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Connecting Southern Oregon's COG With Its Members

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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

Coming Soon to an Event Near You

Environmental education and outreach are essential parts of the activities undertaken by the COG's Natural Resources department. Throughout the year, you will find Natural Resources staff conducting workshops, open houses and presentations at a variety of regional events. Events include the annual Earth Day Celebration in Ashland, the Bear Creek Watershed Education Partners Symposium, Salmon Watch, the Master Gardeners Spring Fair, the "Kids and Bugs" celebration, Riparian Outdoor School, and the Bear Creek Salmon Festival at North Mountain Park.



An aspiring biologist studies an RVCOG storyboard at this year's Earth Day Celebration in Ashland.

At these events, Natural Resources staff members discuss the need for clean water, types and causes of water pollution, stream restoration, stormwater management and watershed health. We discuss how pollution is generated and the problems it causes to natural areas like creeks, rivers, lakes and wetlands. Then we help people understand fundamental concepts including the local connection of storm drains to creeks ("what goes into the storm drain goes into the creek"), to regional connections of local creeks to the Rogue River and eventually the Pacific Ocean. We also discuss actions that people can take at home to help protect streams and wetlands and reduce pollution including conserving water, using fewer chemicals (herbicides and pesticides) or non-toxic alternatives, cleaning up after pets, planting trees, using phosphate-free soaps, or taking vehicles to a car wash. Finally, we describe what communities are doing to clean up local streams and protect our watersheds.

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Education and Outreach

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These educational opportunities not only meet the goals of the Federal Clean Water Act and other regulations, but they also give us the opportunity to inform residents of Jackson and Josephine counties that a number of the more critical aspects of our environment are indeed improving. We make sure to let them know that although streams and wetlands have suffered from abuse and neglect in the past, Bear Creek has shown remarkable water quality improvements in the last several years, and the Rogue River is one of the remaining strongholds of healthy salmon runs in the Northwest.

RVCOG's Natural Resources department is proud of the role it has played in this healing process, and very appreciative of the way in which our member jurisdictions have uniformly supported our activities. Look for us soon at an event near you.



Displays feature posters, hands-on activities, games, puzzles, and brochures. For more examples of Natural Resources' brochures and handouts, [visit us on the web](#).



Students planting wetland near the Twin Creeks development in Central Point.

Food & Friends Invited to Washington, D.C.

Food & Friends manager Evelyn Kinsella, along with 12 other Meals on Wheels managers from across the nation, was selected to review and provide input on an Emergency Preparedness Planning model created by the Meals on Wheels Association of America. The proposed model was requested by the federal government to fill a gap in many of the nation's emergency preparedness plans when it comes to homebound seniors. The process was funded by FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security, and was held in Washington, D.C., in January.

On the home front, RVCOG and the state's Department of Human Services (DHS) are collaborating with Jackson County Health and Human Services in a pilot program to provide H1N1 vaccine free of charge to Food & Friends home delivery clients. Food & Friends volunteers were asked to deliver printed information, and to answer questions clients might have about the program.

Aging in (Your Own) Place

RVCOG's Senior and Disability Services has long been recognized as a leader in Oregon's efforts to make it possible for people to age in place—living in their own homes—for as long as their circumstances permit. It's no accident that residents of Oregon, compared to all other Americans, are the least likely to be institutionalized as they age and their abilities change, and we continue to look for ways to make aging in place even more feasible in our state.

On May 25, 2010, the COG, in cooperation with AARP, is holding a public brainstorming session to advance the work of the Life Long Housing Certification Committee, which has been tasked with the responsibility of developing a certification process and standards to be applied to housing construction or remodeling that would directly address the accessibility needs of aging homeowners. The certification as now envisioned would be at three levels based on different degrees of accessibility. These certifications would be recorded on the deed to the property, and would become part of the Multiple Listing Service information at the time of sale.



RVCOG is requesting that all those interested in further developing and refining this concept participate in this discussion, especially those who represent the construction, architecture, real estate and inspection trades. The event will be held at the Higher Education Center, Room 127, 8th and Bartlett, in Medford. Please RSVP by May 18 to Connie Saldaña at (541) 423-1383 or csaldana@rvcog.org, leaving your name, phone number, email address, and whether you are a representative of the senior or disability community, or are involved in one of the trade groups mentioned above.

Putting the “Sense” in Census Data

Although the Census Bureau offers a bewildering array of information on much of what it means to live and work in the United States, many people can't get past the “bewildering” part, so they never learn to take advantage of all that information. Acknowledging the competitive advantage an ability to find and manipulate census data would give our staff and member jurisdictions, especially in grant writing, RVCOG has invited Linda Clark, an Information Specialist with the Seattle Census Bureau, to come to the Rogue Valley on June 18, 2010, to share her knowledge in a 4-hour workshop. The workshop will be held at the COG's main office in Central Point from 8:30 to 12:30, and is limited to the first 43 to sign up.

We will be sending out further information on the topics to be covered in the workshop, but if you would like to pre-register, please contact René Sjothun at (541) 423-1332 or rsjothun@rvcog.org. There is no charge for employees or elected officials of our member jurisdictions and, as an added bonus, AICP planners will be able to qualify for four (4) certification maintenance credits.

An RPS Snapshot



We are in the last stages of the Regional Problem Solving process in the Rogue Valley. There is a great deal of activity around the public process, with a fair amount of passion between opposing mindsets on the question of whether or not the draft plan is as good a first, large step to a better future for the valley as it could be. I know the answer for myself, and I know that some people share that opinion, and others do not. That's fine; good-willed and well-intentioned people can disagree on something as large and complicated as RPS—it would only be curious if that weren't the case. It would also be curious if those feelings weren't passionate at times, because RPS will have a fundamental impact on this region decades into the future, and people care about this valley.

In the midst of this passionate public process, I wanted to describe a brief impression of the May 5 Talent public hearing on the draft plan. It just happened that I was able to attend this particular hearing at the last minute—I haven't been able to attend many others—and I was glad I did. As the hearing proceeded, it occurred to me how well our system can work when people on both sides are willing to listen and consider information, rather than beat each other over the head with bumper stickers and absolutes. At this hearing a number of citizens, most of them from Talent, were willing and able to have a reasoned, respectful conversation with their elected representatives about what their city meant to them, and what they would and would not like to see as Talent's future. The members of the City Council matched the civility in kind, and responded by suggesting potential modifications to one of their proposed urban reserves that clearly demonstrated they were listening, and were willing, even at the end of this decade-long process, to continue to make refinements. No threat of a lawsuit motivated council members; rather, it was the desire to be part of a plan that works the best it can for Talent's citizens and for the region as a whole.

This isn't to say that the other cities or the County need to make changes to the plan to demonstrate that they care about the Rogue Valley or their citizens. Not everyone who wants a change made at this point has had or will have a compelling case. In addition, the draft plan has been created over many years of development and refinement, and is the product of a great deal of input from every corner of the Rogue Valley. Without any doubt whatsoever, this is by far the most heavily vetted plan ever seen in this region.

What this one hearing in Talent did say to me is that reasoned compromise is still very much a part of our society, no matter what we all see on the news. That can't help but bode well for what needs to happen after RPS, as the real process for creating a better future for all of us will occur then. RPS only sets the stage, the play remains to be written.

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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.

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Academy Training Explores Personality Types

On April 7, 2010, the Rogue Valley Public Service Academy had some people seeing red—and blue, yellow and green. Each color represented one of the four personality types examined during the Academy's latest training, *Understanding Personality Differences in the Workplace*.

This colorful training was presented by Bill Gallagher, founder of *Teamworks*, a Medford-based consulting and mediation firm that specializes in helping organizations to better understand the complexities of relational dynamics in the workplace. Considering the number of people who attended this training (74 in total), it appears that employers in our region realize the importance of personality type and its impact on productivity, communication and other facets of human relations in the workplace.



To help facilitate the learning process, RVPSA staff distributed a profile Mr. Gallagher uses in his workshops so that registrants could complete it in advance. This allowed people time to figure out their dominant personality type—whether they were a “powerful” red, “perfect” blue, “popular” yellow or “peaceful” green—as well as their overall combination. Upon arrival, participants were given colored dots to place on their nametags, identifying their primary and secondary personality types. Practical and often humorous scenarios from real life were used to illustrate each of the personality types, while the group explored ways to leverage their strengths, compensate for their weaknesses, and get the most out of their interactions with other personalities. In the end, Mr. Gallagher's training received rave reviews from those who attended, with one participant saying it was “absolutely one of the best trainings I've been to in some time.”

The Academy's next training, and its last before the summer break, addresses a different, but equally important topic. In a 3-hour workshop, Portland-based attorney Barb Bloom will cover *Lawful Hiring Practices and Supervisory Skills*. Although this class is *already* full, the Academy looks forward to bringing a fresh lineup of high quality, affordable training to the Rogue Valley this fall.