

## SAVE THESE DATES

**Community Council Meetings.** Board of Directors meeting every 2nd Monday, 7 pm. HP Community Center. Contact HPCC: PO Box 592, Lyle, WA 98635 or email [highprairiebarb@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:kcfpd14@gmail.com)

Visit the community website ([www.highprairie.us](http://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](mailto:highprairiebarb@gmail.com)

### WEBSITE:

Check us out at [www.highprairie.us](http://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/](https://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/](http://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

### HPCC NOT SELECTED FOR STATE GRANT

Chris Satterm

In early March, 2022, your HPCC Board was disappointed to learn that we did not obtain the Washington State grant which we were seeking. This grant was to improve our facility and fire department capability. We plan on applying for it again next year.

The grant would have paid for improvement in the following areas:

1. Kitchen remodel and upgrade
2. New heating system
3. New A/C system: For cooling stations during hot summer months and electrical re-work
4. Additional wiring and work on electrical panels
5. New exterior covered emergency distribution and storage area with power and lights
6. Outdoor lighting, with timers, for parking lot
7. Commercial washer and dryer for Fire District 14
8. Large dual fuel generator for Struck Road Firehall (Fire District 14).
9. External power outlets for trailers, fire crews, and emergency preparedness
10. Replace cracked, broken flooring
11. Acoustic treatment for main hall to decrease noise levels
12. Wi-Fi installation

Other areas for improvement were also sought. If you have any suggestions for future improvements please contact us. Please go to <http://www.highprairie.us/community-center/> and complete the form at the very bottom of the page with your suggestions. Thank you.

## COMMUNITY IS OUR MIDDLE NAME

Zifra Weber and Gwen Berry

The High Prairie Community Council is busily organizing projects and social gatherings to bring community members together again after the 2-year pandemic hiatus. So far, following up on the responses to last September's interest survey, they're planning Bingo nights, a Community Cleanup, a Firefighter Appreciation Breakfast, a community garage sales event, and a mini Firehouse Sale.

### Bingo Nights

Your High Prairie Community Council will hold community Bingo on the 2nd Thursday of each month. Our next games will be May 12th. We are sorry about the late cancellation in April, but our caller and equipment were snowed in and unavailable. If you came that night please let me know and we will make up to you.

Please join us on May 12th, 2022, at the High Prairie Community Center at 701 Struck Road. Doors open at 6:00 PM. The first game starts at 6:30 PM. There will be 10 games with increasing prizes. Due to state regulations, Bingo Boards can only be purchased with CASH. The games are open to players under 18 only if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

- 1 set of boards (1 for each game) \$6.00
- 3 Sets of boards (1 for each game) \$10.00
- 6 Sets of boards (1 for each game) \$15.00

### May 12, 6:00

Bingo Night (every 2nd Thursday)

### May 12, 13 & 14

Community Cleanup, Phase 1

### May 21, TBA

Firefighter Appreciation Breakfast and Fundraiser

### June 3, 4 & 5

Community Cleanup, Phase 2

### TBD

Community Garage Sales and Mini Firehouse Sale

(continued on p. 2)

## THE HIGH PRAIRIAN

"All the news that's print to fit"

Publisher: High Prairie Community Council

Editor: Gwen Berry

Layout: Cindy Henschell

*Serving the Community of High Prairie, Klickitat County, Washington*

Published 4 times a year (or as often as needed)

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<http://www.highprairie.us>

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Contact the editor with news or comments:

Gwen Berry: [pgwenberry@hotmail.com](mailto:pgwenberry@hotmail.com)  
or 509-281-1998

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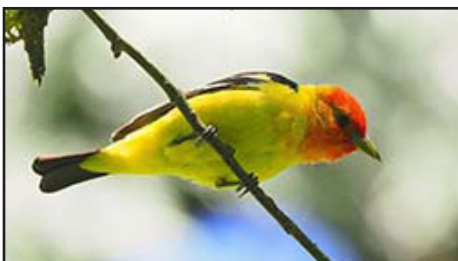
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**PO Box 592**  
**Lyle, WA 98635**

Please make all payments payable to: **HPCC**

## HARBINGERS OF SPRING



Balsamorhiza. Photo: Mike Mahaffa



Western Tanager. Photo: Mike Mahaffa

(from p. 1)

Snacks, soda and coffee will be available for purchase. We can't accept credit or debit cards for Bingo boards, but we will accept credit cards for snacks and drinks.

If you have any questions please call or text Zifra Weber, Bingo Manager, at 541-300-8145.

### Firefighter Appreciation Breakfast

Saturday, May 21 – Save the Date! The Firefighter Appreciation Breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, May 21. Arlen Aleckson will be cooking. Neighbors can enjoy a basic breakfast and a fun gathering; and since we really do appreciate the firefighters, it will include a little bit of fundraising to help them buy special jackets. Details to be announced.

### Community Clean-up

At the urging of members of the community, the HPCC is reviving a spring activity that has been popular in the past – Community Clean-up. There are two phases to this project. Phase 1 will take place over May 12, 13 and 14. Phase 2 is scheduled for June 3, 4 and 5.

Phase 1 is going out and picking up litter and trash from High Prairie's neglected roadways. The roads are broken down into reasonable-sized sections, with a volunteer in charge of each section. On May 12, 13 and 14, anyone who's interested can get together and help clean up the roads. Conveniently, Klickitat County has a new "Litter Gitter" program. Their free Litter Gitter kits include safety vests, gloves, grabber sticks, and trash bags. They'll provide pick-up of the litter that's collected and dispose of it through a partnership with Republic Services and the Washington Department of Ecology. Call or text Sharon at 509-310-9172 to be connected with volunteers in charge of road sections.

Phase 2 is "Dumpster Days." Dumpsters will be available for community members to toss the results of their own spring clean-ups. On June 3, 4 and 5, two dumpsters will be parked at the Old Fire Hall at 704 Centerville Highway. There may be a third dumpster for yard waste. Some volunteers are bringing coffee and cookies. Particulars such as open hours and what trash can be accepted will be announced later. Plus, while the dumpsters are open you can also drop off donations for a "Mini Firehouse Sale." (see next section)

### Mini Firehouse Sale

One of the fundraising ideas that garnered interest on the September 2021 survey was to hold periodic rummage sales at the Old Fire Hall. HPCC is asking for donations of items that are clean and in good shape. No date for the first sale is set, although it may be planned to coincide with a Community Yard Sales event later in the summer. Expect more information as plans solidify.

### Community Yard Sales Event

This has been popular over the last few years, and did draw interest on the survey. What's needed now is someone to take charge of getting it going for this summer. It's not a huge task. Ask Sharon Aleckson for details: 509-310-9172

## HIGH PRAIRIE COMMUNITY FACEBOOK PAGE

Debbie McDonald

There are several ways to receive High Prairie news and, in this age of social media, Facebook is a good app for sharing information. On the High Prairie Community Facebook page neighbors write all kinds of interesting posts as well as posting pictures - for example, weather, lost animals, road conditions and highway construction updates, passing of neighbors, educational workshops, sometimes school and bus schedules, community events, gardening questions - neighbors might ask a question that only others in High Prairie can answer.

The High Prairie Community Facebook page is a closed group, meaning members must request access, but that's just so the page can stay unique to our community. If you'd like to join, search in the Facebook app for the "High Prairie Community" page, go to the page and then click on the button to join. There are three membership questions so that the moderators can verify your eligibility (nothing personal, I promise), and the moderator will approve your request. Once approved you'll be able to share with your neighbors, too. Anyone can see the page but only members can see who is in the group and what they post. Please keep posts civil and written with respect for others with perhaps a different point of view.

If you wonder how some people seem to know everything that is going on the High Prairie, they may be reading the High Prairie Community Facebook page.



# HIGH PRAIRIE SING-ALONG SONG

Audrey Bentz

To the melody, "When It's Springtime in the Rockies"

When it's Springtime on High Prairie  
 And the birds begin to sing  
 Oh, we thrill to hear the meadowlark,  
 See the bluebird on the wing.  
 The wild flowers start their bloomin'  
 There is color everywhere.  
 When it's Springtime on High Prairie  
 This land is oh, so rare!

When it's Springtime on High Prairie  
 Sure the wind can surely blow,  
 But the blue sky speaks of promise  
 that the summer comes, we know.  
 The balsam root and camas, grass  
 widows, lupine too!  
 When it's Springtime on High Prairie  
 Our hearts ring with joy anew!

Local poet and High Prairie resident, Rebecca Sonniksen, who has shared some of her poems in previous issues of The High Prairian, was recently recognized for her poetry. One of her poems was featured in the April 9, 2022, edition of Columbia Community Connection News (CCC News) in their weekly column, "Local Poetry Spotlight." (<https://columbiacommunityconnection.com/the-dalles/local-poetry-spotlight-rebecca-sonniksen>) Rebecca writes that the poem was inspired by her 8-year-old granddaughter, Sofia.

## How Easily

Rebecca Sonniksen

I break off  
 from the embrace of being-  
 eight years old, flinging rocks from a railroad trestle  
 to hear the splash.

Break off-  
 from imagining morning frost  
 changing driveway gravel to a glistening  
 river of diamonds.


From cracking ice fragments  
 clinging to grassy winter remnants,  
 framing a multitude of miniature grasses,  
 flowing time suspends.

Bend close to absorb the transparency  
 of vanishing coldness-  
 Capture the marvel of an unexpected melt,  
 in the unexpected warmth of a winter day.

Hold it in your hands, it melts.  
 It's only ice, after all.



Rebecca's granddaughter, Sofia



**BUILDING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES —**  
*Vision & Action*

One of a series of conference being held around the world, exploring the inherent oneness of humanity and a universal call to work for the betterment of the world by focusing on ways to unite and transform our communities.

**Hosted by the Baha'i Faith in the Gorge**  
**Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup>, 10a.m. - 4 p.m.**  
**Lunch Provided**  
**Daubenspeck Park, 410 Humboldt St. Bingen**

Questions 509-281-0477 [bahaikickin@gmail.com](mailto:bahaikickin@gmail.com)  
[www.bahai.us](http://www.bahai.us)

- So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.  
 Baha'u'llah

Baha'is all across the globe are hosting these conferences to bring community voices together to celebrate our unity and consult about how to build vibrant communities. It's going to be a really special gathering, truly intended for all. There will be art, music, food and guided consultation about the process of community building. I hope you can come! – Rene Weiler



## MICROGREENS

Cindy Henchell

It all started with our indoor cat, Nermal. We felt sorry that we had to restrict his outdoor access to fresh grass so I ordered a kit for growing organic wheatgrass for indoor cats. The concept was simple and easy: Densely sow wheatgrass seeds in a fiber pot filled with a coconut coir disk (more about that later), add water and in a few days introduce it to your cat. Nermal (literally) loved it to death. He greedily mowed it down, knocked it off the shelf and scattered the remains all over the floor. But that's a cat for you.

The kit happened to come from a company that supplies similar kits to grow microgreens. If you aren't familiar with microgreens or have only seen them pre-packaged in the grocery store or farmers market, usually near the packaged sprouts and wickedly expensive, the real reason people are willing to spend lots of money for them is that they pack a nutritional and flavor punch. Unlike sprouts, microgreens are a little older, harvested usually shortly after producing their first true leaves and typically without the roots. They can be up to forty times more nutritious than full grown green leaves and they are super flavorful. The types of microgreens range from the relatively mild lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, beans, and peas to the pungent varieties of radish, mustard, fenugreek, and onion. Herbs such as dill, oregano, basil, cilantro, and parsley are flavorful versions of their full-grown selves. Most people use microgreens as additions to salads, soups, sandwiches, or smoothies. A little goes a long way. As a bonus, they are great just to munch on.

So what's the connection with cat grass? I was curious to know how I could grow microgreens without spending \$15 for a kit. Surely you can just buy some seeds and a bit of seed starter mix and plant a tray in a sunny window (protected from the cat, of course) until harvest time a couple of weeks later. So, I consulted farmer Google for tips on DIY microgreens and got a lesson in everything from coconut coir to hydroponics to optimum lighting for plant growth. Everything that an experienced cannabis grower already knows.

I only needed a simple, inexpensive method for growing just a few square inches of a few varieties for a few weeks. I happened to find the extremely useful YouTube channel, "Keep on Growin' with Mike VanDuzee." His premise is to use easily obtainable, reusable or recyclable materials to grow these little powerhouses year around. And so I was introduced to the repurposed uses of (wait for it...) those plastic frozen/fast-food containers piling up in the back of my cupboard!

Here's how to do it: First, invert the lid from a 5" x 7" container on top of its base, make a few holes in the lid to allow some wicking (untreated) cotton cord to pass through, and place a 40 mm coconut coir disk in the center of the lid.

OK, now I'll explain coconut coir. It is the inner husk of coconuts that is milled and compressed into bricks or disks and used as a sterile germination base or soilless planting mixture. It is highly sustainable, just the right texture for germinating seeds, and super efficient to transport and use. Once the compressed material is watered, it expands to about five times its original size. One or two 40 mm diameter disks are just right for the lid of a food container.

Put plain water in the base of the container and the wicking action should keep the coir moist, but not wet. Watering from below keeps the greens dry which prevents mold. Densely sow the seeds and then invert another base over the seeds to keep the sprouting seeds in the dark. Place this setup someplace out of the reach of cats for a few days.

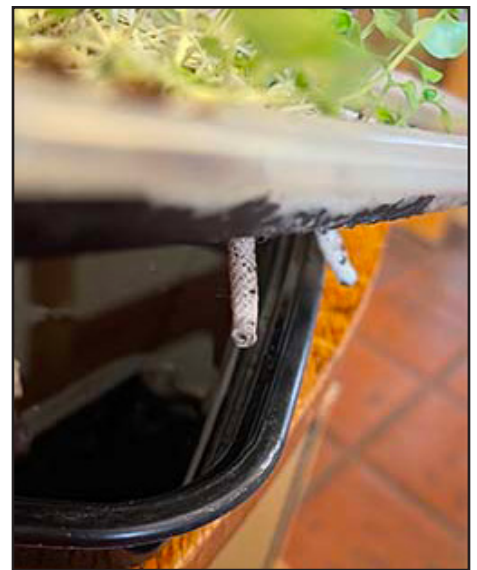
It's wise to check on it daily, but usually after about 48 hours there should be sprouts forming. Allow these to expand in height in the dark for another day or so before removing the lid and allowing them to green up and grow some more by the light of a sunny window.

Harvest using scissors just after the first true leaves emerge. Use them as needed or harvest the whole batch and use another plastic food container lined with dry paper towels to store them in the refrigerator. For longest storage, keep them in plastic bags, wrapped in dry paper towels and most of the air squeezed out of the bag. I recommend not washing them until they are ready for use. They can also be plucked out with intact roots and used as seed starts for your summer garden.

Toss the used coir into your garden, wash out the food container and repeat. Who knew that these nuisance containers could be so useful?



An almost-finished crop of basil microgreens, only slightly rero-filled by the cat.



Base of the container filled with water that is wicked up by cotton wicking cord to moisten the planting mix.



Coconut coir disk before and after hydrating.



# COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

## 2021 FIRE DISTRICT #14 VALUE OF SERVICE

Did you know that High Prairie has its own community directory? It's a handy resource if you are trying to reach a neighbor or if you need a road map of the area.

Inclusion in the directory is voluntary and, if you choose to join in, the amount of information that you list is up to you. The directory is not available to the general public and it will only be sent to the people who are listed in the directory. The listings are not intended to advertise businesses.

Since it was first developed in 2014 we have experienced significant growth in our area so updating it is long overdue. Please feel free to add a listing.

There is an online form that is easy to fill out and submit. You can find it at <http://www.highprairie.us/general-information/community-directory/>

If you have previously submitted information to the directory, now is a good time to make sure that it is up to date.

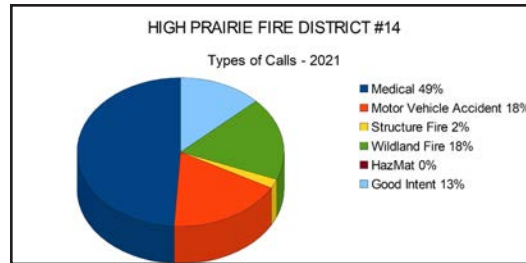
When the 2022 directory is completed those who submitted information will be notified. If you provided an email address (even if you don't wish to have it published) you will get an email with a PDF link to the directory. Print several and keep one in your home and others in your vehicles. There is even a map showing most of the roads!



Mount Adams Early Morning Off Bluebird Lane. Photo: Mike Mahaffa

As the Covid-19 pandemic continued through 2021, the fire district remained vigilant during peak times of local infection rates. This impacted the district's training, maintenance and, to some extent, response to calls. However, your community first responder volunteers are a dedicated group of professionals that continued to answer the call. While compiling the emergency call and training/maintenance data, it is of interest to me to see if any anomalies come forth while pulling the numbers together. One fact in particular rose to the top. A first responder had an extraordinary amount of responses through the year, and that was Lieutenant Tom McMackin. Tom had responded to 99 of the 123 total fire district calls. Truly amazing, Tom! Along with Tom's individual call volume, High Prairie Fire Department volunteers collectively responded 354 times through 2021 with an average of 2.9 individuals responding to each call. I reflect on these response numbers and I feel honored to know these individuals on our fire department.

To recap 2021 HPFD activities: Members responded to a total of 123 emergency calls lumped into 5 categories this last year, of which 31 calls were in-district responses. The graph below shows the breakdown. Most of the categories are self-explanatory. The "good intent" calls are where our firefighters were asked to stand down when other departments maintained control of their emergency scene or alarm companies called to cancel responding units.



To calculate the value of service we take the number of hours spent on emergency responses and training/maintenance activities and multiply it by the total personnel time on each activity. Then we multiply the number of volunteer hours by \$28.54, the average emergency services hourly wage (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). The table below shows that HPFD MEMBERS VOLUNTEERED A TOTAL OF 940 HOURS in 2021! THE VALUE OF SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY TOTALED \$26,828.

HIGH PRAIRIE FIRE DISTRICT #14 Value of Service to Community – 2021		
	Man-Hours	Dollar Value @ \$28.54/hr*
Training & Maintenance	516	\$14,727
Emergency Response Calls	424	\$12,101
<b>Total 2021 Volunteer Hours</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>\$26,828</b>

\*Average Emergency Services Hourly Wage (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021)

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge our Fire Commissioners, who sign a waiver not to get paid for their time serving in their elected positions, which keeps more dollars in the budget for operation and maintenance needs. Thank you for your dedication to our department and community. One other person to acknowledge is our Administrative Assistant, Glenna Scott. She is a paid member of our department and worth every penny we give her.

With great sadness, we remember our colleague, Rob Taylor, who passed away on Tuesday, April 12. Rob was a dedicated volunteer firefighter for 10 years (retired February 2016) with the High Prairie Fire Department. Our hearts go out to Madelon and the entire Taylor family. He will be missed!



Tom McMackin

Spring!!! That familiar chapter, a reaffirming renewal of Nature's beauty and the wonders of the Columbia Gorge, especially on High Prairie. The fresh greenery and the bursting brightness of wildflowers, the almost audible 'Pop!' of buds, and the leafing out of buckbrush, oaks and willows – they are, in a word, magnificent! It's this season that reminds us why we choose to live in (or extend our visits to) this place.

Our springtime slice of paradise in an Oregon White Oak savanna is framed by the equally charged seasonal realities of Cold/Wet and Hot/Dry. These are the engines driving the progress of bud or sprout to seed and fruit for the next renewal and an elemental return of vitality to the soil for the next cycle of Life. The browning/drying of the grass and other fuels is a critical phase in returning crucial elements for regeneration; and wildfire is a dynamic catalyst in this annual renewal.

Given where we live, it is a simple fact that on High Prairie it is not a question of 'If' but 'When and how intensely' a wildfire event will impact our lives and properties. We have all seen the incredible power and speed of the spreading advance of wildfires on the nightly news or on social media. It makes sense to protect our properties as much as we can and be ready for prompt evacuation if necessary.

#### **FireWise Tasks:**

Survey the defensible space around your home, other structures and any property you need to protect. Property losses to fire generally happen when fire can make contact with your property. For example:

- Embers carried on the wind, then falling on combustible material on roofs or other similar surfaces
- Fire traveling on the ground and igniting material next to or attached to the property, like a wood fence.

→ 0 to 5' – Immediate Zone: The home and the area 0-5' from the furthest attached exterior point of the home. Start with the house itself, then move into the landscaping section of the Immediate Zone. Eliminate potential entry for embers and remove sources of ignition. **Any work needed should be your top priority!**

→ 5' to 30' – Clear up debris, cut grasses, prune shrubs, etc. to prevent fire from moving easily to your property. This will also provide defensible space work areas for firefighters if they need to come to your home. Take time to assess and create a 3' cleared area around wooden utility poles and fence posts! **Any work needed should be scheduled for completion before June 1st!**

→ 30' to 100+' – Clean up debris and plan for thinning shrubs and trimming ground level or low tree branches. **Any work needed can be done when possible or planned for Fall's regular chores.** Also, take time to assess and create a 3' cleared area around wooden utility poles and fence posts!

Burn, chip or take to a transfer station all trimming, pruning, other yard items. If burning, prepare a burn area 10'X10' on bare ground center a fire pile to 4' high in a 4' square area. A water source, a shovel, other hand tools and no wind will make your work safer for all. **Burn barrels are illegal in Klickitat County!**

#### **Know the Evacuation Levels**

Klickitat County Emergency Management will issue alerts in case of developing wildfire incidents.

- Level 1 (Ready) – Assemble your supplies or load your prepared items in your vehicle and complete tasks on your 2-3 hour checklist.

- Level 2 (Set) – Complete tasks on your 1-hour-or-less checklist. If you expect a Level 3, when you've completed your tasks Leave Now! Leaving now will make having to navigate crowded traffic, smoke, or possible fire impingement less likely!

- Level 3 (GO!) – Drop whatever you're doing. Get everyone and the dog into your preloaded vehicle. Don't dilly-dally. Leave!

- Why leave early? Watch: "Family's Car Runs Out of Gas While Fleeing Wildfire" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-1GVAzdwHYo> 02:11

#### **Online resources:**

CalFire: <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/>

Preparing for Wildfire: <https://tinyurl.com/5y3zkn43>

WA Evacuation levels: <https://tinyurl.com/3rj3dbc5>

WA Wildfire & Smoke information: <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/Wildfires> or <https://tinyurl.com/2m79f34v>

FireWise: <http://www.firewise.org> or <https://tinyurl.com/2p85str8>

Ready, Set, Go! <http://www.wildlandfire.org>

Contact me, Tom McMackin, if you'd like more information on the 'FireWise' and 'Ready, Set, Go!' programs or anything else about wildfire readiness. Email at [firewise-on-highprairie@gmail.com](mailto:firewise-on-highprairie@gmail.com) or phone message at 509-365-2786.



## SUCCESSFUL NESTS ON BLUEBIRD LANE

Mike Mahaffa



This article was originally published on the Pacific Birds website in September 2019. <https://pacificbirds.org/2019/09/successful-nests-on-bluebird-lane/>

In the hills outside of Lyle, Washington, Mike and Rita Mahaffa are working hard for birds, especially Western Bluebirds and Tree Swallows. They started with a few nest boxes on the property they bought 25 years ago, but they couldn't stop there. They are now up to 15 boxes, both on their property (and) the shared road that leads to it. The success

of those boxes depends on many things, one of them being suitable habitat.

Lyle is about 75 miles east of Portland, Oregon, along the Columbia River Gorge. The Gorge and surrounding lands are full of transitions – the country looks different as you travel west to east and cross the Cascades, and there are numerous different microclimates. The habitats also change with elevation and aspect, and they are changing with time. The Mahaffas have a mix of habitats on their land, including high prairie with scattered conifers and oak woodlands.

As long time landowners, Mike and Rita are interested in all aspects of conserving biodiversity, but they have a special interest in birds. They were inspired to establish bluebird nest boxes after a visit to Bickleton, Washington, self-described as the "Bluebird Capital of the World" (although there it is mostly Mountain Bluebirds). The prairie with scattered pines en route to and on their property provides the habitat the birds prefer – semi-open country where trees, or fences, provide perches for their insectivorous habits.



Mike's family started out with a few nest boxes but by now they are up to 15.



Tree Swallows also moved in, which they considered a bonus.

Two years ago—after experiencing success with nest boxes on their property—the Mahaffas looked at the road that they share with

neighbors as providing even more suitable habitat. They built an additional 12 nest boxes along several miles of the road, at a minimum of 200 yards apart. The road has become known as Bluebird Lane.

In the summer of 2019, they had 4-6 successful Western Bluebird nests and about the same number of Tree Swallow nests. The bluebirds and swallows can use the same nest box openings and while Mike has observed the swallows harassing the bluebirds a bit, they have so far coexisted. Mike and Rita are enjoying watching the birds on what they now call Bluebird Lane, as are their neighbors, but they are also concerned for the future of the bluebirds and other species.

*I greatly enjoy seeing the birds on our property and in the habitats nearby. But what I really want is for my grandchildren to have the same opportunity to see the birds as I have had. We want to help make that happen. —Mike Mahaffa*

Even though it is not a threatened or endangered species, there is concern in about the Western Bluebird and its diminished range in parts of the Pacific Northwest. One reason may be the lack of nest cavities, due to habitat loss or alteration. Western Bluebirds are secondary cavity nesters, so they rely on other species to build their cavities, or they use natural cavities if available. Fortunately, they take well to nest boxes which can help support local populations. Tree Swallows are among the aerial insectivores (birds that only eat their insects "on the wing") that are experiencing recent, precipitous declines across their ranges so the boxes may help that species as well.

While Mike and Rita hope to enjoy bluebirds and swallows for years to come (along with their grandkids), they may not stop there. Mike also has an interest in building boxes for the American Kestrel, and after that, who knows?



Nest boxes have overall dimension, and openings, for specific species although there is some overlap. This box has a guard to prevent other birds from entry and a PVC pipe to discourage mice and snakes.

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

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SPRING PHOTOS BY  
MIKE MAHAFFA



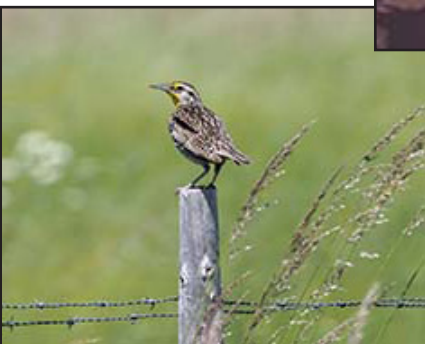
Canola Field Off Hartland Road.



Mount Adams Summit Closeup



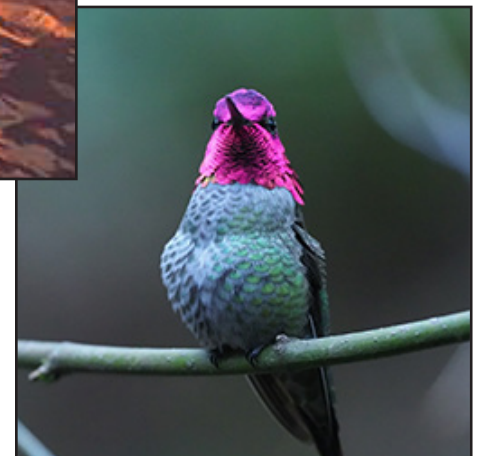
Scenic Mt. Adams, Off White's Ranch Road



Western Meadowlark



Doug's Beach



Anna's Hummingbird, Male