

Helicopter survey for alyssum scheduled by CEEN

Cultural & Ecological Enhancement Network has a scheduled helicopter survey for yellowtuft alyssum June 16. The helicopter will concentrate on the fields where alyssum was planted including the Illinois Valley Airport, and escapee populations, especially along Rough & Ready Creek and the Illinois River.

Alyssum is likely to be in full bloom at this time. It has tiny flowers in flat umbrellas, the color a distinctive shade of yellow that can be seen from the air. Alyssum was planted in the Illinois Valley in a failed phytomining experiment by Viridian LLC of Texas in an attempt to extract nickel out of serpentine soils.

Alyssum was planted in at least eight locations in the Illinois Valley, around 100 acres total. But the effort was not economically viable. Alyssum has since escaped and the company folded.

Yellowtuft alyssum is a hyperaccumulator of metal, its leaves becoming toxic to livestock and wildlife. It is alleged that two bulls died from eating it. Like a number of mustard species, alyssum turned out to be prolific and it was spreading into the waterways. When the spread of alyssum was brought to their attention by local Suzanne Vautier of CEEN, the Oregon Department of Agriculture became concerned about alyssum's potential impact on Agriculture in the Illinois Valley and beyond.

Forest Service and BLM joined in the effort when it was discovered that Alyssum had spread to their lands. CEEN is a local nonprofit 501(c)3 that has been surveying for and pulling alyssum since 2010. The number of alyssum plants has greatly reduced over time. Several of the planted fields now have few seedlings. Vautier and CEEN members hope to see the end of alyssum in the near future.



Yellowtuft alyssum



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City Council tables Ziply franchise agreement

Gwen Barringer
IVN Contributing Writer

Ziply was the hot topic during the Cave Junction City Council via Zoom May 23. Although Mayor Meadow Martell and council member Jesse Dugas both had prior obligations and were unable to attend, the remaining council members, Ethan Lane and Tina Casey Jones, soldiered on with Jean Ann Miles at the helm as they discussed some very pertinent local projects and issues.

The Ziply Fiber franchise agreement that was tabled from the previous meeting was readdressed. The agreement itself had been rewritten since the previous meeting to address the council's concerns, such as running new fiber systems underground instead of aerial connections, and the maintenance of their control boxes.

The council members made it abundantly clear that they had made the Ziply Fiber representatives aware of the fact that local residents are extremely unhappy with the phone and internet service that they have been receiving from the company.

Jean-Ann Miles described her personal experiences with Ziply as "unacceptable," although Tina Casey-Jones admitted that she was perhaps the odd one out in feeling that her service has always been

satisfactory. Council member Ethan Lane voiced his concerns regarding how implementing these underground fiber systems and their control boxes will impact city residents.

This incited a discussion between the council members and Alex Ponder, the city works director, regarding whether this franchise agreement was going to create more problems than it would solve by way of damaging the city's sidewalks and streets.

It was determined that within the agreement, the burden to repair those damages would fall upon Ziply Fiber's shoulders, but council members remained unconvinced as to the clarity of the language within the agreement about this.

City recorder Rebecca Patton also admitted that in researching the agreement herself, she had been unable to find another city in Oregon that had accepted a franchise agreement with Ziply Fiber. Due to the concerns that council members still had, the decision was made to table the agreement a second time, until the next meeting June 6.

Rowan Fairfield, the Americorp RARE volunteer for the Mainstreet Cave Junction program, gave a brief update regarding their plans for beautifying the city, including creating an eye-catching mural that will face City Hall. The council members were more than happy to

give their input on various ways to improve the mural's mock-up in order to personalize it, and they approved the project and its subsequent funding unanimously.

The council also discussed the award that was recently received from ODOT for upgrades within the city, including the placement of five new sidewalks that will be placed between the months of June and September. The motion to approve this idea was also passed unanimously.

Before the council parted ways for the evening, Ethan Lane assured those in attendance that the concerns that he had raised stemmed from his desire to make decisions that he felt were right for the citizens of Cave Junction, a sentiment that was echoed by the other council members.



Cave Junction Public Works Director Alex Ponder



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