

E-Link

Connecting Southern Oregon's COG With Its Members

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Food & Friends Celebrates Milestone

Ten years and more than 2 million meals ago, RVCOG assumed responsibility for the senior meals program in both Jackson and Josephine counties. Two million meals prepared, transported, packaged, and served one meal at a time, one senior at a time, one volunteer at a time. Whether to the homebound or to the folks who visit our sites, it has been our pleasure to provide a hot lunch, a friendly visit, and a vital safety check to hundreds of our elderly neighbors every day.

As hard as staff have worked to make this happen, though, it all would have been impossible without the thousands of volunteers who over these ten years have so

RVCOG MEMBERS

- Jackson County
- Josephine County
- City of Ashland
- Town of Butte Falls
- City of Cave Junction
- City of Central Point
- City of Eagle Point
- City of Gold Hill
- City of Grants Pass
- City of Jacksonville
- City of Medford
- City of Phoenix
- City of Rogue River
- City of Shady Cove
- City of Talent
- Emergency Communications of Southern Oregon
- Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District
- Rogue Community College
- Rogue Valley Sewer Services
- Rogue Valley Transportation District
- Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.
- Southern Oregon University



generously donated their energy, good will, and over half a million hours of their time. Nor would this program be possible without the continued logistical and financial support of the communities our clients call home—the fact that our jurisdictions sacrifice every time they give to this program proves yet again that our region really does care for its own. As for the future, we all know that these tough times will probably get even tougher in the next year or so, but considering what has been accomplished in southern Oregon so far, we are optimistic about our ability to continue making the difference we do.

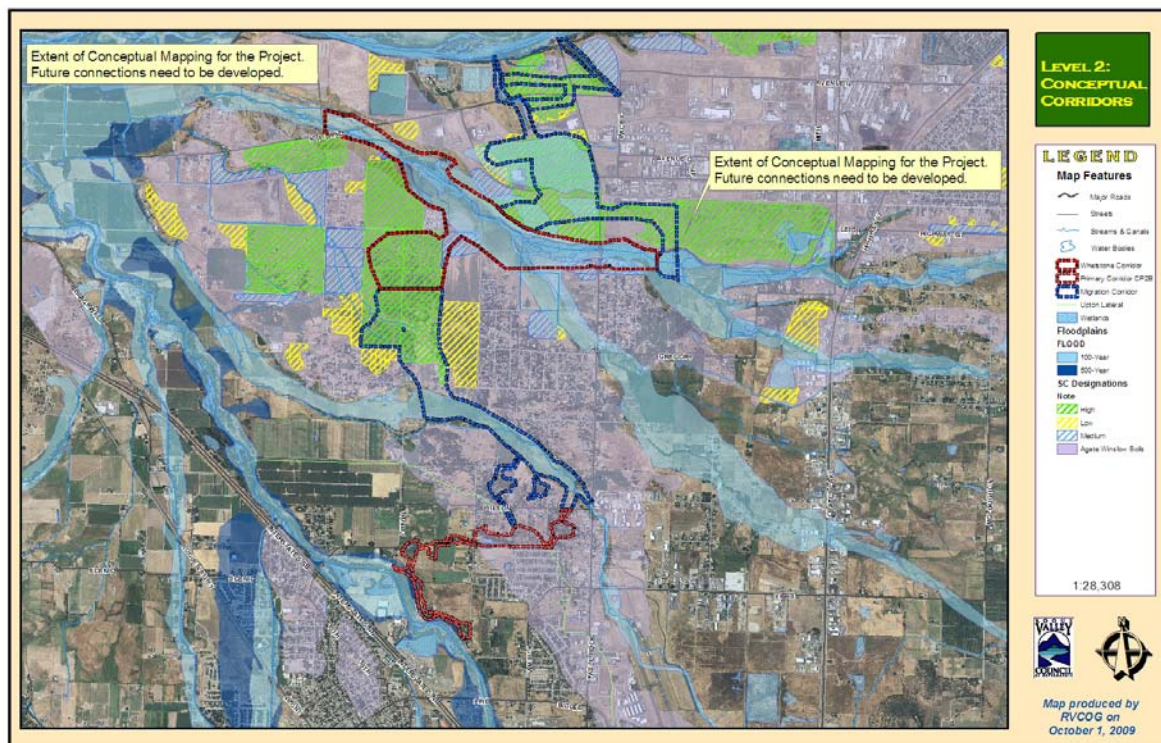
Again, our sincerest gratitude to everyone who helps make this vital program possible. Although you will never know most of the people you are helping, you touch their lives deeply nonetheless. That is something worth celebrating.

Rogue Valley Ecosystem Planning for Healthy Communities

Despite the recent economic downturn, the Rogue Valley has experienced unprecedented growth over the last decade. Mindful of the impacts this level of growth can have on natural systems, the RVCOG Natural Resources Department has been focusing on developing strategies to conserve fragile ecosystems while also supporting economic development and infrastructure needs. An important part of this work has been a \$76,500 Bullitt Foundation award to RVCOG to support multi-jurisdictional, ecologically based land use planning throughout the Rogue Valley. The funding has provided a catalyst for integrating regional planning activities in Jackson and Josephine Counties, and has strengthened several key projects in the valley including Regional Problem Solving (RPS) and Agate Desert Vernal Pools Conservation.

The Bullitt funding has allowed RVCOG's Natural Resources Department to gather local ecological information and enter it into a Geographic Information System (GIS) geo-database for use by planners. The data, which are now retrievable in a consistent, usable format, have been used to delineate natural resources corridors and produce maps showing a variety of valuable natural resources areas including wildlife migration corridors, wetlands, floodplains, sensitive soils, and water bodies. RVCOG is also emphasizing the fact that early recognition of ecologically sensitive areas not only increases conservation of important natural resources, but also helps developers and jurisdictions comply more cost effectively with environmental regulations, such as the Endangered Species and Clean Water acts.

Ecologically Sensitive Corridors between White City and Central Point



RVCOG is now working on the second phase of the Bullitt project—exploring the financial and legal aspects of the conservation strategy derived from this work, and building the necessary processes to implement responsible and realistic on-the-ground conservation. Now is the right time to do this—with the recent removal of three large main-stem dams on the Rogue River (Savage Rapids, Gold Hill, and Gold Ray) and another large dam on Elk Creek,

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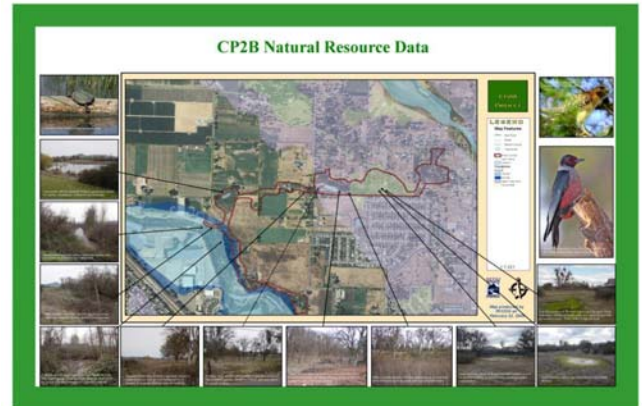
Ecosystem Planning

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our area is poised for a revitalization of natural resources, including fish runs in the Rogue, and a resulting boon to the regional economy. With the Rogue River running free from Lost Creek Dam to the Pacific Ocean for the first time in living memory, river use and tourism are bound to increase.

Other initiatives like the development of the Rogue River Greenway, restoration projects along the shores and near the tributaries of the Rogue, and vernal pools restoration projects will be complemented by the Bullitt-funded work. The ecological information provided by the Bullitt project will also help to establish restoration priorities for other projects as well as partners, such as OWEB (the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board), the Laird-Norton Family Foundation, the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, the Bob and Phyllis Mace Foundation, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and others.

Ultimately, our aim is to provide our member jurisdictions with the plans and tools they need to protect our area's ecosystem functions, thereby enhancing their own communities and everyone's quality of life in the Rogue Valley. We intend to accomplish this not by attempting to change people's core beliefs, which by definition are resistant to change, but by being able to demonstrate that not only is conservation possible in the face of development, the two processes can actually be mutually beneficial.



Example application of natural resource data for urban planning near Central Point

Newly Elected Officials Orientation, version 2011

In January 2009, mindful of the tremendous learning curve our recently elected officials go through in their new roles, RVCOG tried to do something to help. We invited our region's newest policy makers to an introduction to the state agencies they would most likely come in contact with during their public service, the individuals who represent those state agencies in southern Oregon, and aspects of their individual programs that might be of special interest to this region, including any grant or loan programs. We also took advantage of the opportunity to give attendees an orientation to RVCOG's services.

The event was attended by well over a dozen newly elected officials from both Jackson and Josephine county communities, and was in every sense of the word a resounding success. Not only did these newly elected officials receive a well-rounded overview of southern Oregon's Economic Revitalization Team, the Governor's Office, and the major state agencies represented—the departments of Transportation, Land Conservation and Development, Housing and Community Service, Environmental Quality, Energy, Water Resources, and Business Oregon—but they made good use of the opportunity at the end of the session to speak one-on-one with the state agencies' regional representatives to receive some further information about specific concerns or interests.

In early 2011, we will be repeating our Newly Elected Officials Orientation, this time on February 28. The time has yet to be fixed, but early evening is most likely. We will be sending personal letters of invitation to all newly elected officials in late January, but wanted to let our members know that we would, as promised, be repeating the orientation, and to request that jurisdictions, if at all possible, refrain from scheduling any special meetings for that evening to allow as many officials who would like to attend to do so.

Finally, to those elected officials who attended the orientation two years ago, and who saw value in it, please do speak with your newest colleagues to let them know that a few hours on a cold winter's evening at the COG can be time very well spent.

Living Well with Chronic Conditions in Southern Oregon

Are you or a loved one living with arthritis, cancer, diabetes, heart problems, or other chronic health conditions? If so, a Living Well workshop may be for you.

Living Well with Chronic Conditions is a workshop series designed by Stanford University's Patient Education Center to help people who have significant health conditions learn how to take control of their life, feel better and do the things they want to do. The workshops provide participants with tools to manage symptoms, reduce pain, and deal better with stress, frustration and depression. Participants also learn strategies for making better nutritional and exercise choices, along with techniques for communicating effectively with healthcare professionals and family members. The workshop series, comprising six 2 ½-hour sessions, is offered free of charge in both Jackson and Josephine counties.

The Living Well program was developed in 1996, following a five-year Stanford University study involving 1,000 people living with chronic conditions. The research found that people who went through the Living Well program spent fewer days in the hospital, had fewer emergency room visits, and saw improvement in exercise, fatigue, health distress, and social activities compared to people who did not attend a workshop. Our southern Oregon workshop participants say they have learned how to set realistic goals and found ways to work past the limits caused by their conditions. Some report feeling less pain and more energy as a result of the workshop, while many point to having made supportive friends among their fellow attendees.

The Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Senior and Disability Services, and Oregon State University Extension Service introduced the local Living Well program to the Rogue Valley in 2006. Since then, 1,400 Rogue Valley residents have attended the six-week workshop series. The state of Oregon recently released a Program Impact Report on Oregon's program completed by Viktor Bovbjerg, Ph.D. of OSU. Dr. Bovbjerg's study concludes that Living Well has contributed to participants' quality of life while at the same time reducing health care costs.

Today, RVCOG has expanded its sponsorship of the Living Well program into Douglas, Coos, and Curry counties with assistance from the Administration on Aging, a partnership with the state of Oregon's Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) and Public Health offices, and a two-year American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant.

Workshops are available now in Grants Pass, Medford, Ashland, White City, Roseburg, and Coos Bay. Stanford also supports an [online version](#) for people who cannot attend a workshop in person.

The Regional Coordinator for the local Living Well program is Arlene Logan. To find out more about southern Oregon's Living Well program, please get in touch with Arlene at 541-864-9611 or alogan@rvco.org, or check out the program's website at www.sohealthyoregon.org.



RVCOG

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Founded in 1968, RVCOG

is a voluntary association of local governments and special districts in southern Oregon.

OUR MISSION

We shall act as a catalyst to promote quality of life, effective and efficient services, and leadership in regional communication, cooperation, planning, and action in southern Oregon.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Michael Cavallaro
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Don Bruland
Director of Senior and Disability Services

Craig Harrell
Natural Resources Program Manager

Alan Hudson
Finance Manager

Evelyn Kinsella
Nutrition Program Manager

Sandi Morton
Asst to Exec Dir / Human Resources Manager

Berta Varble
SDS Operations Manager

Free Workshops on Reducing Home Energy Usage

In keeping with the new direction RVCOG's Board has taken with the recent designation of the Green Jobs Council as a subcommittee of the COG, we would like to pass on to our jurisdictions information about no-cost "Home Energy IQ Workshops" being offered through a collaboration between Energy Trust of Oregon and Pacific Power. The free workshops are geared towards individuals, and are designed to answer attendees' home energy questions such as:

- How much energy and money can you save?
- What is the single biggest energy user in your home?
- Do you need to install insulation or simply change your habits?

The workshop will teach individuals how energy works in a home, and what impact some practical changes can have. Those who attend will develop a deeper understanding of home-energy use, the impacts of appliances and systems on their energy bills, and how changing simple behaviors can reduce a home's energy and carbon footprint.

Attendees will also learn about what they can do to increase comfort and indoor air quality, distinguish do-it-yourself techniques from projects that may require professional services, and understand what diagnostic testing can do for homeowners.

Workshop topics include:

- Identifying household energy use and how it changes over time
- Taking a whole-home approach to energy efficiency
- Recognizing the most cost-efficient home energy improvements
- Saving energy and improving your comfort, health, and safety
- Reducing your environmental footprint
- Saving money with Energy Trust incentives

Each workshop will be held from 6:00–8:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

For more information or to register for a workshop, please contact Dan Moore, RVCOG, at 541-423-1361 or dmoore@rvcog.org.

