

GORGE LOCAL – IN BUSINESS

Hood River Coffee Roasters changes hands

Updated website is early priority for Margottas

By Trisha Walker
Columbia Gorge News

After three years of looking for the perfect buyers, Peggy Thompson, founder and owner of Hood River Coffee Roasters, has sold the business to Mike and Susie Margotta of Birmingham, Ala. She's spent the past three months helping the Margottas with the transition.

"A lot of people were interested (in purchasing the business), but nobody fit what I was hoping for," Thompson said. "Mike and Susie fit — their strength is that they divide and conquer. They have a beautiful plan that will allow them to keep things generally as they have been; the community won't notice a huge shift. But they will take this little business and make it recognizable here and beyond."

"I couldn't be happier that Mike and Susie fell out of the sky," she said.

While this will be Mike Margotta's fourth business, it's his first with Susie.

"This is something we can do together," he said. "Our youngest moved to Portland six years ago, and our oldest went to college in British Columbia," so they were familiar with the northwest.

"We couldn't be happier with our choice," he said.

They searched for such a business for three or four years, looking to settle in Oregon. They began looking for businesses in the service industry in Bend, Ashland and Brookings. When COVID hit, they realized that industry could be risky.

That led them to Hood River Coffee Roasters.

"We've always loved Hood River," he said.

"We're so happy to be here."

Thompson said Margotta is a sponge and actively seeks to understand all areas of the business, taking a hands-on approach to everything from processing orders to roasting coffee beans.

"I feel a responsibility for keeping this going," he said. "We feel a definite responsibility to maintain the reputation of this organization within the community."

He is impressed with those working for the company and credits Thompson for nurturing a positive environment.

"We want to be long-term contributors to the community. We want our site to reflect that."

Mike Margotta
Hood River Coffee Roasters owner

"They are professional, proficient and courteous," he said. "They're wonderful people and they have a smooth bond. We couldn't ask for more stability and you don't usually see that."

The Margottas are focusing their energy on two areas at present: To understand and meet customers locally, and to update the business website.

They are updating the front office retail space for local customers; the updated website will feature new product photos and content, and is expected to launch May 17.

"We want to be long-term contributors to the community," said Margotta. "We want our site to reflect that."

Thompson has lived in Stevenson for the past two years and is looking forward to the next chapter, participate more in the activities she loves — like biking and surf skiing — and



Mike and Susie Margotta (and pup Riley), at left, have purchased Hood River Coffee Roasters from founder and owner Peggy Thompson, right. Trisha Walker photo

becoming involved in hospice.

"I'm learning to stop and recalibrate after all these years of this being my life," she said. "The Stevenson community is amazing. A lot of the company's original contacts stem from Stevenson, so transitioning to living here has

been easy."

Hood River Coffee Roasters is located at 1310 Tucker Road, Hood River. For more information, visit the website at hoodrivercoffee.com.

Take action for Invasive Species Awareness Week

By Cyndi Soliz
Skamania County Noxious Weed Department

By Tova Tillinghast
Underwood Conservation District

Residents and visitors of the Columbia River Gorge can "take action" to prevent the spread of invasive species in support of the National Invasive Species Awareness Week. While May 17-21 is the highlighted timeframe for this issue — see more information and free online events at www.nisaw.org — raising public awareness about invasive species and how to prevent them is a year-round need.

The moment you brush past a plant or set down your backpack in a meadow, you've invited seeds to cling on to your belongings. Then, while on your trip home or during your next adventure, you accidentally disperse the seeds, spreading invasive species into a new ecosystem. Those invasive species can out-compete native species for food and habitat and sometimes even cause their extinction.

Whether you travel afar or just live locally, invasive species can cause a nuisance and even environmental or economic harm on public and private lands. Your favorite destination or your own backyard could be the next site for a noxious weed infestation. Seeds can be found on your boots, socks, and clothing; they may be lying dormant in the mud

between your boot treads, or caught in between your shoes and socks, or they may have simply attached themselves to your clothes like velcro. What's more, those same species caught within the treads of your shoes can be in the treads of your bike, ATV, and stroller tires.

One of our favorite companions, our dogs, can also give invasive plant seeds a ride to their next home. It is important to inspect your four-legged companions and remove any plant material you find before traveling to another site.

There are many habits people can adopt to lessen the probability of transporting pests. Here in the Columbia Gorge, many trails have installed Boot brushes. Hikers can clean their boots before their hike in order to reduce the chances of any unknown hitchhikers escaping into trail systems and after a hike to prevent the spread of weeds to other trails or even their own backyards.

Boot brushes can reduce the spread of weeds from site to site. It is important to use them before and after your hike, as weed seeds can be very small, so clean boots even if you suspect they are clean. Be sure to clean camping gear, including sweeping out tents and brushing off tarps on site before packing up to leave.

Spreading invasive species doesn't stop at seeds or plant pieces. Many pests and

plant diseases can spread as well. On farms and forestry operations, specific agricultural sanitation practices are necessary to prevent invasives, pests, and crop diseases from spreading when moving equipment or tools between forests, fields and farms.

A key action to prevent the spread of invasive insect species is to buy and use firewood locally. Dangerous forest insects like the Bark Beetle and Gypsy Moth, which affect our forestry and orchard industries, can hitchhike their way into a new area on firewood transported long distances.

Invasive plants and pests are not limited to land! There are a host of aquatic invasives to be aware of like the zebra mussel, New Zealand mudsnail, and plants like Eurasian milfoil. Clean off visible aquatic plants, animals and mud from watercraft, gear, paddles, floats, ropes, anchors, trailers and dip nets when you exit a waterbody. Drain any extra water from your gear, and dry everything for five days or more unless otherwise required by local or state law when moving between waters to kill small species that are not easily seen. Never empty aquariums into local waters or release fish or other pets.

To learn more about essential actions we can take to prevent the spread of invasive species visit play-cleango.org. Most counties



Simon, 2, uses a boot brush at Rowena Plateau trailhead. May 17-21 is National Invasive Species Awareness Week, but preventing the spread of invasive species is a year-round effort. Contributed photo

also have noxious weed departments and soil and water conservation districts with access to expertise and resources for identifying suspected plants and pests.

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Conservation districts are local, non-regulatory,

public agencies charged with assisting landowners and residents with responsible natural resource management and stewardship. Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District in the Dalles, Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District in Hood River, and Underwood Conservation

District in White Salmon are available to assist with a variety of natural resource issues, including soil health, water quality, fish habitat, wildfire risk, forest management, noxious weeds, pollinators, wildlife, livestock and agriculture.



Adopt-A-Dog executive director Sherry Bohn, lead shelter tech Denise Perimeter, Insitu CEO Megan Davies, and Insitu community relations coordinator Kip Miller. Contributed photo

Friendly competition results in donations to non-profits

Staff Report
Columbia Gorge News

On Friday, April 9, Insitu's new CEO Megan Davies traveled to three Gorge non-profit organizations to distribute \$10,000 in donation checks to representatives from Hood River Adopt-a-Dog, FISH Food Bank and Columbia Gorge CASA.

The donations were the result of a friendly competition Insitu sponsored for its employees that let them earn points for their favorite charitable organization by volunteering their

time at company and community events. Hood River Adopt-a-Dog received \$5,000, with FISH Foodbank and CG CASA receiving \$3,000 and \$2,000, respectively.

"As a new Gorge resident, I am inspired by the dedication of organizations like Hood River Adopt-a-Dog, FISH Food Bank and CASA to deliver critical services in our area," Davies said. "On behalf of the Insitu team, thank you to all of our local non-profits for the incredible work you do to build better, more remarkable communities in this beautiful place where we live and work."

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