Swap & Meet, scheduled to take place from noon to 3 p.m. at the Frog Farm Octagon building this Saturday, April 12. The Frog Farm is located at 9044 Takilma Road in Takilma. The free event will offer a workshop in seed saving basics, kids’ activities, and cookies and tea.

CJ Farmers’ Market manager Hall summed up local efforts by saying, “There are a growing number of farms in the Illinois Valley, and there is increasing demand by community members for local, seasonal produce that is regularly available each week from spring to fall. The mission of our market is to connect customers and farmers in this small-town, open-air market environment, encouraging friends and families to gather together. The scene includes a preponderance of local farmers’ produce booths with local crafts, local food vendors, light acoustic music, and open space for children to play and adults to mingle. We seek to build community, making Cave Junction’s Friday nights memorable and vibrant.”

For information on the CJ Farmers’ Market, contact Hall at 541-415-4419 or info@cjfarmersmarket.org. For information on Friday Farmers Market contact moooshie@frontier.com or call 541-597-2330.

Airpark ... Continued from A-1

Goals for the Airpark include attracting new businesses and supporting local entrepreneurs, with a strong focus on facilitating development of high-tech businesses, the fastest growing industrial sector throughout the state.

“Actually, in southern Oregon, we’re now growing this sector faster than the rest of the state and much of the nation,” said Josephine County Commissioner Cheryl Walker.

“There’s been a lot of progress at the IV Airpark in this past year, they have a great board and they’re working very hard,” Walker said. “There’s been recent expansion and improved accessibility for high-tech business ventures and now’s the time to take your good ideas off the drawing board and put together a business plan. The IVCDO is an excellent resource to explore a business idea. They’re very proactive.”

The IVCDO offers a full range of business counseling services and provides micro-loans to new or expanding businesses.

Graves, who has a strong background in private industry, says the IV Airpark could be a hub for clean-tech and light-industrial businesses by creating a central core of facilities, a “technology incubator” that could feature machine shops, tools and software. By providing Airpark tenants access to equipment, the facility could support twenty-first century entrepreneurs as they develop product designs and manufacturing processes.

“There’s people who need access to milling machines, lathes, CNC plasma cutters and more, for fabrication and assembly of prototypes,” Graves said. “In this economy many just don’t have the capital and resources to make these key purchases that would enable them to get their great ideas rolling. This is an outstanding opportunity to help grow the business infrastructure within the Illinois Valley.”

“Also, I’m a firm believer in the discipline of making a good case for business development,” Graves added. “And not just for infrastructure competition, but also, we need a substantial marketing plan that well-discerns precisely who our target market is.”

“The current commissioners have been very supportive,” Graves said. “People should get ready to go, start envisioning their businesses and making plans now.”

“Industrial activity is starting to take off and settle into this region. Lot’s of business people want to leave California,” said Dave Bassett, a civil engineer and IV Airport Advisory board member. “With a major highway and an airport we’re really well-poised. But we can’t market the location to potential tenants until this work is done.”

Bassett also said the IV Airport will be a critical resource if a large earthquake damages coastal areas and roads. There are

two airports in Josephine County and two in Curry County.

Bassett and Graves also note the importance of re-vamping the county’s GIS system.

“The entity responsible for owning and operating the airport, in this case the county, has a requirement imposed by the FAA to be GIS compliant in our planning and development,” Graves said. “Currently we’re using a system that is no longer supported, but we’re taking steps to hire an experienced GIS programmer who will utilize state-of-the-art software as we move forward and increase our industrial infrastructure.”

Walker also had high praise for the former Smokejumpers, who come annually, from all over the nation, and have renovated the historical airport buildings and created a “first rate Smokejumper’s Museum.” The volunteers are getting ready to renovate the former commander house right now.

“These improvements and better aesthetics at the airport will also help in attracting new businesses,” Walker said. “That new split rail fence at the museum looks great. Tourist traffic stopping to check out the museum is increasing and these visitors often wind up having lunch in town and then learn about other attractions in the area.”

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