

ROW RIVER REVIEW

Our Voice, Our Valley, Our Future



Fire Season Is Here.

Let's work together to keep the valley green

The June/July edition of the Row River Review focuses on emergency preparedness, wildfire safety, water conservation, grant status updates, and the rich timber history of our valley.

Pre-construction is officially underway at the Disston Fire Station, marking a vital milestone in expanding our rural fire protection. Alongside this project, we rallied Think Tank Tuesday volunteers to help identify 119 new homes to support an Oregon Department of Emergency Management and FEMA grant application to bolster our valley's safety infrastructure.

As dry conditions approach, the Oregon State Fire Marshal urges residents to take proactive steps to harden homes against wildfire. Please exercise extreme caution with yard tools, mowers, and metal equipment during chores, as sparks on dry brush ignite quickly. Find tips for creating defensible space on the RRVCP website.

This edition features Opossums and their favorite snack...ticks!

For further emergency planning, join the Think Tank Tuesday "Be 2-Weeks Ready" class. This course teaches step-by-step measures to sustain your household after a major disaster, utilizing resources from the Oregon OEM's "Be 2-Weeks Ready" program.

As summer temperatures rise, the Row River Water District reminds us that water conservation is essential to keep our aquifer healthy. They also have an exciting announcement.

Finally, we step back in time to explore the fascinating history of balloon logging, an innovative technique that used giant helium balloons to lift heavy timber out of steep terrain. We also spotlight PJ Jennings, a hard working miner from the mining days.

Most importantly this issue informs us about the dire predictions of the 2026 Fire Season. Let's prepare now and do what we can to protect our families, homes, wildlife and waterways, for the good for all beings.

Stay safe, stay prepared, and have a wonderful summer!

Main Fire Station Project Advances in Federal Appropriations Process

The Row River Valley Community Partnership and the Row River Rural Fire Protection District are pleased to share that requests for federal funding for the proposed Main Fire Station have officially moved into review within both the U.S. House and Senate Appropriations Committees in Washington D.C.

The requests were submitted with support from Congresswoman Val Hoyle and Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, who helped move the project forward through the federal appropriations process.

The proposed Main Fire Station would help establish a permanent emergency response facility within the Row River Valley, providing space for emergency apparatus, volunteer firefighters, training, equipment storage, and future emergency operations in this high wildfire-risk rural area.

While funding approval is not guaranteed and the process remains highly competitive alongside projects from across the nation, reaching this stage represents meaningful progress for a small rural community working to build its first permanent fire station.

The project has involved ongoing coordination and support from community volunteers, local partners, county agencies, state organizations, and federal offices as planning and funding efforts continue moving forward.

We greatly appreciate the many volunteers, firefighters, EMTs, donors, and community members who continue supporting efforts to strengthen safety, preparedness, and emergency response throughout the Row River Valley.

Disston Station Progress Update

Special thanks to RRVCP volunteer and Disston resident Art Alexander, and local contractors Don Lamm of Lamm Brothers Construction, Dan Gilmore, and Steve of Gilmore Excavation for their support and contributions in the advancement of the Disston Station project.

Pictured Below: Dan, Steve, and Art at Disston Station site. At the corner of Layng Creek Rd. and Brice Creek Rd.



The Disston Station property, located near the Umpqua National Forest, will support a future auxiliary fire station serving the upper Row River Valley and surrounding high wildfire risk areas. The property was donated through a partnership with Weyerhaeuser to support future fire and emergency response operations.

Early site preparations are now underway!

Volunteers and local partners removed debris, cleaned the site, leveled the future building footprint, and installed a culvert to improve drainage and prepare for the future apparatus apron and station access area. These improvements help move the project closer to construction while reducing future site challenges.

See Art's Corner on page 11 for more Disston Station details.

Row River History Corner

Balloon Logging

by Katy Vaughn

What a strange thing it was back in the day, to go around a bend on Sharps Creek Road and see a giant helium balloon looming over you. Bohemia Lumber Company experimented with logging with balloons in the 60's, 70's and 80's. The technique had its advantages, such as eliminating the need for roads, and being easier on the environment.

In 1964 Bohemia acquired a triangular, vee shaped balloon made by the Aerospace division of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. That balloon proved to be problematic because it was easily affected by changes in the wind. Bohemia experimented with the Vee shaped balloon for 5 years, trying different rigging configurations to make it more stable, before giving up on it.

In the late 60's they purchased a classic onion shaped balloon from Raven Industries of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. This shape proved to be much easier to work with. It cost \$90k, held \$20k worth of helium and was controlled by a \$110k yarding machine.

The Forest Service wanted to encourage balloon logging, so they set up timber sales that were so steep and difficult that they could only be logged by balloon. Bohemia had a huge advantage in bidding the sales as no one else had the ability to get in there. This helped offset the high cost of experimenting with this new way of logging.

Balloon logging disappeared locally in the 1980's as unpredictable weather and wind were a continual struggle. The balloon was beloved by the Row River Valley residents and was something of a local attraction. It was certainly an odd sight and the story is told of a new person tending the fire lookout one summer who called the authorities because she was sure that it was a UFO.



Tool Use During Fire Season

During fire season in Lane County, Oregon, the rules for using chainsaws and power tools depend directly on the local fire danger level and Industrial Fire Precaution Level (IFPL).

Specific regulations during

- **High Fire Danger:** Prohibited between 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Allowed outside of these hours.
- **Extreme Fire Danger:** Prohibited entirely all day.
- **Electric/Battery-Powered Saws:** Often exempt from time-of-day bans, but specific fire safety equipment is typically still mandated.

When operating a chainsaw during hours it is permitted, you must carry the following at your work site:

- One shovel
- One operational fire extinguisher of at least an 8-ounce capacity
- A "fire watch" is strictly required for at least one hour after each saw is shut down

Fire season rules apply to all power-driven, spark-emitting equipment—including weed trimmers, lawnmowers, chainsaws, and motorized wood splitters.

To confirm the specific fire danger level, IFPL, and precise public use restrictions for your exact area, verify daily updates using the Oregon Department of Forestry Public Fire Restrictions website.

P.J. Jennings and the Road to Lead Crystal

spiritofbmd.com

by **Matthew Hewlett**

Executive Director of Spirit of Bohemia Mining Days

Based on family notes from Wally, grandson of P.J. Jennings, written down by Mable Crouch in 1989.

Patrick Joseph "P.J." Jennings was born on St. Patrick's Day and became an influential figure in the Bohemia Mining District above Cottage Grove. He was connected with the Helena and Champion mines, working with a group of men who helped develop and promote mining efforts in the district.

One of the best-remembered family stories tells of P.J. carrying a gold brick from the mines to Portland by train. The brick was worth \$30,000 at old gold prices. He asked the local sheriff for protection, but the sheriff refused, so P.J. made the trip anyway with the gold hidden in a bag beneath his feet.

During the trip, the train was robbed. The robbers took his money and his gold watch, but they never found the gold brick.

Years later, P.J. walked past a secondhand store and saw his stolen watch in the window. He told the owner his name was inside the case. When the owner opened it, P.J.'s name was there, and the watch was returned to him.

P.J.'s life was tied closely to both mining and community. He and his brother R.J. Jennings donated windows to the Catholic church in Cottage Grove, and P.J. also gave a piano to the sisters at a parochial school in Eugene. His wife, Margaret Victoria Jennings, and their children were part of a family life shaped by the movement and uncertainty of mining.

After his work in the Bohemia Mining District, P.J.'s mining ventures took him through Kentucky, Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, and other places. He fought a railroad in Kentucky over shipping rights and, according to family memory, won the lawsuit, though by then the

leases or mines had been lost.

The mining life continued through his son, George H. Jennings, who was badly burned in an assay office explosion at the E.O. & E. mine near Bourne, Oregon. George spent nearly a year recovering in a hospital in Baker. Later, after the crash of 1929, the family moved again as mining opportunities faded.

In his later years, P.J. returned to the Bohemia Mining District and spent summers at Lead Crystal. Even as an older man, he was remembered walking down the road, clearing rocks and debris like someone much younger.

P.J. Jennings' story remains one of gold, risk, family, and persistence, from the Helena and Champion mines to a stolen

watch found years later and finally to Lead Crystal, where an old mining man was still clearing the road.



Top: P.J. as an older man. Bottom: Ore in the store

WUI WILDFIRE RISK AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

WUI INTERFACE DEFINED



WILDFIRE RISK FACTORS



MITIGATION STRATEGIES (Example)



FIRE BEHAVIOR & MECHANISMS



For emergency dial 911 & please stay safe.

Oregon faces a severe and potentially brutal summer wildfire season in 2026, with forecasters warning of highly combustible conditions that could fuel massive, rapidly spreading blazes.

According to long-range data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Pacific Northwest is projected to experience significantly above-normal temperatures coupled with below-average precipitation extending through October.

A primary catalyst for this heightened risk is the state's 2025–2026 winter, which tied with 1934 as the warmest winter on record, decimating mountain snowpack to just one-third of normal levels and leaving roughly 82% of Oregon locked in a drought.

As these meager snow reserves melt entirely, the regional landscape is converting into a continuous tinderbox of dry, highly volatile vegetation.

***WUI = Wildfire Urban Interface**

Compounding these dry conditions is a persistent climate shift toward a strong El Niño pattern, which historically intensifies summer heat, depletes water supplies, and suppresses seasonal rainfall across Oregon.

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) projects that significant wildfire potential will escalate above normal east of the Cascades starting in June, before expanding into southwestern Oregon and the Willamette Valley by July and August.

Meteorologists from AccuWeather warn that these parched landscapes are ripe for extreme fire growth, particularly when lightning from dry thunderstorms strikes dry fuels.

Because the environmental baseline is so profoundly compromised, state leaders and fire marshals emphasize that minor human errors or natural ignitions could quickly escalate into unmanageable, large-scale natural disasters.



Community Volunteers Help Advance Wildfire Mitigation Grant Effort



Over the past year and a half, Row River Valley Community Partnership has been working alongside the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) on a wildfire mitigation grant effort designed to help reduce wildfire risk for local residents throughout the Row River Valley.

This past month, the project entered a major milestone when OEM requested updated mitigation information within a tight 10-day window. The request required detailed information for participating properties, including broad fuel classifications such as trees, tall grass, brush, and ladder fuels that could increase wildfire risk around homes and structures.

Thanks to the dedication of community volunteers and staff, the information was successfully gathered and submitted on time.

We would like to recognize Laura Bee, along with board members, Jill Lemonoff, Lena Harding, and Jennifer Ferraez-Chartrand, and volunteers Art Alexander, Thomas Hands, and Karen Mitchell for their hard work helping collect and organize property information throughout the valley. Their efforts helped make it possible to submit a total of 119 properties identified as needing wildfire mitigation assistance.

This project reflects the growing community-wide effort to strengthen wildfire preparedness and support neighbors who may need assistance reducing hazardous vegetation around their homes.

We have been advised that confirmation regarding grant funding is expected in the coming months. If awarded, the grant would support mitigation work across the Row

River Valley over the next three years.

Wildfire preparedness continues to be an ongoing community effort, and we appreciate everyone who has participated in helping make the valley safer and more resilient.

How You Can Help Build a Stronger Row River Valley

The growing wildfire mitigation, preparedness, and community resilience efforts across the Row River Valley are only possible because neighbors continue stepping forward to help neighbors. As these projects continue growing, we invite community members to become involved in whatever way fits their interests, skills, and availability.

Become a Board Member or Volunteer

We are looking for community members who want to help strengthen the valley through practical, neighbor-led work. You do not need prior nonprofit experience to participate.

We welcome people with skills or interests in:

- Bookkeeping or office support
- Fundraising and donor outreach
- Community events and organizing
- Making phone calls and community outreach
- Writing, photography, or communications
- Food preparation or baking for community gatherings
- General volunteer support and project help.

Sometimes the most important contribution is simply showing up and being willing to help.

Join or Help Establish a Neighborhood Team

Neighborhood Teams are small hyper-local groups of neighbors working together to strengthen connection, preparedness, and support within their immediate area.

These teams help residents:

- Get to know their neighbors

*We ♥ our
Volunteers*

- Build communication networks for use during emergencies
- Check on vulnerable residents during wildfire, storms, heat, or power outages
- Share information and resources locally
- Strengthen community connection before disasters occur

Even a few connected neighbors can make a major difference during an emergency.

Participate in *Be 2-Weeks Ready* Training

Community members are encouraged to participate in *Be 2-Weeks Ready*, an Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM)-supported preparedness program designed to help individuals and families prepare for emergencies and disaster situations.

The training focuses on practical steps families can take to remain safe and self-sufficient during extended emergencies.

Support the Work Through Donations

Every local donation helps demonstrate community commitment as we work with foundations, state agencies, and federal partners to secure funding for wildfire mitigation, emergency preparedness, watershed protection, and community resilience projects.

Even small donations help show that the community is working together toward shared goals and long-term success.

Have Other Ideas?

Many of the projects now moving forward in the Row River Valley began as simple conversations between neighbors.

If you have ideas, skills, resources, or would like to become involved in another way, we would love to hear from you.

Jennifer Ferraez-Chartrand and Lena Harding (pictured on the right) are two of our RRVCP Board Members. Not only do these awesome women come to Board Meetings and offer great advice and support, they show up to do surveys, ground work, sign-ups, events, make food, and more!

RRVCP's team is full of heart and community service.

Think Tank Tuesday

Community Preparedness : Collaboration

Mutual Support : Advocacy

First Tuesday, Monthly 5:30-7 at Row River

Christian Fellowship Church, Dorena



Being 2 Weeks Ready is having an emergency plan for everyone in your

household to survive for at least two weeks following a disaster. This may sound overwhelming, but you're probably more prepared than you think! This *Be 2 Weeks Ready* program is designed to help you start from where you're at and build your self-reliance and community preparedness step-by-step.

We will present on the *Be 2-Weeks Ready* Preparedness at each Think Tank Tuesday Meeting until we have run through the course.

Program. There will be give-aways, checklists and information that will help your family be prepared for an emergency.



CREATURES OF THE ROW RIVER VALLEY

Facts & Observations by Lena Harding



Possum - Opossum

This Native American marsupial was introduced to Oregon in the early 1900s, They came from Virginia and are also called Virginia possums after their origin place. Fish and wildlife considers them an invasive species, but they have many benefits to our area as well.

The possums' primary source of food is insects, amphibians, small rodents, snails, carrion and even ticks. Although the number of ticks they eat is questionable, the studies that have been done only prove that a possum in captivity will eat large numbers of ticks. This has not been proven in the wild. With a wide range of food sources, it makes them both resourceful and very adaptable.

Possums are marsupials, giving live birth and nursing their young. On their tummies they have a pouch they carry their babies around in for the first couple weeks, and then on their backs until they are big enough to fend for themselves. Baby possums are some of the cutest things you'll ever see.

Being a nocturnal animal you are likely to see possums out only at night. Their eye sight isn't great though, so they get around using sonar location with a series of clicks similar to a Bat.

If you've ever run across a possum it's likely you have seen them play dead. This is a defense mechanism that can save a possum's life, when they think they're in danger they will fall over and act dead for a few minutes in hope their prey won't want a dead creature and lose interest. I have also seen them stick their head down thinking (you can't see me, because I can't see you). Funny!



Ticks

There are four species of ticks that bite in Oregon. Habitat is woodlands, bushes, and grassy areas or fields. They are more active in spring, mild winters, and fall.

Western Black legged ticks (*Ixodes pacificus*)

These are the ones I have commonly found here in the Dorena area. They are the ticks most likely to carry Lyme's disease, although it is not very prevalent in Oregon. A small likelihood.

Rocky Mountain Wood tick (*Dermacentor Andersoni*) Found mostly in eastern Oregon. They can carry Colorado tick fever.

American Dog tick (*Dermacentor Variabilis*) Found all across Oregon. Both the Rocky Mountain tick and the Dog tick can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Tularemia.

Pacific Coast tick (*Dermacentor*) Mostly found in western Oregon. They can carry tick-borne disease.

If you find a tick burrowed in your skin, get it out as soon as you see it. The longer it's burrowed in, the higher your chances are of contracting any tick-transmitted diseases.





Row River Valley Water District

Contributor
Cindy Igou
Commissioner

GREAT NEWS! GREAT NEWS!

We applied for and received a \$20,000 Small System Equipment Assistance (SSEA) Grant from Business Oregon. We purchased a Hypochlorite Generation System using the Grant money. It paid for the entire machine and all but a couple hundred dollars of installation. What does that mean? This machine produces sodium hypochlorite using only salt, water, and electricity. This produces a safe, sustainable, and automated alternative for water disinfection which is required for safe drinking water.

What does this mean for our customers? We saved \$20,000 for our customers and we cross this piece of machinery off the need list! Our plant is 20 years old and we are working diligently to update our water



through grants. We have amazing water

plant operators. They make every one of your dollars stretch. Come to a meeting and find out more.

Come learn about the water district.

Getting water from the river to your home isn't as simple as you might think. AND let's talk about how you would like to help by volunteering!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES (cost savings for the water district):

- Weed eating at all the meter locations
- Landscaping at the plant site – lots of weed eating
- Beautification projects at the water plant

WATER WISE

"Water-wise" refers to the practice of using water efficiently and sustainably, particularly in landscaping and daily life, to conserve resources and protect the environment. It emphasizes selecting drought-tolerant plants, improving soil, utilizing efficient irrigation (like drip systems), and using mulch to minimize water waste. FYI Elkton Community Center has a native plant nursery. And speaking of mulch...Lane Electric Co-op has a trimming crew upriver and they sometimes have FREE mulch, just ask them. Also, talk with the Row River Valley Community Partnership...they have many great ideas and resources.

Thank you to Business Oregon for working with us to update this vital piece of machinery!

With historically low snowpack and **early drought warnings across the Pacific Northwest, conserving water this summer is crucial** for Oregonians to protect drinking supplies, maintain vital river ecosystems, and sustain local agriculture.

Proactive measures help manage early-season shortages and protect vulnerable aquatic habitats, such as those in the Row River and her tributaries. You can take action by preparing your household and outdoor spaces. Track local drought updates via the **Oregon Water Resources Department** and follow regional tips from the **Regional Water Providers Consortium**. Implement sustainable landscaping to save water, and explore **Oregon State University Extension** for effective garden irrigation guides.

TIP: Maintain Septic Systems: Inspect your system regularly to prevent leaks. Efficient water use avoids overloading the drainfield.

JUNE & JULY

RRVCP Community Event

**Think Tank Tuesday,
June 2nd & July 7th, 5:30- 7:00pm**

RRCF* 37553 Row River Rd
We will have food for you!



Emergency Preparedness
Be 2-Weeks Ready Program

*Together
We Can!*

Dorena School Highlights

- 6/5 Awards Assembly 1:30- 2:30
- 6/9 5th Grade Graduation 5:00-5:30
8th Grade Graduation 5:30-6:30
- 6/10 Preschool Graduation 10:45- 12:30
- 6/11 Field Day & LAST DAY-All Day



Bohemia Mining Days

- 7/10 Bohemia City Opens
10 am-10pm Coiner Park, CG
- 7/19 Cottage Grove Prospectors and
Goldiggers "Breakfast on the Mountain"
6:00am-1:00pm
Bohemia Saddle Park (near Fairview Lookout)
20 miles up Sharps Cr Rd- Bohemia Mining District

Sunshine Club, Ice Cream Social

Saturday, July 18th, 1 to 3:00pm
RRCF* 37553 Row River Rd



People's Place Drop-In Center

A Space of Belonging

Mondays, 12-2:30pm

People's Place drop-in center open now!
Community Meal, Resource Exploration
Rural Organizing Project (ROP) Building,
632 E Main St. Cottage Grove

All Are Welcome! FREE!



Upriver Food Bank

**Friday, June 19th and July 17th
4-5:30pm**

at Child's Way School
37895 Row River Road

All Are Welcome!



Row River Rural Fire Protection District Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 16th & July 21st, 6:00pm
RRCF* 37553 Row River Rd

Open to the Public

Row River Grange

Gentle Yoga: **Thursdays 10-11:00am**

Business Meetings: **3rd Monday ea. month, 5:30pm**
Potluck follows at 6:30pm. *All welcome!*

34360 Row River Rd.

*The Row River Christian Fellowship (RRCF), also known as the 'little white church'
All are welcome to Sunday Services at 11am.



Art's Corner

Disston Station Update

I went to Lane County to see what was needed to get our Building Permit. I knew what I had was not sufficient. I got the laundry list and pressed on. It required a Geotech report. They got it for me in two weeks, I guess that is pretty quick. The engineers have our plans and will stamp them and give us a new page 1 for our plans using the correct safety codes and attach the new geotech report.

In the meantime Dan Gilmore gave us a smoking deal on the grading of the building site, and installed a culvert and driveway to satisfy Lane County's requests to issue a Conditional Use Permit. Tomorrow I will set off to the County to verify they are happy with what we have done.

I know this is a little "in the weeds" I just wanted to give you a taste of the "red tape". There are fees due at every turn and it will add a couple of months to the construction schedule. Don Lamm is our contractor. He has worked hard with us to reduce costs and break the project in to manageable pieces to accommodate our hit and miss schedule of income from grants.

We are going to get this done. We just haven't been able to find a source to fund the entire project. If you know somebody with an extra \$150,000 or so we could bang this out right away. As it is we have a good plan and will be able to get this done, it will just take a little longer than I would like.

~ART ALEXANDER
RRVCP Team Leader

DONATE
today

DONATE
RowRiverValley.Org
or mail a check to

PO Box 4, Dorena OR, 97434
501c-3 Receipt available



Letter from the President

RETA COCHRANE
RRVCP BOARD PRESIDENT



I am so excited to learn how this community stepped up to be involved in trying to make our valley more resilient to wildfires. When the call came out to sign up for fuel mitigation around your homes to fulfill the requirements for a grant request, this community worked hard to get the numbers needed. A great big THANK YOU, to Laura Bee, Jill Limonoff, Art Alexander, Lena Harding, Jennifer Ferraez-Chartrand, Karen Mitchell, and Tom Hans for personally contacting so many people in order to get the application done and in the mail on time.

I really want to thank the staff of Row River Valley Community Partnership, Kathleen Istudor and Laura Bee. They work very hard to make things happen for all of the community!

~Reta Cochran

MORE HOT TIPS

Avoid Reckless Sparking: Fireworks and uncontrolled debris burning are leading causes of summer wildfires.

Grill with Caution: Always operate propane and charcoal grills on a flat surface away from overhanging branches, shrubs, or deck railings. Clean grease traps regularly and never leave a lit grill unattended.

Check safety equipment: Prep your generator, top off your water storage, keep your yard tidy, and keep ABC-rated fire extinguishers and fire blankets easily accessible in and around your home, and in your car.

Practice an escape plan: Prepare go-bags today for every person (and animal) in your household and practice evacuation routes with your family and pets.

Visible address: Ensure your house number is highly visible from the street so emergency responders can find your home quickly.