

SAVE THESE DATES

Community Council Meetings. No meetings are planned until it is safe to gather. Contact HPCC: PO Box 592, Lyle, WA 98635 or email highprairiebarb@gmail.com

Needlers Mondays, at 10:30 a.m. Call 365-5288 for more information.

Fire Volunteers, 1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m.

Fire Commissioner Meeting, 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m. P.O. Box 853, Lyle, WA 98635 or email kcfpd14@gmail.com

Visit the community website (www.highprairie.us) for additional scheduled events and meetings.



STAY IN THE LOOP!

EMAIL:

Put your name on the HP info list by emailing highprairiebarb@gmail.com

WEBSITE:

Check us out at www.highprairie.us Calendar, blog, High Prairian, history, and lots more!

FACEBOOK:

Stay up to date with community happenings and join the discussion:

www.facebook.com/groups/180735785338230/

Don't forget to *like* the page.

HP DIRECTORY:

Trade contact info just with friends and neighbors. Add or update at: www.highprairie.us/general-information/community-directory/

(We can't invite you if we don't know how to reach you!)

High Prairie Community Council

Look back 16 years at what the organization that became the HPCC was doing

(originally printed in The High Prairian in December, 2004)

HIGH PRAIRIE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Douglas Taylor

The High Prairie Boosters was the first community group to organize after our fire district was formed in the early 1980's. It's purpose was to support the fire district through fund-raising and community events. The Boosters eventually disbanded and a non-profit, non-political organization was founded for the benefit of all High Prairians to work together to shape the future of this growing community. Over the last five years the Association has been ably led by Martha Hamil, who is retiring this year.

The Association has undertaken projects that benefit the community as well as the fire district. Two committees were appointed to work on both building design and grant funding for a community center. This project was undertaken originally to separate community functions from emergency operations at the fire hall. Other projects include a new, insulated addition to the fire hall, siding, finishing the electrical, and walkway for the fire hall. The members have cleaned and hauled rubbish from the water fill-up site, installed fence posts, and designed the community building.

Volunteers have built picnic tables, and built and sold birdhouses and feeders to raise funds for other community projects. They have contributed many hours to the annual Firehouse Sales, which has built a considerable fund toward the making the community center a reality, as well as equipping our fire crew and supporting other community organizations. The association has donated funds to send 4-H members on a national sponsored trip, send the youth group to OMSI in Portland, and contributed funds for the annual Christmas basket sponsored by the Lyle Lion's Club. The organization was instrumental in working with the county to install guardrails and stripe a fog line on our local county roads.

At the September meeting of the HPNA a different suggestion was presented to the group that included building a four-bay fire station and meeting building on Struck Road and a separate fire hall on Schilling Road. This would be funded, in part, by issuing a 25-year bond. With this plan the present fire hall on Centerville Highway would be declared surplus and sold. Any funds obtained from the sale would be put toward the new building. The Community Association requested additional research into costs be done and the results brought back to the January meeting.

The October meeting finalized the change of name from High Prairie Neighborhood Association to High Prairie Community Council. The nominations of officers was also accepted to be voted on in December. To see minutes of HPCC and Fire District visit the High Prairie web site: www.highprairie.us.

(Note: The website no longer maintains the minutes of the HPCC or the Fire District.)



Grass widows. Harbingers of Spring -- not long now.

Photo: Gwen Berry

THE HIGH PRAIRIAN

"All the news that's print to fit"

Publisher: High Prairie Community Council
 Editor: Gwen Berry
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 or 509-281-1998

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NEEDLERS DONATE QUILT TOPS FOR FIRE VICTIMS

Susan Satterm

In the fall of 2019 the High Prairie Needlers began making children's comfort quilts. The group's goal was to donate them to the local fire and sheriff departments. Our thought was that they might help comfort children in crisis situations. We were able to finish 23 "I Spy" quilt tops. Then came COVID-19. The quilt tops sat patiently at Judi Strait's home awaiting the day we could gather as a group and finish them.

In August, I noticed a message on Facebook from a quilt shop in Albany requesting finished or unfinished quilts for victims of the fires in Oregon. The shop said they would finish the quilts at their own expense for anyone who was willing to donate. After checking with the Needlers, I drove the 23 quilt tops plus 4 finished children's quilts to Albany. Needless to say, they were delighted with our donation. I was told the response to their request was massive and they were receiving quilts from across the US. Most, however, were adult quilts so our children's quilts were a blessing.

A huge thank you to Bolts to Blocks Quilts, located in Albany. They finished our projects and made sure all our "babies" were donated to a good home. Hopefully, they will be a comfort to the many children who lost their beloved possessions and send a message to their families they were not alone.



Judi Strait and granddaughters with a few quilt tops

BECAUSE YOU ASKED ABOUT THE LINE BETWEEN PROSE AND POETRY

Howard Nemerov - 1920-1991

<https://poets.org/poem/because-you-asked-about-line-between-prose-and-poetry>

Sparrows were feeding in a freezing drizzle
 That while you watched turned to pieces of snow
 Riding a gradient invisible
 From silver aslant to random, white, and slow.

There came a moment that you couldn't tell.
 And then they clearly flew instead of fell.

Happy Valentine's Day



STOP - LEAVE THE LIGHTS

Rebecca Sonnixsen



Go ahead.
Take down the tree. Needles are dropping.
Toss out the wrappings. All revealed.
Resolutions made. Happy New Year.

But wait. Look up.
Outside the window.
See how our string of colored lights
Punctuates the darkness.

See how those spots of color
Bring lightness to the seriousness of night
Like a silly joke.

Wait until the winter darkness turns
to the lightness of spring.

Wait until violet grass-widows, yellow balsamroot,
and purple lupine
push through the bulking basalt looming across the
canyon

Then unwind the red, yellow, purple, blue, green
specks of light
That dance across the railing of our deck.

The holidays are over.
But not our need
to say
to the vastness
to the darkness,

Wait,
we are still here.

PAINTINGS BY JOCELYN WEEKS



"Red Eyed Stew," a portrait of my Rooster.



"Rudimentary Ranch Rabbit."



"Cold Creek Brookie." I painted it for my nephew, who loves to go fishing with my brother in the Gerhart Wilderness area in Southern Oregon.



"Hello Out There," painted at the beginning of the pandemic.

GERANIUM LOVE

Gwen Berry



In my experience, geraniums look their very best in Fall. They've had all summer to grow from spindly starts to good-sized plants. The weather has cooled down to temperatures more pleasing to geraniums, so they're enthusiastically putting out new green leaves and bright blooms. Every year I have to make a weighty decision – whether to sadly watch freezing temperatures demolish the gorgeous plants or bring them inside where they'll inevitably become leggy and ratty-looking and take over all available space.

This year I couldn't bear to let my big potted geranium go, so I brought it inside. "It's just temporary," I said to myself. "It's so beautiful, I'll enjoy it for

a while longer. When it gets ratty and leggy, I can put it out and let the winter take it then."

Ha! As if I could ever be that hard-hearted, when it's been faithfully charming me with bright new flowers all through the dark, cold days. As predicted, they are blooming on stretched-out, wandering branches with increasingly empty space between leaves. The lower leaves crumbled away long since. Leggy, yup. Ratty, yup. But still. . .

As I contemplated my dilemma, for the first time it occurred to me to wonder if a geranium could be pruned, and what that would do to a plant like mine in the middle of winter. So I did what any modern seeker of wisdom would do – got on the internet.

What followed was a gaggle of YouTube videos demonstrating how to prune geraniums, how to use the trimmings to root new geraniums plants, and how to overwinter geraniums in a dormant state instead of actively growing. Most methods of dormant overwintering involve storing the plants, bare-rooted and upside down, in a paper bag or cardboard box, in a cool, dark place. Then you just get them out and replant them in the Spring.

Melinda Meyers (melindameyers.com) gives this basic advice: "Long leggy stems can be cut down to size. Use a handpruner or garden scissors for the job. Cut overgrown stems back, just above a set of healthy leaves or node, the place where leaves were once attached. You can cut back all the stems or stagger this over a few weeks, leaving some leaves in place to create energy for the plant.

"Root some of the trimmings to increase the number of plants for your garden or to share with others. Cut the stems into 4 to 6 inch pieces with at least one set of leaves attached. Stick the cut end, with the lowest node buried, into moist vermiculite, perlite or a well-drained potting mix to root.

"Place in a bright location out of direct light and keep the rooting mix moist. Loosely cover with an open plastic bag while the cuttings root."

It's worth watching some of those expert videos if you're thinking of pruning your geranium. The videos have more complete information, and you can watch how it's done. Just do a YouTube search for "pruning geraniums," and you're off.

MY MOTHER'S PUDDING CAKE

Rebecca Sonniksen

Remember when we kept recipes on notecards organized in a file box? No googling "coleslaw dressings, or "how to make the best ever brownies." We thumbed through cookbooks from our Mothers, Aunts, and Grandmothers or shuffled through water stained smudged note cards with recipes handwritten or typed, or cut and pasted from a newspaper.

And when the fragrant smell of your mother's favorite yeast rolls or Aunt Kathryn's meatballs wafted out of the kitchen you might remember Thanksgiving dinner when we all got surprised by the early snowfall, or laughing during family dinner at Uncle Bob's corny jokes. Sharing and baking family/friends recipes is a way to connect us to those we love.

I have a decorated filebox where I keep my favorites which I hope might be enjoyed in the future. With that in mind I would like to share one of my favorites from my mother. One I've never seen anywhere else. Simple, elegant, and versatile.

The recipe calls for peaches, but I've made it with apples and pears. And at the end, when you pour the cup of hot water over the topping DO NOT STIR.

France's Peach Pudding Cake

Turn the oven to 325

In an 8 inch square pan, slice 2 cups of fresh peaches (apples or pears.)

Sprinkle with lemon juice. Season with nutmeg or cinnamon.

Mix the batter

¾ C sugar
4 T butter
½ salt
1 t baking powder
1 C flour
½ C milk

Spread the batter on top of the fruit .

Make the topping

¾ C sugar
1 T cornstarch
Sprinkle topping over top of batter

Pour 1 C boiling water over top.

Do not stir.

Bake 325 for 50 minutes or until slightly crunchy on top.



The High Prairie Fire Department responded to 119 incidents in 2020. To date in 2021, we have had 6 incidents.

Our COVID-19 protocols are still in effect for our responses to page-outs and departmental activities, with masks and/or social distance norms followed to minimize any risk. Our firefighters are counted in the Phase 1 roll-out of the current COVID-19 vaccines. The choice to participate, like the choice to respond, given the current COVID-19 situation, remains with our individual members. Their decisions, based on their personal, home, and work responsibilities, are fully supported by the department. KCFPD 14's officers and EMS responders have chosen to be in the vanguard of this vaccination effort and are in the process of receiving the two doses recommended at this time.

The basic concepts of self-care in daily life and in the Flu/Cold/COVID 19 seasons are simple enough. You have the option to choose what actions you'll take and how you respond. Simple things we all can do to mitigate some of the exposure risks to this virus: Masks / social distancing / washing hands / avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands / being careful when out of your home environments. Common sense and hygiene are keys to good health anyway!

If you have any questions or interest in seeing what KCFPD 14 is about... Please don't hesitate to contact any of our volunteers or come to an activity or drill night. Our regular schedule starts at 7 PM every 1st, 2nd and 4th Tuesday of any month! Feel free to contact me at mcmackin@gmail.com or 509-365-2786 for more information!

The 2020 Firefighter Appreciation Dinner had to be canceled last March, due to COVID-19. The firefighters still got their awards, of course, even without the dinner. (You can see them at www.high-prairie.us/firelines-5/.) The following are from my notes for comments I had planned to make after the awards ceremony. They are presented here in priority order and in a less rough-cut version of my extemporaneous presentation...

'THANK YOU!'

Significant Others / Spouses / Families

- First and foremost, to all of you in the homes of each of our firefighters
- Your time, support, love and consideration for your firefighter is critical and serves as an extension of our mission of caring for our communities!

Each and Every One of you Volunteers

- Each and every one who who shifts gears and moves to help...when the pager calls!
- **Shout Out!** to Fred Henschell, Rocky Schultz and 'anonymous' High Prairie residents for their generous donations to High Prairie in your direct support of our firefighters.

'THANK YOU!'

Chief Darland and Chief McCune – Our CEOs!

For all of the time your brains and both differentials are in gear:

- Morale – Keeping your volunteers engaged / our safety as a priority / our equipment operational
- Business – Crossing the T's and dotting the I's!
- Commitment – Your willingness and physical efforts to answer the call - above and beyond!
- Responsibility – Taking on the position of being who and where the buck stops!

Chief Darland... and by extension his wife, Sue!

- You've carried all of the aforementioned qualities to your service to the HP Community.
- Even under the pressures of your responsibilities for the Army Corp of Engineers, you've managed tasks and worked tirelessly to maintain your commitment to us all.
- Your organizational skill sets serve us well in the fire hall and on the fireground!

'THANK YOU!'

Ms. Glenna Scott, our High Prairie Secretary and Office Administrator Extraordinaire – Thank you for your dedication and the moxie you bring to the chores of administering and organizing things for Tim and the rest of us (aka 'Herding the cats!'). Your work is invaluable in helping us be safe, more efficient and effective in our mission.

Our Fire Commissioners – James Amery, Phillip Haner, and Anthony Perry – who work diligently, as our elected fire officials, to keep the wheels on the rigs going around and to mind the P's and Q's of the codes and requirements of Washington state and Federal agencies.

HP and Lyle Communities – for your recognition and continuing support!

'THANK YOU to all y'all!'

THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

<https://www.almanac.com/weather/longrange/zip-code/98635>

2021 Long Range Weather Forecast for Intermountain Region

February 2021

Dates

Feb 1-7
Feb 8-13
Feb 14-17
Feb 18-28

Weather Conditions

Rainy periods, mild
Snow showers, turning cold
Sunny, mild
Snowy periods, then sunny, cold

February Summary

Temperature 33.5° (3° below avg. north,
2° above south)
Precipitation 2" (0.5" above avg.)



So – it's 18°F outside and lightly snowing. What's a person to do... ? Stay in and make use of the internet! Here are a few Firewise suggestions for your education and entertainment! If you have questions on the Firewise program or about preparing your property or evacuation list, please contact me for assistance.

Articles to check out:

- Basic Wildfire [or any Emergency!] checklist. Create your own from this basic list:

[Wildfire Evacuation Checklist \(unr.edu\)](#)

- Defensible Space – WA Department of Natural Resources

[Defensible Space - Prepare Your Home | WA - DNR](#)

- 50 Things You Can Do!

[50 things you can do to protect your home - Firewise | Minnesota DNR \(state.mn.us\)](#)

Videos to check out:

- Home Improvement: A Firewise Approach 15:42

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECCivEjAV6A>

- Firewise - Protecting Your Home [Minnesota] 14:51

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bllskZEslM>

- Your Home Can Survive a Wildfire 13:19

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL_syp1ZScM

Things to do for Winter /Early Spring:

Maintain [or Expand] your Firewise buffer (defensible) zones

****Do a 360 ° walk-around and create a list of defensibility things you can do... 0-5'/5-30'/30-100'/100' +**

****Identify evergreens needing pruning!** Ideally you've already done it. If not, do before the end of January!

****Plan for clearing up the little stuff!** Take note of the places leaves and other natural debris come to rest in the nooks and crannies around your home and outbuildings. Clear up what you can and make a note to revisit those trouble spots with your Spring chores.

Inside:

****Develop your plan for evacuation!** Now is the time to create an action plan you can execute in the Spring.

Check the evacuation planning resources mentioned previously in this article. Figure out NOW... what you can do in Spring...so you are ready to load all the basic and important items you've prepared into your vehicle and head to safety when a wildfire threatens the community and the evacuation order comes.

****Walk around your home/barn/shop and take pictures of what you have in place!** As part of that evacuation planning, using your cell phone camera or other imaging device, create a visual record

of your property. It will serve you well in two ways. First, as you look through the images, you can identify valuable items or other things of importance to be on your 'Goes with me...' list. Secondly, it may be your best reference for property claims to your insurance company in the event you suffer losses due to a wildfire or other catastrophic event.

Resources:

You can contact me by email at firewise.onhighprairie@gmail.com or by phone message by calling 509-365-2786.

Online resources:

Firewise – <http://www.firewise.org> or <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/be-firewise/home-and-landscape.aspx>

Ready, Set, Go! – <http://www.wildlandfirersg.org> or <http://www.wildlandfirersg.org/Resident>

FROM HAZARD TO HEALTHY FOREST – DNR CAN HELP

Joseph Walsh

Washington's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimates that there are over a million and a quarter acres of forest east of the Cascades that are unhealthy and in danger of succumbing to fire and disease. More than half a century of fire suppression plus record warm and dry years have given us unnaturally thick stands of timber and less moisture to go around. Locally, the reduction in logging and grazing that go along with the transition to rural residential I have added to the challenge in High Prairie.

There's a Program For That

DNR's Cost Share Program works with woodland owners with forest management efforts like thinning, brush removal and slash disposal to create a healthier, more fire resistant forest. You can get free professional help to plan your project and to pay up to half of the cost of work to improve your woods for fire resistance and forest health.

Healthier Woods in 4 Easy Steps –

Develop a plan - If you are an owner of less than 5,000 acres of forest land, the best way to start the process is to call one of DNR's local foresters (contact info below). Their initial visit will help determine if the Cost Share Program is right for your property. If you decide to proceed, the forester will work with you to develop a plan that meets your objectives and the Cost Share Program's requirements. That plan will include how to handle underbrush, thinning, pruning, and slash disposal, plus the proposed reimbursement amount of up to 50% of the cost of the work.

Sign a contract - If you decide to move ahead, you'll sign a standard contract with DNR that sets out the work to be done and the agreed-on reimbursement. You can hire a contractor or you can do the work yourself and be reimbursed based on actual hours at DNR's schedule for labor and equipment. DNR has a list of contractors who have experience with the program and can help you get references for folks on that list.

Do the work - Cut, pile, chip, burn. Repeat.

Get paid - Once the work is done, you'll request payment and the DNR forester will visit the site, review the work and, if the work is complete as agreed, sign off on payment. If your contractor is registered with the program, they can be paid directly by DNR or you

can pay them.

Five Star Review

Our property was logged probably sixty or seventy years ago and hadn't been touched since. As a result it was so brushy and overgrown that a lot of it was impassible. Our experience with the Cost Share program was terrific. The DNR foresters were enthusiastic and helpful and they connected us with good contractors. We got good advice, there was no red tape anywhere along the way and our reimbursement was as agreed. Today, the woods is in better shape to deal with fire or a bug infestation, with lots of good wildlife habitat

Keep These Things in Mind, say HP Experts:

Part of your Firewise strategy – Tom McMackin, our High Prairie liaison with the FireWise program, supports tying in woodland fire resistance with the FireWise approach to keeping your homestead safe. Fire resistant forests make safer communities. Tom is always available to consult about plans for defensible space around home environments - look for his regular FireWise articles in the High Prairian.

Keeping the forest healthy – Lucy Winter is a retired forester and a small forest landowner. Forest health is a critical concern to her and she is using the Cost Share program to improve forest resilience. She says "Our forests are under a lot of stress, from drought and overcrowding, and that usually results in increased disease and insect infestations. Since prescribed burning isn't practical in our rural residential area, we need other tools. The Cost Share Program lets us do more thinning and brush management than we could do on our own. We'll have healthier trees that are more resistant to warmer and drier conditions."

Don't forget the wildlife - Bill Weiler, a High Prairie neighbor and recognized wildlife habitat expert, worked with the Cost Share program on his family's property. He urges neighbors to include habitat as a priority in their forest plans and suggests retaining some brush as cover and food sources for wildlife. He also points out that Oregon White Oak is our most valuable wildlife tree - its acorns provide a critical winter food source and its cavities provide nesting opportunities for birds and mammals.

Some Common Questions

- *Do we have to be Klickitat County Forest Designated Forest Land to qualify?* No, the Cost Share Program is available to all non-industrial forest land.
- *Does DNR require regular maintenance or inspection?* No, DNR does not typically come back to the property after the work has been approved for payment, but it is a good idea keep after brush and overcrowding over time.
- *What about liability?* DNR does not assume any liability for the work. They do remind folks to pick a contractor that is licensed and insured and to get proof of insurance as part of your contract for the work.
- *Is the DNR reimbursement taxable?* Always consult a qualified advisor, but in our case, all the DNR reimbursement wasn't taxable – it went directly to our contractor.
- *Can I apply right now?* Yes – the program has funding and is a priority as part of the state's effort to improve forest health east of the Cascades. COVID-related issues have slowed down the pace of work in the field, but DNR expects that pace to pick up over the next few months.

- *Where can I get more information?* Go to www.dnr.wa.gov/cost-share, then follow up by contacting Dan Lennon or Greg Houle, our DNR Landowner Assistance foresters. Dan has been involved since 2013 and Greg recently joined him. They know our Klickitat County forests very well and are dedicated to working with landowners to improve the health of our forests.

Our DNR Landowner Assistance Foresters:

Greg Houle
greg.houle@dnr.wa.gov
 509-261-1961

Dan Lennon
 509-773-5588
 509-250-0491 cell
DANIEL.LENNON@dnr.wa.gov



Before



During



After

The High Plain
P.O. Box 592
Lyle, WA 98635

LYLE GOOD FOOD PANTRY REPORT – 1/20/21

From <https://www.facebook.com/lylegoodfoodpantry/>

The Pantry was giving out duck eggs from a local community member today, a first for us! We also had a nice assortment of winter veggies. Thank you to all who have made donations of food, bags and \$. Everything goes directly back to our community!

The Lyle Good Food Pantry is open the first and third Wednesdays of each month 10am-1pm and new winter hours 2-4pm. Please spread the word, as many in our community may not be aware of this resource for the food-insecure. If our hours don't work for you, it is possible to pick up at any other WAGAP food pantry (Stevenson, Klickitat or Goldendale). Check the WAGAP website for hours of operation and services.

You can make donations during our hours of operation or message me via Facebook (or email me at chrimsokol@gmail.com) to arrange a pick up. Do you have surplus produce or eggs? We can arrange to pick them up! You can also call Kate at 509-281-0884 for more information or to offer your time to volunteer.

Tax deductible monetary donations can be sent to WAGAP, PO Box 805, Bingen, WA 98605. If you put Lyle Good Food Pantry in the memo line, all donations will go to the Lyle and surrounding communities. You can also set up one-time or recurring donations through a link on the WAGAP web page: <https://www.wagap.org/donate>