

Butte Falls Community Forest Newsletter

1 message

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Butte Falls Community Forest Monthly Newsletter

03/07/24



BFCF

Welcome to our monthly newsletter, where you can find updates and upcoming events promoting the progression of our community forest.





Resident and logger: Don Hamann leading the monthly forest chat

Dear Friends and Partners of the Butte Falls Community Forest,

The Town of Butte Falls is delighted to announce the appointment of Ms. Sonya Goddess as our new Community Forest Liaison. Ms. Goddess holds a degree in environmental sciences from Southern Oregon University, showcasing a strong academic background in the field. She also brings a wealth of energy and a positive demeanor, complementing her exceptional educational qualifications.

The Community Forest acknowledges the crucial role of liaison between us and our partners, and she will be entrusted with a variety of responsibilities. We anticipate that you will have the opportunity to hear directly from Ms. Goddess soon, as she settles-in and assumes her role with us. Please help us make her feel welcome.

Mayor Trish Callahan shared, "Sonya's hire gives our Community Forest the opportunity to connect our sponsors and keep the public informed about updates and treatments occurring within the forest."

Sonya Goddess noted, "There are many huge steps the Community Forest is taking to create a safe and enjoyable forest for all to experience. I am excited to be a part of this wonderful project and am eager to share how wonderful it is with the community."

Sonya was introduced for the first time to the public at the Open House in October of 2023 where the plans for the Community Forest were presented to the public.

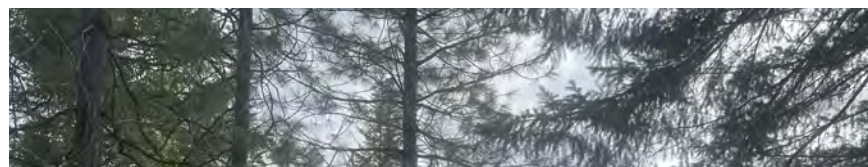
We are proud to share that the Butte Falls Community Forest has been awarded a substantial grant from the Ford Family Foundation to support Ms. Goddess for nearly one year. Additionally, a grant from the Gordon Elwood Foundation has been secured to further contribute to her funding, alongside the Community Forest's own financial commitment.

As the project progresses, Sonya will be updating community members and supporters through this newsletter and updates on the bulletin at the Butte Falls Community School Partnership - The Landing.

Sincerely,

Trish Callahan

Mayor Town of Butte Falls





Cleared brush being prepared for burns by ODF in Hukill Creek unit

Recent Updates in BFCF

“Underwear Burial”:

In the Forest Chat held on February 9th, 2024 Don Hamann demonstrated a Butte Falls tradition of an “underwear burial”. This comical experiment is designed to provide insights into soil health based on the decomposition of cotton underwear.

Here's how it typically works:

Biodegradability: Cotton is a biodegradable natural fiber. By burying cotton underwear in the soil, researchers or individuals can observe how quickly the fabric breaks down. The rate of decomposition can be an indirect indicator of the biological activity and microbial health of the soil. Healthy soils with an active microbial community tend to decompose organic matter more efficiently.

Microbial Activity: The breakdown of cotton fabric relies on the activity of soil microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi. The more thriving the microbial population, the faster the decomposition process. This can be a qualitative measure of the soil's biological activity and diversity.

Soil Moisture and Aeration: The condition of the underwear after burial can also provide information about soil moisture levels. Well-aerated soils with proper moisture content are generally more conducive to microbial activity and decomposition.

Nutrient Cycling: The decomposition of organic materials contributes to nutrient cycling in the soil. As the cotton breaks down, it releases nutrients into the soil, potentially benefiting plant growth.

While this method is more of a fun and educational activity rather than a rigorous scientific test, it can serve as a simple and visual way for people to understand the importance of soil health. Keep in mind that factors like climate, soil type, and local microbial populations can influence the results.

We will be checking back on the underwear in a couple of months to see how fast it decomposes and will send out the date so the public can see the condition of Butte Fall's soil firsthand!

<https://news-decoder.com/buried-underpants-and-tea-bags-help-scientists-evaluate-soil/>



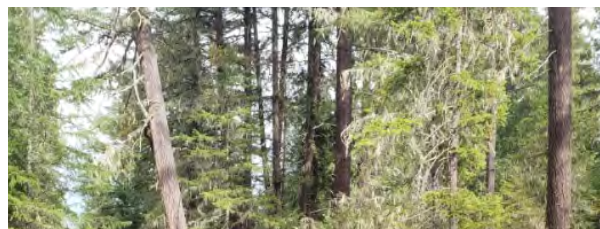
Don Hamann burring the cotton underwear in the community forest 2/9/24

Butte Falls Community Wildfire Safety Presentation - Natural Resource Center (NRC):

Ben Decarlow, high school science teacher and co-founder of the Butte Falls Charter School - Natural Resource Center, will be joining forces with various individuals associated with the Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative to co-teach a k-12 elective course focused on their FireBright curriculum. This program aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of our fire-prone forests, the behavior of wildfires, and the essential skills required to pursue careers in natural resource management or wildfire risk mitigation. The ultimate objective is to empower students to actively contribute to the reduction of fuel hazards near their own residences, while simultaneously fostering a sense of community cohesion and preparedness for inevitable fire incidents.

The Butte Falls High School students will share insights from their fire safety elective on **April 5th from 10am-2pm** in the NRC, they will be covering topics such as wildfire risks, forest types, forestry tools, fire ecology, indigenous burning practices, firefighting roles, and community mitigation. Community members can interact with students at various stations to learn more about these subjects.

For more details on the program: <https://sofrc.org/education/high-school-wildfire-curriculum/>





Outdoor learning at the NRC

Oregon Department of Forestry Fuel Reduction Update:

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) began thinning for fuel reduction on Monday, January 22nd. This initiative is anticipated to last for a minimum of six weeks and is scheduled to take place four days a week from Monday to Thursday, between 8 am and 4 pm, on the designated sites. Two highly skilled crews have been assigned to oversee this project, with one crew stationed in Grants Pass and the other in Medford. The initial undertaking began in Unit 1 at Hukill Creek, and has progressed to the Falls. Thinning piles have already been created, clearing areas for the Falls viewing deck, construction of the deck is expected to begin within the next month. The primary objectives of this operation include thinning the vegetation, cutting brush, and preparing for a broadcast burn scheduled for the fall of 2024. These diligent measures will help enhance forest health and mitigate potential fire risks. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this endeavor.

2/7/24 Update:

ODF crew has completed approximately 70 acres of pre-commercial thinning and fuel reduction prescriptions. Units 1 and 1A, at Hukill Creek are complete and ready for underburn, planning to take place this Fall of 2024. The crew will move down to Unit 5 at the Falls on Thursday the 8th. They will be pre-commercial thinning and brush cutting, and all slash will be piled and burned along with the other units in the Fall. With the help of ODF, work has begun in the Falls to replace the old viewing platform.

Which entails rock removal, and preliminary trail construction.

The Community Forest will seek grants from various entities to pay for the viewing platform and all other planned recreational infrastructures in the Falls area.





Piles made by ODF in the Falls unit

Opportunities to get connected!

Forest Chat:

March 9th (Second Saturdays) @ 2pm at the Falls in the Community Forest

Topic: Root disease in mature trees

Commissioners Meeting:

March 6th (First Wednesdays) @ 6pm in the Butte Falls School District Office

Butte Falls Community Wildfire Safety Presentation:

April 5th @ 10am-1pm located in The Pavilion at the Natural Resource Center

Facebook Page: Check out the Butte Falls City Hall Facebook page for updates throughout the month

<https://www.facebook.com/municipalgovt>

Any other inquires feel free to reach out to the new hire, Sonya Goddess
sonyagoddess16@gmail.com



Butte Falls Community Forest
Honoring the past while looking to the future
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