



Her life in the Valley of Riches

by Laura Mancuso, editor

I just wanted to say how grateful I am to all the I.V. firefighters.

On the morning of July 15, after being woken by loud booming thunder, I was making breakfast for the family and Dan shouted “There is a fire on the hill above us!”

I went outside to look

and sure enough smoke was streaming up through the trees on the hill, much too close for comfort. We could hear chainsaws and big trucks coming from a forest road near us. Next, I woke up all our sleeping children and then went to make sure my horses were in their pen. After that, I proceeded to walk down the drive to make sure our gate

was open in case fire trucks needed easy access to our property at some point.

There, sitting across the street from our driveway was an I.V. fire truck and a water tank was heading to the forest road. I felt such relief knowing that fire personnel was so on top of this fire.

In the meantime, Dan had talked to the I.V. Fire Department and they reassured him that firefighters had a “line around the fire” and we should not worry.

By late afternoon, we no longer could see any smoke coming from the hills. What a relief.

I hope you will join me in thanking our firefighters every chance you get.

Enjoy this week’s paper and stay safe during this wildfire season!

INFO ... Continued from A-9

The Southwest Oregon Joint Information Center (JIC) is your “One-Stop-Shop” for important and current information on the Natchez and Hendricks Fires as well as other major wildfires in southwest Oregon. Talk to someone in the know at the JIC by calling 541.474.5305 or email them at SWOfireinfo@gmail.com.

- Website links are as follows:
- Access a user-friendly interactive map detailing all the region’s fires: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>
 - Great resource, Southwest Oregon Joint Information Center (JIC): <http://swojic.blogspot.com/>
 - ODF’s main fire website for southern Oregon site, is <http://www.swofire.com/>. Information on individual fires is listed here and includes phones numbers regarding each incident as well

- Natchez Fire Information: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5948/> or call 541-597-4784

- Klondike Fire Information: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5998/> or call 541-597-4784
- Illinois Valley Fire District: Facebook Page by this name or call 541-592-4334
- Sign up for citizen alerts by going to: <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/alert>
- More info about evacuation levels and preparedness can be found at <http://www.rvem.org>
- Current smoke forecasts, including information about where the nearest clear air is located, can be found here: <https://wildlandfiresmoke.net/outlooks>
- High smoke levels can have hazardous impact on health. People with respiratory or heart disease, children, and the elderly should stay inside and contact their healthcare providers if they become ill. Learn more at: <http://oregonsmoke.blogspot.com/>
- About drones, visit: Know Before You Fly, <http://knowbeforeyoufly.org>
- The Northwest Interagency Coordination Center, another great resource, provides good maps and info at: https://gacc.nifc.gov/nwcc/information/fire_info.aspx

Comment deadline fast approaches on controversial logging proposal

Annette McGee Rasch
IVN Senior Contributing Writer

Valley residents are crying foul on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as the deadline looms for submitting comments on the Clean Slate Environmental Assessment. Many old growth trees found in the hotly contested 311-acre logging proposal in Selma’s Deer Creek Watershed have been targeted for logging six times in the past 20 years.

“Last October the BLM abandoned this portion of the Pickett West Timber Sale due to major public opposition and citizen science, but just a week later, a revised version with even fewer protections, was opened for public scoping comments under the name Clean Slate,” said Mary Camp, president of the Deer Creek Association. “Now, people need to send their comments in by July 30 to help save this high value natural area.”

“It’s insane that we waste our government resources chasing down the last few old growth trees we have left,” said KS Wild Executive Director Joseph Vaile. “Every time we cut big, old trees and replace them with a bunch of small, highly flammable trees, we are set up for a bigger fire next time. Instead, let’s focus on protecting homes and communities from fire, restoring our forests, and reducing the fuels in the forest understory.”

Rich Nawa, longtime Valley resident and KS Wild staff ecologist, disputes the BLM’s claims that “their hands are tied” because they’re following the new Resource Management Plan (RMP).

“This is not true,” Nawa said. “KS Wild does not dispute the BLM’s authority to propose to cut down 240- year-old trees that were growing when George Washington was president, but we don’t think it’s prudent. The 2016 RMP does not require the Grants Pass Resource Area to log old growth trees in the Clean Slate project - it’s entirely discretionary with the field manager. The fate of these old growth trees is entirely up to him.”

For its part, the BLM reports that, “It’s been a struggle for the Medford District to meet the annual timber goal, which was 57 million board feet for over two decades, and now is 52 million board feet since the new management plan was put in place.”

And while the proposal has shrunk some, residents say that’s not nearly enough to

adequately protect critical values. “We’re still hugely worried about Clean Slate,” Camp said. “This is a beautiful, complex, cool and moist old-growth forest that provides important habitat for many species. This watershed also provides important spawning habitat for coho, cutthroat trout and other fish species.”

“But soon, if the BLM logs it, these will be ravaged, hot, dry open landscapes with only a few trees left,” she added. “This illogical, irresponsible, immoral, illegal prescription for a timber sale is not an environmental assessment of the incredible values and uses of this area - socially, economically and ecologically. All these values would be irrevocably and significantly adversely impacted should the Clean Slate project be implemented. The community has proposed sustainable relationships through the Natural Selection Alternative, which would protect and restore all environmental, social and economical values.”

“Most of these units are the last islands of late successional natural ecosystems that we have left in our watershed,” said Serena Barton, vice president of Deer Creek Association. “We need them for fire resiliency, drinking water, to enhance our property values, recreation and tourism economy, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat and so much more. My family would be losing places that we love dearly and the view from our home would be severely impacted. Our community should not have to burden the enormous costs of reducing these ancient ecosystems to corporate timber plantations. They belong to the public and should stay that way.”

The Grants Pass Field Office has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a Draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Clean Slate Forest Management Project. But residents disagree and say impacts are huge.

Camp said the public should ask for the “no action alternative,” in part, because the agencies refuse to consider the community-supported Natural Selection Alternative. She also stressed that this is a “critical moment in which public comments really really matter.”

Again, the BLM must receive your comments by 4 p.m. on July 30. Email comments to shicks@blm.gov. Access information about the Clean Slate proposal and the BLM’s Environmental Assessment at <http://thesiskiyoucrest.blogspot.com>.



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for the support they give the Alumni Association**

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siskiyoubluegrassfestival.com





presents

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8:00-8:45	REGISTRATION Light breakfast provided
9:00-11:30	WORKSHOP SESSION #1 Meet the day's facilitators, who will use a series of sensory prompts to get your creative juices flowing
11:45-12:45	LUNCH & GUEST SPEAKER Diana Coogole examines the question "Am I a Writer Yet?"
1:00-2:30	WORKSHOP SESSION #2 – Choice of two - Whirlwind Playwriting with Kaci Elder - Performance Poetry with MÖsley WÖtta
2:45-4:15	WORKSHOP SESSION #3 – Choice of two - New Pathways in Poetry with Michael Spring & Vincent Wixon - Write What You Know, Loathe & Love with Diana Coogole
4:30-6:00	OPEN MIC – OPEN TO PUBLIC * Hip Hop artist & Oregon slam poetry champion MÖsley WÖtta will MC this unique take on Open Mic, with optional musical accompaniment for performers Light snacks and wine- and beer-tasting provided * Please note: "Let's Write!" participants will have priority for performance spots

**Fees: \$35-\$55
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\$20 for students**

Register online at www.southernorenguild.org, at the Guild, or call 541-592-5019
For financial hardship scholarship information, call 541-659-3858 or email guild@southernorenguild.org

Stay after to be part of a 24-hour Whirlwind Theatre Festival beginning at 6pm!
(or come to the performance Sunday, August 5, at 6pm)

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