

ROW RIVER REVIEW

Our Voice, Our Valley, Our Future



Together We Did: A Year in Review

As winter settles gently over the Row River Valley, our December and January edition of the Row River Review arrives filled with reflection, community achievements, and practical guidance for the season ahead. We look back on an eventful year, highlighting the projects, collaborations, and shared resilience that shaped our community's progress.

This issue also continues our exploration of the remarkable wildlife that surrounds us. In *Creatures of the Row River Valley*, we spotlight the winter habits and habitats of elk, beavers, and American pelicans, three species whose presence adds richness and wonder to our local landscape.

With colder weather and the possibility of storms, we include an important overview on safe heating equipment use during power outages, offering practical tips to help keep households warm and secure. You will also find our Community Calendar, with dates for gatherings, community meetings, and Think Tank Tuesdays,

as well as details for our upcoming Neighborhood Team meetings.

We review the recent Work Party at the Row River Christian Fellowship Church and celebrate the volunteers whose dedication helps preserve this historic landmark and community center. We also share news of our community tool acquisitions, including a chipper and dump trailer, which support neighborhood preparedness and property maintenance efforts.

This issue also highlights the Collaborative Study of the 2024 Cottage Grove Complex burn scar, offering insights into recovery and long-term resilience. Our history feature explores the story of transplanting the town of Dorena, a pivotal chapter in shaping the valley we know today.

Finally, the Row River Rural Fire Protection District provides its seasonal report and a heartfelt call for volunteers, a reminder that community safety grows stronger when neighbors step forward.

Community Event: Together We DID!



Community Event Brings Out 20 Volunteers!

On November 14, around 20 people gathered at the Row River Christian Fellowship Church, which also serves as a community center, to help reduce fire risk around the building and clean up the interior. Members of the Sunshine Club, RRVCP, and Row River Neighbors worked together to clear the front half of the property.

*Together
We Can!*

We will be returning with heavy equipment to address the area behind the building, so keep an eye out for more improvements.

Great News: New Tools!

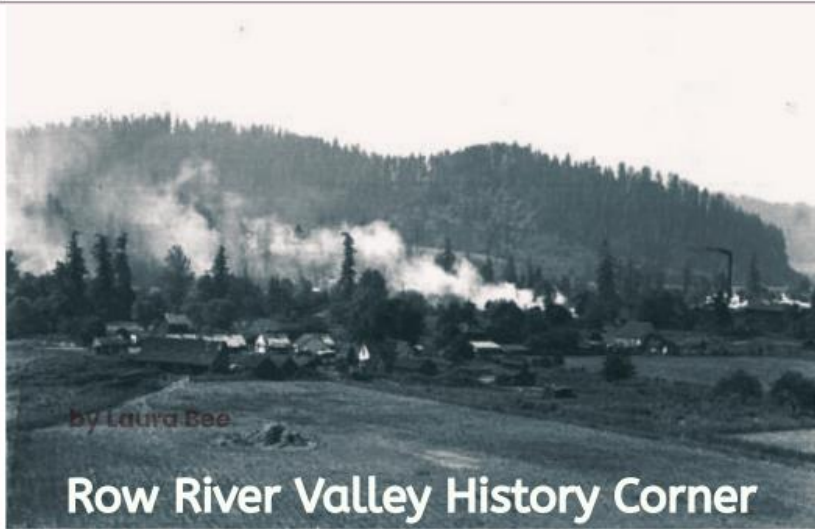
RRVCP purchased a new Dump Trailer and we filled it twice! For future projects, With generous support from our partners at the Oregon State fire Marshall, RRVCP also obtained a new chipper, and a tool trailer which we will be filling with tools in the new year. **Come to the next Think Tank Tuesday (Tuesday, January 6th, 5:30-7pm)** to learn more about our Tool Program. We are excited to be increasing access to equipment for wildfire mitigation and hiring local people to continue our efforts at creating a safer Row River Valley!

Total volunteer hours for this project alone was approximately 80 hours! Thank you everyone. You are all so awesome. It was a fun and rewarding experience!

Thank you to all the volunteers that came to support this effort. Next time let's do a photo of the whole group!

Pictured from top to bottom: Nancy Young's beautiful grandchild, Scott Bylor, Daniel Blades, Tom Hans, Quincy Sundsten, Gary Mowrey, Lena Harding & Quincy Sundsten, June Buechting, Chris Woolhouse, and Laura Bee.





Did you know they moved the town of Dorena?

by Katy Vaughn

Did you know that the original town of Dorena was located where Dorena Lake is now? The little town was located where the Row River met Rat Creek and existed there as a named town from 1899 until 1946. There was a large lumber mill, Durable Fir, that employed many of the town's residents. There was

a store, a grange hall, a church, a train depot, and a school. There were many farms in the valley, including a dairy farm.

The town started out on land that formed the donation land claims of Ira Kelley, Greenberry Van Schoiack and Terrence McMurry. The early farms broke up as acreage was sold off, smaller farms took their place and eventually the village was formed. It was named by its first Postmaster, Alfred J Bigelow, in 1899. In that era most small towns were named by the first Postmaster, often after women or girls in their families. In addition to Dorena (named after two local girls), Elmira, Veneta, Vida, Lorane and Marcola were all named after local ladies.

The town was meant to disappear when the dam was built and Dorena Lake was formed. The residents petitioned the Post Office Department to keep the Post Office and the place name. The people prevailed and the Post Office moved 6 miles upriver, practically on the doorstep of the town of Culp Creek. The grange moved downriver a few miles thus creating the very

long and narrow new town of Dorena.

Why did the town have to move? We will learn all about the Willamette Dam project of 1936 and it's effect on Dorena in the next issue of the Row River Review.

Photos from top: Smoke from the train and mill, old Dorena street, old Kirk house,, and old Dorena labeled





And...we got it done! RRVCP and our partners at Lane County worked together to mitigate *SIX* more homes with hazardous tree removal.

*Together,
We make a
Difference*



Thank you to Lane County Public Works for closely working with us to remove hazardous trees from six more properties. C & D Land and Tree (Dave pictured left with the Colemans) and Ashrock successfully completed the dangerous work and homeowners couldn't be happier.

If you would like help removing hazardous trees, please contact Lane County representatives directly. Cammryne Anderson, a Land Management Technician with Lane County, can be reached at **cammryne.anderson@lanecountyor.gov**
Office: (541) 682-6702 Cell: (458) 221-3425

STUDYING THE BURN: COTTAGE GROVE COMPLEX

Team members from RRVCP, Spirit of Bohemia Mining Days and Dave Light, a local historian, took a field trip to study the burn scar of the 2024 Cottage Grove Complex as part of a collaborative effort to develop a clearer understanding of the fire's impacts and taking meaningful steps toward long term recovery and watershed protection in the Row River Valley.

Pictured, from left to right: Matt Hewlett, Laura Bee, Dave Light, and Kathleen Istudor (See the story on page 6.)



THINK TANK TUESDAY

25 People Joined Together

The meeting room at the RRCF was full to the brim as 25 Row River Residents joined together to discuss evacuation preparedness, community goals, and to identify strengths and needs for our little valley. Plus, five delicious homemade soups were served!

Join us January 6th at 5:30 for our next Think Tank Tuesday

This meeting will be about forming and formalizing action groups. Up for discussion is **creating a Fire Station Committee** to help RRVCP get our Fire Station built. **We also want to share news about our new Chipper, dump trailer, tool trailer, and other project tools, plus establishment of a local (paid) workforce.**



We will also talk about our grant status, review 2025 successes and flops, and work together to plan 2026. Plus, we'll have SOUP FOR YOU!

Ideas? Questions? Email Laura Bee at Programs@RowRiverValley.org. BONUS: If you leave your phone number she'll give you a call.



WE WANT YOU AS A VOLUNTEER!

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HELPING PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY? Email: Landstraj@rowriverfire.org

Row River Rural Fire Protection District (RRRFPD) is always seeking volunteers for different levels of commitment and interest. **Please email Landstraj@rowriverfire.org** for an application and information on what volunteering opportunities look like. All training, medical examination, and equipment fees covered and provided by Row River Rural Fire Protection District based upon applicant eligibility.

Upcoming volunteer responder training

- **November 2025** is *Driver Operator and Pumper Operator/Engineer* tasks as laid out by National Fire Protection Association and the State of Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.
- **December 2025** will be reviewing *District Standard Operating Guidelines* and *After Accident Reviews* for the past year where our volunteers can talk about responses and learn from each other to be better prepared for future incidents.

Some of our responders began EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) training in September and will be finishing it with **state certified testing in December**. This will dramatically improve our response abilities for medical emergencies and help save lives.

For emergency services dial 911 and please stay safe.

29 Service Calls August- October 2025		
7		Structure Fire
14		Vehicle & Brush Fire
4		Medical Response
2		Motor Vehicle Accident
2		Other, Public Assist

(BEAVERS continued from Pg. 8)

Dams also help make an area more fire resistant. Not only is there additional water available during a fire, but the vegetation that grows around the dam creates a natural fire break and sometimes even a fire retaining wall. In this way, beavers help strengthen and increase the resilience of our landscape. They also improve water quality by filtering sediment. The dam traps debris such as leaves and sticks, while the plants growing around it naturally filter the water through their roots. It is truly a win-win.

Sometimes the conditions in an area are already ideal for beavers, and they will not need to build a dam. In

ponds or slack-water areas, they create underground dens along the banks, often under tree stumps or in areas with strong root structures. These dens function much like dams on the inside, with a submerged entrance that opens into a dry chamber lined with twigs, reeds, and grasses. Beavers usually include a back entrance or multiple channels for easy escape.

There are also ways we can help support beaver populations. One approach is to place logs, branches, and twigs in the water to mimic the beginnings of a beaver dam. They just might decide to move in.

Wildfire Assessment and Recovery Work: Cottage Grove Complex Fire

Our wildfire assessment and recovery work in the Cottage Grove Complex area is powered by a strong team of partners who bring local knowledge, technical skill, and a deep commitment to the Row River Valley. This project is supported by an **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)** grant, and four organizations are collaborating to carry out the work.

Each group plays an important role, and together they are helping us understand how this fire affected the landscape and how we can support long term watershed health and wildfire resilience.

Row River Valley Community Partnership

As the local community organization, RRVCP coordinates landowner outreach, field logistics, and neighborhood engagement. Our role is to serve as the local connection, support on the ground work, and ensure that landowners and community members are part of the process from start to finish. We bring knowledge of local priorities, local history, and the needs of the people who call this valley home.

The Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District provides essential expertise in soil health, slope stability, vegetation recovery, and erosion concerns. Their staff help interpret field conditions and guide best practices that protect water quality. Their scientific knowledge is critical for understanding how the landscape is responding after the fire.

The **Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council** contributes watershed science, action planning, and on site ecological assessment. Their team supports our work in riparian areas and helps identify where restoration efforts can provide the greatest long term benefit. Their partnership

strengthens our ability to protect sensitive waterways that feed into the larger Willamette system.

As the cultural and historical partner, the **Spirit of Bohemia Mining Days** brings valuable insight into the region's mining heritage and land use history. Their connection to the upper valley and the Bohemia landscape adds important context that helps us understand how past land uses shape present conditions. Their role also supports community storytelling, local identity, and public awareness of the project.

Why This Work Matters

The Cottage Grove Complex burned through steep slopes, tributaries, and forested areas that are vital to the health of the Row River watershed. This project allows us to document natural regeneration, evaluate erosion concerns, study vegetation recovery, and identify areas where restoration would make the most difference.

By combining community engagement, field science, watershed expertise, and historical perspective, this team is ensuring that our approach reflects both the needs of the land and the people who depend on it.

Healthy forests and stable slopes protect water quality, reduce sedimentation, support wildlife habitat, and strengthen our valley's resilience to future wildfires. The information gathered through this project will guide restoration planning for years to come.

Moving Forward Together

This collaboration is a powerful example of what can happen when multiple organizations come together with a shared purpose. We are grateful for the expertise, effort, and enthusiasm of every partner, and for the landowners who have welcomed us onto their properties.

2025 RRVCP Milestones & Community Thanks

We are deeply grateful for every partner, volunteer, contractor, and neighbor who contributed their time, talent, land, and support throughout 2025. Together, we strengthened wildfire resilience, expanded community safety resources, and built meaningful momentum for long-term valley readiness.

RRVCP Highlights

Reducing Wildfire Risk across Row River Valley

- 25 homes are safer today due to defensible space mitigated.
- 11 properties received hazardous-tree removal thanks to Lane County Public Works

Community Members gave resounding support for the formation of **Neighborhood Teams**. Look for amazing results in 2026 as this program empowers residents to help one another with defensible space, preparedness, and local volunteer projects. **With OSFM support, we have secured a Mobile Tool Shed, Commercial Chipper, and Dump Trailer to support our valley-wide network of neighbors** who are ready to work together and support the wellbeing of our community.

Regulatory Pathway & Progress of Fire Stations

- **Two Donated Properties** (Dorena Central Station and Disston Substation) are extraordinary gifts that will serve the community for generations. Continuing work milestones:
- **Completed steps toward fire-station development**, including:
 - Ownership Transfers
 - Special Use Permits Site feasibility evaluations
 - Environmental reviews
 - Income survey work
 - Traffic analysis scoping
 - Pre-engineering and access studies

2025 Milestones & Community Thanks

- **Meetings and grant requests:** We continue to work with governmental partners and agencies including: Tina Kotek, Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, Congresswoman Hoyle, State Senator Hayden, Representative Harbick, Lane County Commissioners, Lane County Administration, Lane County Public Works, USDA and FEMA.
- **2026 Formation of a Working Committee:** Requesting dedicated and interested community members to join us in this worthy effort. Let's work together to get our Fire Stations!

Other Activities and Milestones

Partners in Action: We continue to strengthen our partners base to build connected, safe, and resilient communities through education, prevention, and preparedness. Some of our new partners include: Lane County Public Works, OWEB, OEM, Row River Grange, and other local and regional collaborators.

Current programs:

- **Post-Wildfire Restoration Planning Project** with Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) and Partners: Upper Willamette Soil & Water Conservation District, Coast Fork Willamette Watershed, Spirit of Bohemian Mining Days, and Dave Light t
- **Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)** with Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) and partners.

thank you

To all valley residents, Neighborhood Teams, land donors, contractors, partner agencies, and volunteers- thank you!

Your commitment, collaboration, and generosity are what make every milestone possible.



CREATURES OF THE ROW RIVER VALLEY



Roosevelt Elk

Roosevelt Elk are the specific subspecies found in northwest Oregon on the west side of the Cascades. They live here year round and typically spend most of their time roaming the higher elevations. In fall, as temperatures drop and leafy forage becomes scarce, they often move down into the lower valley to graze and escape harsher weather. A small herd reliably comes to the grass plains at the head of Dorena Lake each year around October.

These large herbivores live in herds, usually made up of females and their offspring. The herd is generally led by an experienced female with young. Cows give birth to only one calf per year and twins are rare. Their gestation period is about eight and a half months, with calves born in spring.

Bulls are mostly solitary, though during mating season (July through October) they join or follow herds. Sometimes males group together as they search for females. Only males grow antlers; females do not.

I look forward to seeing our local herd every year and hope you get a chance to spot them as well. Early mornings from October through December are often the best time to see them grazing in the open grass plains behind Bake Stewart Park.

American White Pelican

Pelicans have been coming to Dorena Lake for several years now. They tend to arrive in October and spend much of the fall and even early winter here. It seems that one or two colonies have chosen Dorena Lake to overwinter rather than continuing on to Mexico. There are also reports of pelican colonies overwintering for the first time in the Columbia River Gorge. These birds did not historically occur on this side of the Cascades

and were once found only east of the range and beyond. Their migration patterns have shifted in response to changes in food availability, weather, and habitat. This ability to adapt has supported the growth of their population.

White Pelicans are enormous birds, with the largest wingspan of any species in Oregon at nine to nine and a half feet. They are entirely white except for the black wingtips and a large yellow beak. The beak is especially fascinating because the expandable pouch allows them to scoop fish from the water.

They feed in the shallows of the lake and sleep in pods on island peninsulas, safely away from mainland predators. As colony birds, they stay together most of the time, though they spread out across the lake during the day. When they fly, they travel as a group, creating a beautiful display, often rising and circling together to gain altitude. On longer migrations they fly in a V formation to conserve energy.

So next time you drive by the lake, take a moment to look for the white dots floating on the water. Those are American White Pelicans.

Beavers

Although we covered some information about beavers in a previous edition, we would like to highlight how important these creatures are for our waterways and riparian areas. They are considered a keystone species because they engineer habitat that supports healthy aquatic ecosystems. The dams they build hold back hundreds to thousands of gallons of water, creating habitat for birds, plants, fish, and other aquatic life. Even during drought conditions, these dams act as natural aquifers and provide much needed water to the surrounding landscape.

(BEAVERS continued on Pg. 5)

Safe Heating During Power Outages

As winter temperatures settle into the Row River Valley, power outages can be a common occurrence, especially during storms. While the loss of electricity can be inconvenient, keeping your home warm and safe is crucial. There are a variety of heating methods to consider, but it's important to use them properly to prevent accidents or carbon monoxide poisoning. Here's a quick guide to safe heating options when the power goes out.

Propane Heaters

Portable propane heaters are a popular option for keeping your home warm during a power outage. These heaters can heat a room efficiently without the need for electricity, but they must be used with caution.

- **Proper Ventilation:** Always use propane heaters in well-ventilated spaces. Indoor use without proper ventilation can lead to dangerous carbon monoxide buildup.
- **Keep Away from Flammable Materials:** Ensure the heater is kept away from anything that could catch fire, such as curtains, furniture, and bedding.
- **Follow Manufacturer Instructions:** Each model has specific safety guidelines. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations for safe operation and maintenance.

Generators

A portable generator can be a lifesaver when the power goes out, but it must be used carefully to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning or fire hazards.

- **Never Use Indoors:** Generators should never be used indoors, even in a garage or basement. Always operate them outdoors, at least 20 feet away from windows, doors, and vents. Point exhaust away from house.
- **Proper Fuel Storage:** Store gasoline in safe, approved containers in a well-ventilated area, away from your home and other

area, away from your home and other structures. Make sure you have enough fuel to last through the outage but avoid over-stocking.

- **Keep Generators Dry:** Ensure the generator is not exposed to rain or snow. Water and electricity do not mix, and moisture can cause dangerous electrical shorts or fires.

Chimneys and Fireplaces

Wood stoves and fireplaces are a traditional heating option during power outages. While they can provide comforting warmth, they also require attention to safety.

- **Clean Chimney Regularly:** Creosote buildup in your chimney can cause a dangerous chimney fire. Be sure to have your chimney inspected and cleaned annually.
- **Proper Firewood Storage:** Only use seasoned, dry firewood to minimize creosote buildup and reduce the risk of a dangerous fire. Keep wood stacked at least 10-15 feet away from the home.
- **Never leave burnable materials on or near the wood stove.**
- **Protect with firescreen, and have fire extinguisher nearby** to douse spilled embers.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

No matter what heating method you use, it's vital to have a carbon monoxide (CO) detector installed. CO is a colorless, odorless gas that can quickly become fatal if inhaled in high concentrations.

- **Install CO Detectors:** Place detectors near sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Check batteries regularly and test the detectors monthly.
- **Know the Signs of CO Poisoning:** Headache, dizziness, confusion, and nausea are early signs of carbon monoxide poisoning. If you suspect CO buildup, immediately evacuate the house and call emergency services.

DECEMBER & JANUARY

Sunshine Club

**Wednesday, December 3rd & January 7th,
9:30am-12:00pm**

Row River Christian Fellowship (RRCF)
37553 Row River Rd

Potluck lunch included

Row River Rural Fire Protection District Board Meeting

Tuesday December 16th & January 20th, 6:00pm

RRCF* 37553 Row River Rd

Open to the Public

Row River Water District Board Meeting

**Tuesday, December 9th & January 13th
6pm**

RRCF* 37553 Row River Rd

Open to the public

Row River Grange 34360 Row River Rd.

Gentle Yoga: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11am

Grange Cafe: 1st Sunday each month 11:30am-2pm

Pastries & coffee, light lunch served. **FREE!**

Cookie Workshop: December 18th, 12-8pm

Take a plate of cookies home! Free/Donation

Opening Applications for Certified Kitchen Rentals:

Email Applications and outlines to:

RowRiverGrange@gmail.com

Business Meetings: 3rd Monday ea. month, 5:30pm

Potluck follows at 6:30pm. *All welcome!*

RRVCP Community Event

**Think Tank Tuesday,
January 6th, 5:30- 7pm**

RRCF* 37553 Row River Rd

We would like to welcome you to a Community Meeting to discuss our new Tool Program and to create a Fire Station Committee.

Let's plan for 2026 together! We will have food for you!

See more on pages 3 & 11

*Together
We Can!*

Dorena School Highlights

Every Wednesday **STEM club**

We are **accepting donations for a food pantry** for our families through the winter months

We take **donations for our student holiday store**

We are **gifting holiday food baskets** for selected families

12/15-19 Winter spirit week

12/15-19 Student Holiday Store

12/19 Attendance challenge:

Gingerbread Houses



***The Row River Christian Fellowship (RRCF), also known as the 'little white church'**

Safe Heating during Power Outages

(continued from page 9)

Handling Fuels Safely

Fueling up for heating methods should be done with caution. Whether you're using propane, kerosene, or gasoline for your generator, it's important to:

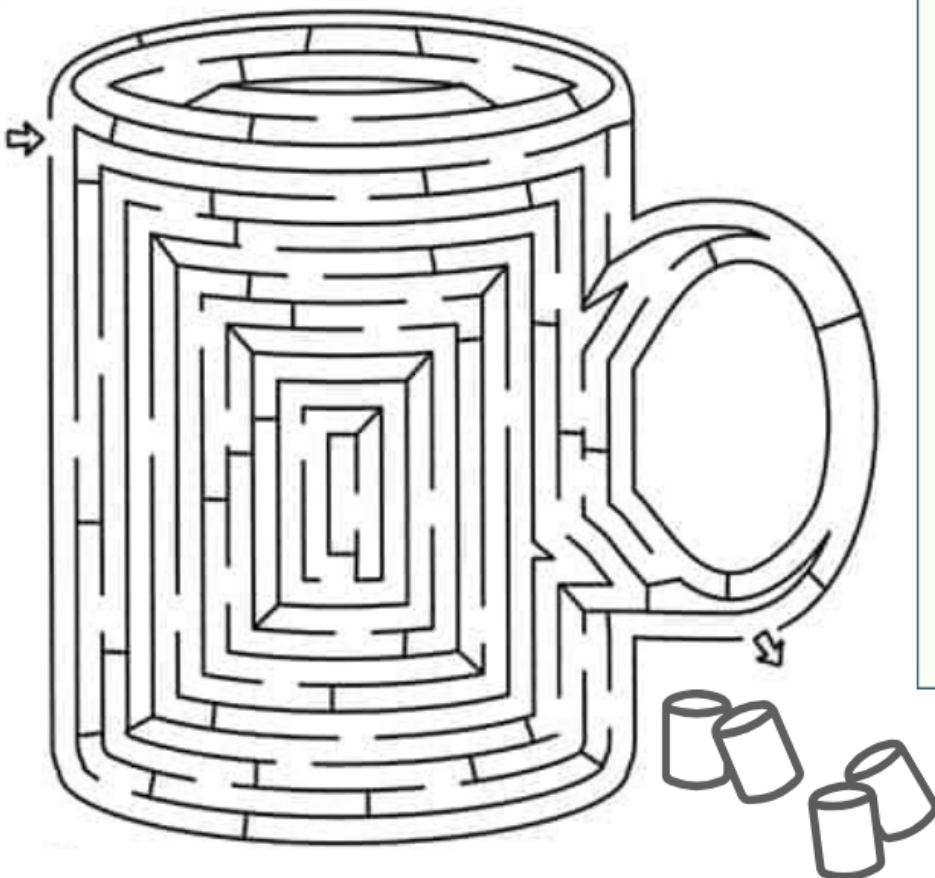
- **Store Fuels Properly:** Always store fuel in approved, clearly labeled containers in a well-ventilated area away from heat sources or flames.
- **Never Refuel Near Heat or Flame:** Always turn off your heater or generator before refueling and allow it to cool down to prevent accidents.
- **Keep Fuel Away from Children:** Keep fuel and heating devices out of reach of children (and animals) to avoid accidents.

When the power goes out in the Row River Valley, it's important to stay warm while also keeping safety at the forefront. Whether you're using propane, a generator, or a fireplace, follow the manufacturer's instructions and take proper precautions to avoid fire hazards, carbon monoxide poisoning, and fuel mishandling. Always make sure to have a functioning carbon monoxide detector in your home, and keep your chimney and fireplace well-maintained for safe and effective heating. By taking these precautions, you can stay warm and safe throughout any power outage this winter season.

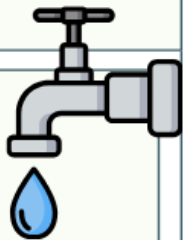
Stay warm, stay safe, and don't hesitate to reach out to local resources for help in case of an emergency.

hot cocoa maze

FIND YOUR WAY TO THE
MARSHMALLOWS!



Notes from the Row River Water District



RRVCP would like to join the **Row River Valley Water District** in thanking Lisa Wilson, Derrena Rojas, Chris Huebner, Dan Crites, and Lowell Hicks for their generous volunteer work at the water district plant, including cleanup, roof repairs, and electrical improvements. Their dedication and community spirit are greatly appreciated.

All water users are asked to update their phone numbers with the Row River Valley Water District so the district can reach you when needed. Either make a note of it when you send in your bill or call JIM ECKSTINE 541-946-1655

*We
thank
you!*



BREAKING NEWS

With OSFM support, we have secured a Mobile Tool Shed, Commercial Chipper, and Dump Trailer to support our valley-wide network of neighbors who are ready to work together and support the wellbeing of our community.



WE WOULD LIKE
TO THANK
OUR PARTNERS



Contribute, Participate, Celebrate with us. We need **you!**

RowRiverValley.org

Communications@RowRiverValley.org



ROW RIVER REVIEW

Your Community News

Row River Valley Community Partnership

P.O. Box 4, Dorena, OR 97434

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Special Thanks to the
**Oregon State Fire
Marshall** for providing
funding for the
Row River Review, the
best little newspaper in
the Row River Valley!



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