

- Mia Moran, the international bestselling author of *Plan Simple Meals* gives a talk 6:30 pm Thursday, Oct. 13, at the Eugene Waldorf School, 1350 McLean Blvd. The school says, "Moran will help simplify and demystify what 'good food' means today. She will share some gems of how to create the space to make good food and even the time to eat it. She will share several tools working with a regular rhythm to make mealtimes manageable at home — tools that work with middle school aged children too." \$10 suggested donation. More info at plansimplemeals.com.

- A **Save the Elliott State Forest** rally is 9 am Tuesday, Oct. 11, at the Department of State Lands, 775 Summer Street NE, Salem. The Many Rivers chapter of the Sierra Club is organizing carpooling from Eugene. The group says, "Add your support to the folks from Coos County at the Save the Elliott State Forest who are holding a rally at a meeting in Salem with Gov. Brown and the State Land Board to tell them the Elliott State Forest should stay in public ownership." The State Land Board meeting begins at 10 am; find more info at goo.gl/W222NW.

- A **Bethel Community Farm open house** is 2-5 pm Thursday, Oct. 6, and Thursday, Oct. 13. The farm is located on 4 acres of land between Kalapuya High School and Prairie Mountain School. Organizers say the free event "invites one and all to come see this Bethel School District farm that has already grown hundreds of pounds of produce in its first season." Farm manager Kasey White and Kalapuya High School students will lead tours of the farm "which includes a beautiful new barn with a solar array, a greenhouse, beehive and space for a future community garden. Go to Kalapuya High School, 1200 N. Terry Street in Eugene.

- The city of Springfield is seeking National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) approval to use federal funds on the **Franklin Boulevard Project in Glenwood**. It is seeking the approval using a process called Categorical Exclusion, which would not require an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement to fully assess, and potentially mitigate, impacts resulting from the project. Categorical Exclusion requires that the project not involve significant environmental impacts or substantial controversy on environmental grounds. Under a Categorical Exclusion, Springfield is not required to provide notice or a period for public comment on this documentation. To express an opinion on a Categorical Exclusion for the Franklin Boulevard Project or request more information, contact Adam Roberts, ODOT Region 2 Environmental Coordinator, at 541-757-4165 or Adam.Roberts@odot.state.or.us.

- Forest Treasures: **Finding and Enjoying Wild Mushrooms** with Peg Boulay and Bruce Newhouse is 7 pm Thursday, Oct. 20, at the UO Law School, 1515 Agate Street, Room 110. Organizers tell EW that "a spirited tag team of two experienced fungi-philosophers will show you how to responsibly find, identify and prepare edible mushrooms for your table."



RINSE AND REPEAT

Eugene's graffiti removal plan

It never ends.

Eugene Public Works maintenance worker Matt Chaney shows me his smartphone. The small screen displays a special email account where he gets notes from concerned Eugeneans who report new outcroppings of graffiti with the Lane Council of Governments online reporting center.

A note comes in that someone tagged the word "mold" nearby on 13th, he says, pointing to the message. There's a chance one of his guys is already en route to scrub it clean.

The city's vandals freckle Eugene with stickers and graffiti. And almost as quickly, counterinsurgents erase the vulgar tide of looping colorful slogans that seem to multiply every time you blink.

Neither side wins, but neither side loses, either.

Though the city says it has an active anti-graffiti program, graffiti removal in Eugene looks more like a rough patchwork. The city tracks the problem through a computerized reporting system but funds only one small road crew to address complaints like the one Chaney showed me.

Eugeneans who prefer order and cleanliness know the problem is more serious than that. That's why downtown business owners organized the Downtown Clean Team program and other volunteers formed a graffiti removal outfit.

Localized anti-graffiti efforts like the Clean Team and the Huckleberry Patrol close some of the gaps in the city's graffiti abatement plan; however, there are still a lot of holes.

Chaney leads a road crew with the city's traffic department that primarily maintains road signs and street markings. Several times a week, though, Chaney puts one of his guys on an eight-hour graffiti patrol shift that mainly covers hotspots like the downtown corridor and the university district.

The rest of Chaney's five-man team is always armed with cleaning supplies and buckets of grey-green paint, just in case.

Other than that, Public Works' approach is mainly complaint-driven, Chaney says.

Public Works has received 1,000 graffiti removal requests since New Years, he tells me — that's more than three a day. For a handful of workers covering a city that's more than 40 square miles (20,000 football fields) in size, that's a ton of work.

The thing is, Chaney isn't expected to respond to every single call for help.

The city's website says Public Works only removes graffiti from public rights-of-way and city-owned facilities, but Chaney says even that isn't entirely accurate and that his crew doesn't remove graffiti in most parks or on public buildings.

"I hate to tell people that," Chaney says. "They aren't usually happy to hear it."

He says he fields plenty of complaints from people still under the impression that the city cleans any and all graffiti, no matter where it pops up.

That's probably because the city used to attack the problem

more aggressively than it does now, Chaney says, but budget cuts six years ago forced his department to narrow its scope. These days, he only washes graffiti off city streets, sidewalks, road signs, utility boxes and sometimes bridges and overpasses.

On a weekday afternoon, it's hard to spot even a trace of errant spray paint or a "DERP" sticker to save your life. Downtown, anyway, anti-graffiti forces seem to be in control of the situation.

Taking a broader view, however, the success with which the combined forces of decency and order are prevailing over Eugene's streets is debatable — you don't wander far from the urban core before you begin to notice the superabundance of strange hieroglyphs.

Chaney's team does a thorough job within its limited jurisdiction. The city says it erases more than 5,000 tags on public property a year. Spray paint is cheap and Sharpie markers plentiful — meaning, it's still better to be a tagger in this particular turf war.

To help level the playing field a little, retired schoolteacher George Jeffcott set up an anti-graffiti cleanup squad in 2007, calling it the Huckleberry Patrol — a quaint nod to Mark Twain's Huck Finn, who is often erroneously associated with whitewashing the fence in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

Though Jeffcott died a few years back, his patrol fights on.

Part of the Eugene Police Department's volunteer program, Huckleberry Patrol teams scour downtown on bike about once a week. A promo video uploaded three years ago to YouTube shows former volunteer Claudia Carlson and Bob Walker in blue EPD vests and bike helmets attacking Dumpsters and garbage cans with spray bottles filled with environmentally friendly solvent.

It's a persistent and complex issue that can be expensive to deal with, says Eugene Chamber of Commerce president Dave Hauser.

Hauser has been with the chamber for 25 years. Over that time he's seen "great energy and a positive trajectory toward vibrancy" downtown. "On the other hand, there are still a lot of public safety challenges to overcome," and one of them is graffiti, he says, be it spray paint, stickering or scratched windows.

The chamber's philosophy is: The quicker you deal with it, the more of it you discourage. Hauser is involved peripherally with a major, ongoing downtown cleanup effort operated by pro-business nonprofit Downtown Eugene, Inc.

Downtown businesses and property owners pay a special tax that gets funneled through the city and apportioned to DEI. Some of that money fuels the Downtown Clean Team, a program that gives low-level criminal offenders a community service alternative to paying court fines out of pocket.

Led by DEI's private security detail, the red-capped Downtown Guides, early-morning Clean Teams hit the streets before sunup and finish their shift by the time most people punch the clock.

"The city needs a lot of cleanup every day," Hauser says, and Clean Teams make a big difference inside the 12-block zone where they operate.

OUT DAMN SPOT:
GRAFFITI REMOVED IN
DOWNTOWN EUGENE

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT CHANEY