Two Decades of Protecting Mt. Ashland

The Rogue Group Sierra Club Executive Committee asked that we give an update on the situation at Mt. Ashland.

The Rogue Group first got involved in the protection of Mt. Ashland in 1989 when John Sully and the late Tom Rose began taking hikes through the Middle Branch’s meadows, creeks, seeps, springs, and unique ecosystems. The Rogue Group has successfully prevented expansion into the Middle Branch for the last 24 years and will continue to advocate for the protection of this area.

So, what’s new?

We have all read the recent news articles about the Mt. Ashland Association’s (MAA) expansion of some runs and their intent to increase the size of the parking lot. None of these activities are taking place in the Middle Branch area. Instead, they are taking place within the current footprint of the ski area. The enlargement of the parking lot has been appealed, but not by the Sierra Club or its partners, in two lawsuits by Oregon Wild and the Center for Biological Diversity (the “plaintiffs”). While we are concerned about this activity, we are focusing our efforts on protecting the undisturbed, pristine Middle Branch and will continue to do so.

What have the three groups been doing?

You’ll recall that in 2007, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals issued an injunction, prohibiting expansion at Mt. Ashland. The court cited some major issues with the Forest Service (FS) and MAA plans. First, the Forest Service had not properly designated unstable lands as “riparian reserves.” Riparian reserves get special protection under the Forest Service rules. These unstable lands are to be protected. In fact, at the 9th Circuit oral argument on our appeal in 2007, one of the judges stated that the MAA may not be able to build ski runs across those areas in the Middle Branch that were unstable. Secondly, the Court said that the FS had not done enough study of the Pacific fisher, a rare weasel-like mammal found high in the Siskiyous, within the expansion area. Third, the Court found that the FS had not followed its own planning rules. Thirty-five acres or so of the proposed expansion area are zoned for watershed protection. These just happen to be the area that will be most disturbed by ski runs and the base of the proposed new lift. The court found that the FS should have, but had not, changed the zoning for this area.

See Mt. Ashland, page 2

Rogue Walker Looking for New Editor

Do you have a knack for writing and/or editing the work of others? Do you want to learn the latest environmental news from the front lines of our local environmental efforts? Do you have experience web-surfing, working with Word documents, and emailing?

Do you long to make a difference? Then put your talents to work as the editor of the Rogue Walker!

As editor, you will work with some of our local environmental community as they send you articles, photos, and information. Working with our layout editor, you will edit and organize that information into a publication that reaches more than 2,200 readers in Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, and Curry counties each month via mail and website PDF files.

This volunteer opportunity requires a commitment of about 5-6 hours per month, a computer with (preferably) Microsoft Word, access to the Internet, and helpful doses of patience, creativity, and good humor. You will be provided training by our current editor, Kristi, and will have the ongoing support of Tom, our Excom and media chair, and Christine, our layout editor. If you are interested, please contact Kristi Johnson at walkereditor@hotmail.com.
Tell DEQ to Deny Coal Export

The State of Oregon will soon decide whether to approve or reject Oregon’s first coal export project, Ambre Energy’s Morrow Pacific Project. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) should protect our air, water, and communities and deny dirty coal export.

The DEQ has extended the comment deadline for the proposed Columbia River coal export project at Port of Morrow’s air quality and stormwater permits to Mon., Aug. 12 at 5 P.M.

You can submit longer written comments here.

Suggested Questions
Ambre promises the moon. But has no track record of operating a coal export terminal.
Ask DEQ how it will protect Oregonians from the Northwest’s first coal export terminal using unproven technologies administered by an inexperienced corporation that has never operated a coal export terminal.

• Is DEQ planning to regulate coal pollution from trains? What if coal chunks fall out of trains and into the Columbia River or local creeks?
• Is DEQ planning to regulate coal pollution from hundreds of coal barges?
• Once DEQ issues air and water quality permits, can Ambre use uncovered barges? What would stop Ambre from using uncovered barges?
• Does DEQ know how much coal pollution would enter the Columbia River if Ambre used uncovered coal barges?
• Does DEQ know if coal pollution will dirty the local drinking water source in Boardman?
• Did Ambre inform DEQ about its history of misleading public officials about the true size of its coal export project in Longview, Washington?
• Will DEQ require that Ambre obtain an air pollution discharge permit for the pollution coming from its Port Westward coal export operations?
• Timing with the Department of State Lands and the Army Corp of Engineers?

For more information or talking points, go to www.coalfreenorthwest.org

-by Laura Stevens
Associate Organizing Representative
Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign

Last year, the local federal court released the injunction stating that the FS/MAA had complied with the 9th's direction. Plaintiffs immediately filed an appeal of that decision back to the 9th Circuit. That appeal has now been fully briefed and is pending a decision. We have argued that 1) while the FS/MAA designated unstable lands, they have not changed the management of these lands, in violation of the 9th Circuit’s ruling, 2) that the FS’s analysis of the fisher is still inadequate, and 3) that the FS has still not rezoned the 35 acres as required by the 9th.

The unstable area issue is important because if the MAA/FS cannot build runs over these areas, expansion into the Middle Branch will, for all practical purposes, be dead.

In addition, the plaintiffs have filed a second lawsuit against the FS. We have been in dialog for years with the FS regarding unstudied issues. We had hoped that the FS would agree to study issues such as climate change’s impact on the future of the ski area and the large reduction in ski area visitors since the previous study was done (meaning that all of the economic calculations made in previous studies are based on incorrect assumptions). We also had hoped that the FS would properly apply the law regarding analysis of the degradation of creeks and associated riparian areas

See Mt. Ashland, page 5
2013 Legislature Adjourns
SB 633 Dies in Committee

The Oregon legislature concluded their 2013 session, leaving SB 633 relegated to the dustbin of never-should-have-seen-the-light-of-day ideas. Thanks go to the legislators who understood the true intent of the bill and prevented it from passing. And a huge round of applause and gratitude to the many supporters who worked tirelessly to spread the word, contacting their senators, representatives, testifying, writing letters and e-mails, and influencing friends and neighbors.

There is another legislative session in 2014 before our election takes place in May. There is much to be done between now and then. Volunteer to help the campaign, and vote now with your dollars so that in May 2014 you can vote for a GMO Free Jackson County.

*What is Senate Bill 633 and Why Are We Concerned?*

SB 633 is a pre-emption bill that would strip the rights of Oregon counties to control their local agriculture. If SB 633 becomes law, all local control of agricultural seed and seed products would be removed, replaced by a “one size fits all” policy dictated by the state.

This bill is a thinly veiled attempt by the chemical companies to silence concerns over genetically engineered foods and gut all county efforts at addressing the growing of GMO crops. SB 633 would prevent individual counties from implementing policies that make sense locally.

Jackson County voters succeeded in putting a measure to ban the growth of GMO crops on the May 2014 ballot. SB 633 is a direct attack on that citizen initiative. Passage of the bill would nullify the measure. Oregon citizens deserve to have their voices respected. SB 633 does nothing to protect local sustainable agriculture. Instead it takes away the rights of citizens to protect their food sovereignty.

-from GMO Free Jackson County [www.gmofreejackson-county.org](http://www.gmofreejackson-county.org), posted July 08, 2013 2:48 PM

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Pacific Northwest Climate Science Conference
September 5-6, 2013

**Governor Hotel, Portland, Oregon**

This year will mark the 4th annual Pacific Northwest Climate Science Conference. The conference provides a forum for researchers and practitioners to convene and exchange scientific results, challenges, and solutions related to the impacts of climate on people, natural resources, and infrastructure in the Pacific Northwest. The conference attracts a wide range of participants including policy- and decision-makers, resource managers, and scientists, from public agencies, sovereign tribal nations, non-governmental organizations, and more. As such, the conference emphasizes oral presentations that are comprehensible to a wide audience and on topics of broad interest. This conference is an opportunity to stimulate and showcase decision-relevant climate science in the Pacific Northwest.

Previous conferences were held in Portland in 2010, Seattle in 2011, and Boise in 2012. This year’s conference will feature a keynote address by U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon, and invited plenary talks by several other distinguished speakers.

Early registration deadline is August 5.

For more information or to register, go to [http://pnwclimate-conference.org/](http://pnwclimate-conference.org/).
The Rogue Group Sierra Club

The Rogue Group Sierra Club is one of six regional groups of the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club, originally formed by John Muir in 1892, now contains 52 Chapters nationwide. Its purpose:

To restore the quality of the natural environment and to maintain the integrity of ecosystems; to educate the public to the need to understand and support the objectives, and to study, explore and enjoy the wildlands.

Executive Committee meetings are held the second Monday of every month from 5:30-7:30 PM in the Guanajuato Room of the Ashland Public Library.

www.oregon.sierraclub.org/groups/rogue/

Executive Committee
Tom Dimitre Chair 541-890-5022
Bob Palzer Vice Chair 541-482-2492
Jack Methot Secretary 541-708-0020
Paul Goff Co-Treasurer
Janet Huntamer Co-Treasurer
John Sully 541-482-3246
Elaine Wood 541-597-2880
Kristi Johnson 541-608-7163

Conservation Coordinators
Forestlands Open
Wildlife Sally Mackler
Air Quality Bob Palzer 541-482-2492
Fish/Water John Sully 541-482-3246
Trails Open

Communications/Media Committee
Tom Dimitre Media Chair 541-890-5022
Kristi Johnson Editor, Rogue Walker
Christine Chumbler Layout, Rogue Walker
Rodger White Webmaster

Membership Committee
Open Chair

Fundraising Committee
Open Chair

Mt. Ashland Committee
Tom Dimitre 541-890-5022
John Sully 541-482-3246

Klamath Basin Committee
John Sully Chair 541-482-3246

Outings Committee
Open Chair

Conservation Committee
Tom Dimitre Acting Chair 541-890-5022
Bob Palzer 541-482-2492
John Sully 541-482-3246

Sections
Al Collinet Curry County 541-412-8444
Elaine Wood Illinois Valley 541-597-2880
Jack Walker Illinois Valley 541-597-2410
Open Grants Pass

Other Events and Outings

Ashland Parks and Recreation

N MT Park Nature Center, 620 N Mountain Ave, Ashland

Mon.-Fri, Aug. 12-16, 9 A.M.-noon - Garden Art & Nature Play

Students will learn basic garden science and express their understanding through hands-on nature arts & crafts. Constant outdoor time exploring local wildlife and landscape will inspire wonder with messy play. Participants will need weather/messy appropriate clothes, sturdy shoes, and an easy-to-carry pack with a simple, nutritious snack and water bottle. Parents welcome too. Register online at www.ashland.or.us/register or call North Mountain Park. Ages 2.5-5.5. Cost $100.

Tuesdays, Aug. 6-27, 12:30-2 P.M. - Dynamic Family Wilderness Class

Hiking is a physically challenging and spiritually rewarding activity that the entire family can participate in. Come learn the basics of hiking including local plants, animals, and safety precautions. This class will take place indoors and handouts will be provided. Ages 5 & up. Cost $32 for four classes.

Sat., Aug. 17, 10 A.M.-noon - Urban Composting

Learn how to divert food scraps and organic yard debris from the landfill through composting. In time, this material can become a valuable soil amendment for your garden and yard. Learn how to set up a compost system in an urban setting with recommendations for keeping critters out of your pile. This class is sponsored by the City of Ashland Conservation Commission & Recology Ashland Sanitary Service. Pre-registration is not required for this program. Ages 13 & up (younger children should be accompanied by an adult). Cost: free.

Sat., Aug. 24, 9 A.M.-12:30 P.M. - Collecting Native Seed for Your Garden

Seed collecting is a fun and effective way to enhance your garden with native plants. Participants will explore an area of the Dead Indian Memorial Plateau just east of Ashland. The group will return to the Nature Center to process and share seeds and learn some techniques for growing native plants from seed. Please bring water, a snack, and sunscreen as desired. Register online at www.ashland.or.us/register or call the Nature Center. Meet at North Mountain Park and be prepared to drive 20 to 25 miles. Ages 12 & up. Cost $15.

Applegate Trails Association

P.O. Box 105 Jacksonville 97530
www.applegaterails.org

Aug. 18 - Red Lily Vineyard

Two or four mile hike. Wine & dine at the vineyard after the hike, catered by Fulcrum Dining. Optional longer hike offered. Meet at Red Lily Vineyard, 11777 Hwy 238, Jacksonville, 9 A.M. For more information, contact info@applegaterails.org.

KS Wild Hikes

Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center
P.O. Box 102 Ashland 97520 541-488-5789 www.kswild.org

Sat., Aug. 3, 9 A.M.-5 P.M. – Takelma Gorge Hike

Join KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper staff for a moderate 5-mile hike along the Upper Rogue River Trail with views of the unique geology of the Cascades and ancient lava flows. Carpool leaves Evo’s coffee in Ashland at 9 A.M. and the north Medford Fred Meyer at 9:30 A.M. Please bring sun protection, rain gear, comfortable walking shoes, layers, plenty of water, and lunch. You can also bring a camera, binoculars, and

See Other Events, page 5
“God never made an ugly landscape. All that the sun shines on is beautiful, so long as it is wild.” — John Muir

Illinois Valley Activity Section Report

The Illinois Valley Activity Section met July 10 in Selma. The meeting was called to order at 7 P.M. June’s minutes and the Treasurer’s report were accepted unanimously.

Things are really in an activated state around the Illinois Valley Activity Section. Members sense we are in a position with real potential as change agents and that things must change. Here’s what we concentrated on:

- First, write a letter to Senator Wyden to share the real situation of the high speed clear-cutting of our forests with almost all the logs shipped to Asia. Still, the lumber industry cries about the lack of trees for our own use and wants to cut down public forests!

- We would like a forestry program modeled after Natural Selection Alternative, one that protects old native stands and restores areas that have been devastated. We particularly want the senator to incorporate federal standards rather than the lenient Oregon Forest Practice Act standards, which allow lumber companies to spray known toxins that have been approved under the influence of the same company Senator Wyden is battling against in the Monsanto Protection Act “controversy.”

- Second, members are working to initiate a youth-oriented Illinois Valley ecology movement. We feel the issues surrounding GMO food and global warming have alarmed many young people. Discussion continued in order to brainstorm ways to attract younger residents to combine our older experience and contacts with their new ideas, experience, and energy.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M. The Illinois Valley Activity Section meets the second Wednesday of every month, alternating between Selma and Cave Junction. Social is at 6:30 P.M. and the meeting begins at 7 P.M. Refreshments are welcome as is the public. Please call Elaine at 541-597-2880 for details. Come share your ideas and issues.

- by Dr. Paul Goff, Co-Treasurer, RGSC

Mt. Ashland, from page 2

and the McDonald Peak Roadless Area. They ultimately refused to do so, and so a second suit was brought in Oregon Federal Court, by the three groups, asking that the court order the MAA/FS to study these issues before the proposed expansion could go forward. This case is currently being briefed by the parties.

The Rogue Group is committed to fighting the proposed expansion until the Middle Branch is permanently protected. For more information, contact RGSC Chair Tom Dimitre at dimitre@mind.net.

If you would like to make a donation to the Rogue Group’s efforts to protect the Middle Branch, you can send a tax deductible donation to: Sierra Club Foundation. Mark the memo line as Mt. Ashland. If you do not need a tax-deductible donation, you can make your check out to the Rogue Group Sierra Club. In both cases, you can mail the check to: Rogue Group Sierra Club PO Box 727, Ashland, OR 97520.

-by Tom Dimitre, Chair, RGSC

Other Events, from page 4

your favorite field guide if you wish.
Call Morgan at 541-488-5789 or email morgan@kswild.org to sign up for the hike.

GMO-Free Jackson County

Mon.’s, 9-11 A.M. Organizational Meetings, in the Gresham Room of the Ashland Public Library

The mission of GMO Free Jackson County is to protect the growth and propagation of non-genetically engineered plants and animals by banning the cultivation of GMOs in Jackson County.

For more information go to www.gmofreejacksoncounty.org/index.html

Southern Oregon Climate Action Network (SOCAN)

(Note-new website address) http://socan.info/calendar/ 541-301-4107

Tues., Aug. 27, 6-8:00 P.M. – Special Topics Presentation 6-6:30 P.M. Gwyn Meyer on a regional climate action plan in the Adams Room, Medford Public Library.

Regular General Meeting 6:30-8 P.M.
Large Community Meeting Room, Medford Public Library, 205 South Central, Medford

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Mt. Ashland

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-by Tom Dimitre, Chair, RGSC

-GREEENLEAF-

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More Than 500 Citizens and 100 Businesses Call on Ashland City Council to Ban the Bag
Ashland Could Lead Southern Oregon in Reducing Plastic Pollution

ASHLAND, OR – A campaign to protect the Pacific Ocean and its wildlife by banning plastic bags from Ashland kicked off with a free screening of the film Bag It, hosted by the citizen-based, environmental advocacy organization Environment Oregon.

“Ashland has the chance to be a leader in stopping plastic pollution by becoming the first city in Southern Oregon to ban the bag,” said Nina Gillespie, preservation intern with Environment Oregon and Ashland campaign organizer. “But we need city councilors to take action and answer the call of hundreds of Ashlanders and the nearly 100 local businesses who want to protect our rivers and oceans.”

The film, which won the Ashland Independent Film Festival Audience Choice Award in 2010, is about the tragic effects plastic bag pollution has had on the Pacific and its wildlife. Right now, there are 100 million tons of trash in the Pacific Ocean. In some places, plastic outweighs plankton 6-to-1. Plastic pollution harms thousands of sea birds and marine animals, like sea turtles, every year. Too much of this trash comes from plastic bags.

Oregonians use more than 1 billion plastic bags each year. Too many of them work their way through Oregon’s waterways, like the Rogue River, eventually leading to the Pacific Ocean. Banning single-use plastic bags in Ashland will help protect wildlife in both the Rogue and Pacific.

“The Rogue River is an invaluable resource for Southern Oregon and Ashland,” said Chris Korbulic, an expedition kayaker and Ashlander. “Tourist or otherwise, we, as its stewards, have the responsibility to protect and keep it clean.”

The “Bag Monster,” the now well-known mascot for Environment Oregon’s Keep Plastic Out of the Pacific campaign, attended the event covered in the average number of bags one person uses in a year, more than 400.

Rogue Riverkeeper, Jackson County Master Recyclers, nearly 100 businesses, as well as the Northwest Grocery Association have all joined Environment Oregon to call for banning the bag in Ashland. More than 500 citizens have also signed petitions in support of the ban. Environment Oregon, a statewide, citizen-based, environmental advocacy organization represents hundreds of Ashland citizens.

Passing a ban would make Ashland the fourth city in Oregon to enact the policy and the first in Southern Oregon.

For more information, please go to www.environmentoregon.org

- from a press release by Environment Oregon, July 15, 2013