

# KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center

AUTUMN 2021



NAVIGATING

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Robyn Janssen  
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## NOTES FROM THE TRAILHEAD

What. A. Summer.

It began in June with a record-shattering “heat dome” over the Pacific Northwest. Places like Seattle that have only seen three days exceeding 100F in the last century, saw that for several days in just a single week. The Bootleg Fire in Oregon captured national attention in July as it grew to more than 500,000 acres in Klamath and Lake Counties, impacting a wide swath of the Klamath Tribes’ ancestral lands and their homes.

Communities in the Rogue Valley and along the Klamath River were once again greeted with “angry August” where water resources are dwindling due to drought and wildfire smoke inundated us with nearly three weeks of unhealthy and hazardous air quality. Amidst all of that, the hopes of gathering with friends, neighbors, and other community members were dashed as the Delta variant and its resurgence through communities in southern Oregon continue to stifle attempts to heal together as we approach the one-year anniversary of the Almeda and Slater Fires. I know that one day the coronavirus pandemic will subside, but I can’t help but think that drought, heat domes, more extreme weather, and fire behavior is what we have to look forward to each summer.

KS Wild’s mission is to protect and restore wild nature in the Klamath-Siskiyou region of southwest Oregon and northwest California.

We promote science-based land and water conservation through policy and community action.

PO Box 102, Ashland OR 97520 • 541.488.5789

I am not actually looking forward to having hotter and drier summers, but as the season changes to fall, there is one thing I am looking forward to: moving “back in” with my colleagues and partners at KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper.



After 18 months, a time that included a “new normal” of working from home during the pandemic and a major remodel of our building, we are ready to move into our new office-home in Ashland’s Historic District this month!

It’ll take us a couple of months to get settled, and we hope to be hosting friends and small groups for gatherings later this winter. When we have the opportunity to gather, you will see many new faces within our organization, as the team has changed in the past year. We said our goodbyes to a couple of team members, including our long-time Rogue Riverkeeper Robyn Janssen. For the past 9 years, Robyn has been a part of many successful campaigns from suction dredge mining reform to Wild & Scenic River designations and the fight against Jordan Cove LNG. She will be missed, but her legacy will remain as the visionary and project manager behind our new office remodel. Please join me in thanking Robyn for her decade of service to the Rogue and for making our new home so cozy!

As we say goodbye to long-time friends, we are also welcoming new staff to our ranks. If you have been following the campaign to prevent Hellgate Jetboats from dredging the Rogue River, you have already seen our new Rogue Riverkeeper Conservation Director Emily Bowes at work. Emily joined us earlier this summer, having spent the past year analyzing Clean Water Act permits for the Klamath Dam Removal project. Alongside Emily, we welcomed Kelsey Furman, our new Deihl Legal Fellow from Lewis & Clark Law School. Kelsey recently joined the ForestWatch program to contribute her time and energy to defending the Klamath-Siskiyou’s ancient forests, wildlife, and wild rivers. Later this fall, we will be adding two additional team members: a digital communications specialist, along with a new Rogue Riverkeeper program director.

In a future where climate change, drought, and extreme weather are going to force us to adapt, we appreciate your support for KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper as we build a team, and a movement, that advocates for a livable planet for us, and all species.

*Michael Dotson is Executive Director of KS Wild.*

# EARTH & MOTHERHOOD

A COLLECTION OF WILDNESS



*Originally published by Oregon Humanities, September 10, 2021. Reprinted with permission.*

A family in Madagascar eats insects every day for eight months because there is no food or water. Male dragonflies are losing their wing color, the color they use to attract females. Senator Ron Johnson called climate change bullshit. The ocean was on fire in July. The land temperature in Verkhoyansk, Siberia was 118 degrees, usually one of the coldest places in the world. The moon cycle is shifting, says NASA, creating higher tide flooding.

My son and I drive to his teen camp on an oppressive July morning, where he will spend eight hours on an organic vegetable farm among the zinnias and corn and goats, swim in a pond and eat popcorn and pretend to play characters on a rustic stage with a straw bale house as backdrop and youth like limbs and skin and smiles and face paint. They will talk about gender inequity. And growing up. And maybe what their futures hold. It's a tiny universe tucked away from all that is harsh and terrible and as we go, as we drive in our vehicle, this car that destroys the earth, we listen to NPR, and the reporter tells us there won't be a salmon hatch on the Klamath River this summer because of drought, that the Bootleg fire, just over the Cascade Mountains from our little home is only five percent contained, that a Supreme Court case could increase labor trafficking

of farmworkers, that Death Valley posted 130-degree temperatures. Record breaking. I turn down the radio, can't listen anymore, look to him as he scrolls through TikTok, How will you find joy today?

I want to talk about how wildness can enter you, how it will overtake your sensibilities, settle into the body like a whisper or whale song, maybe like a finch with hair and threads in its beak— that the fuel corporations don't know wildness, haven't become lost on the way to a marshy lake or watched a wreck of light impress the rocks on a low evening, a damselfly in their daughter's small hand. Or maybe they have, and instead, they withdraw from these images. As coping. What do they feel when they climb onto their castles and watch as the world burns?

A seasonal flock of ducks is called a raft. Cicadas have transparent wings, sometimes rainbow wings in the light. Fritillary butterflies prefer violets. There are false cedar trees in North America, the leaves of which were first used in perfume. Moss have awns, like tails, that capture water, like little ecosystems, miniature groves as such. The Greenland shark lives to be between 300 and 500 years old. Sunflowers move from east to west as the day progresses. Giraffes are likely to be gay.

My daughter, ten, tells me she's bisexual, will become an environmentalist, maybe have a dog, adopt a child. She asks me if I know about the extinction of turtles. About plastic straws and hi-top sneakers. She loves makeup and haunted stories. We roller skate through the singed trees left over from the Alameda Fire, cottonwood and maple, Bear Creek streaming in the morning with fish I don't know, and the orchard across the way beginning to bulge with pears. There is regeneration in this dying world, and swallowtails.

Ava asks me if I know what a pluviophile is. She wants to test me.

Someone who finds comfort in the rain, she replies. That's me.

I take her to the wilderness to show her what's left, to teach her about being quiet, about swimming in wild lakes. The smoke from the Oregon fire, or maybe California, appears, drapes into the subalpine bowl we sit in. It's okay, but this is how we live now. With smoke and fire. She asks me questions like: What's my least favorite color? What is my favorite food? What do I love the most?

I tell her, This. This place and you.

Be modest in your time, says Rilke.

So I do.

*Melissa Matthewson is the author of a memoir-in-essays, Tracing the Desire Line (Split/Lip Press, 2019), a finalist for the 2021 Oregon Book Award. Her work has appeared, or is forthcoming, in Guernica, Longreads, Literary Hub, The Common, DIAGRAM, and American Literary Review, among other publications. She teaches in the MFA Creative Writing program at Eastern Oregon University and in the Communication program at Southern Oregon University. She lives in Ashland, Oregon, with her two children. Find her on Twitter @melmatthewson or at melissmatthewson.com.*

# BLM PLANS TARGET FORESTS NEAR EAGLE POINT

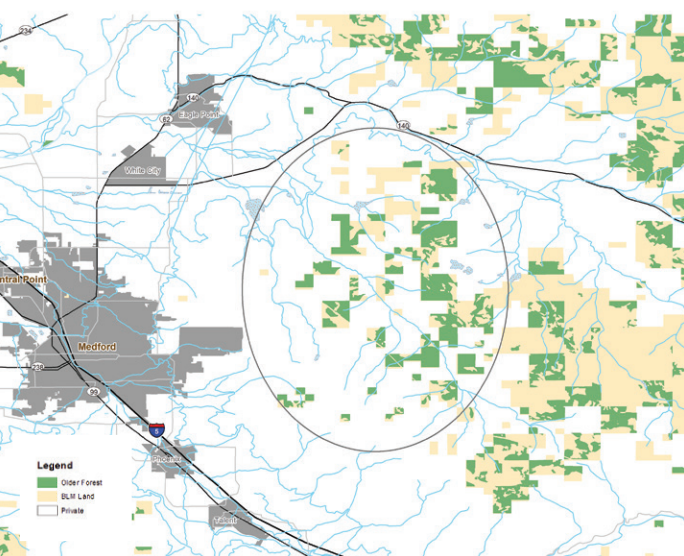
Medford BLM planners know that “regenerating” old-growth forests and replacing them with dense young timber stands increases fire hazard and fire behavior for decades. Yet they do it anyway; and in the case of the proposed Lost Antelope timber sale the BLM is targeting old-growth for removal in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) east of Medford Oregon where federal forest lands mingle with private property.

Elsewhere throughout the Klamath Siskiyou, communities, stakeholders, and thoughtful land managers have been coming together to thin existing timber plantations, protect old fire-resilient trees, utilize prescribed fire to reduce fuels, and create more firewise communities. But not the BLM. Unfortunately the Medford District BLM still prioritizes timber volume over collaboration and restoration.

Why does the BLM continue to propose “regeneration” timber practices that they know will increase fire hazard and undermine collaborative firesafe programs? The answer is that in 2016 the BLM withdrew from the Northwest Forest Plan and wrote a new management plan designed to increase timber production from public lands in southern Oregon. In that management plan the BLM created a land use allocation called the “harvest land base” in which BLM planners claim that they are required to implement industrial logging practices regardless of the impacts to fire hazard, recreation, water quality or wildlife habitat.

The Lost Antelope timber sale continues the counterproductive trend of the BLM putting timber production ahead of all other public lands values. We intend to challenge the BLM’s “regeneration” logging plans. With your help KS Wild is committed to ensuring that community safety, fire behavior, wildlife values, recreational opportunities, and watershed health all have a seat at the table and are considered in public lands forest management.

*George Sexton is the Conservation Director of KS Wild.*



"...in 2016...the BLM created a land use allocation called the “harvest land base” in which BLM planners claim that they are required to implement industrial logging practices regardless of the impacts to fire hazard, recreation, water quality or wildlife habitat."



Ryan Hagerly, USFWS

# ROGUE RIVER FALL CHINOOK

## A WILD SALMON SUCCESS STORY

In late August, a tremendous run of many thousands of naturally produced (wild) Chinook salmon begin making the arduous 100-mile journey up the Rogue River to natal spawning grounds in the upper river near Grants Pass, the Applegate River, Illinois River and Bear Creek as they have for millennia.

Despite record high temperatures and low flows this summer, so far the fall Chinook are being successful in their spawning migration. How is it that these salmon are succeeding when many other runs are faltering?

One reason is that this upriver run is 100% naturally produced with no artificial hatchery fish production. Each year natural selection ensures that the most fit salmon make the one time round-trip journey.

The Rogue fall run sustains a substantial harvest while fishing is being curtailed or even eliminated on other runs. The dependable fall run provides huge economic benefits to commercial ocean anglers and recreational anglers that flock to Gold Beach each year. Hundreds of boats can be seen trolling for fall Chinook during August and September in the Rogue River estuary. With ocean troll-caught Chinook going for 28 dollars a pound at Gold Beach fish markets, the economic value of these fish is easy to demonstrate.

Due to natural selection these salmon have maintained life history diversity that includes late-maturing salmon of 20-30 pounds that are regularly caught. By the fall, there are many opportunities to view these salmon on their spawning grounds in Bear Creek, the Applegate and Illinois Rivers where fishing is not allowed to ensure successful spawning (see our Events section to sign up for Salmon Walks).

Actually, wild Chinook salmon do not need much to flourish: unimpeded migration routes with adequate flows, abundant spawning gravel, and clean water. Is that asking too much?

*Rich Nawa is an avid angler, and a salmon and stream expert.  
He serves as Staff Ecologist for KS Wild.*



Darren Campbell

# ROLLIN' ON THE RIVER

*Dear Friends,*

As many of you know, I have departed from KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper. After 9 years advocating for the river I love and call home, it's simply time for me to do something new and allow for new energy to do great things for the Rogue. I want to thank you for all your support over the years and encourage you to continue to support this amazing program and mission.

Saying goodbye has not been an easy decision. I have dedicated the last decade of my life to Rogue Riverkeeper's mission and vision. Before my time with Rogue Riverkeeper and as a professional guide on the Rogue, I knew it was not enough to just work on the river. I had to work to protect it as well.

From helping stop suction dredge mining to building Rogue Riverkeeper's membership to helping pass legislation to add more Wild & Scenic tributaries to the Rogue, I have learned so much and grown as an advocate for this river that I love.





We have accomplished so much together! Thanks to you, we've achieved a lot for clean water and the Rogue. Your time, energy, donations, and passion have been instrumental in helping make a difference for the Rogue. Here are just a few of the things we've done together for clean water, native fish and healthy communities over the last nine years:

- Passed legislation to prohibit suction dredge mining in essential salmon habitat in the Rogue and 24,000 miles of waterways across the state!
- Built Rogue Riverkeeper's base of support to 1,000 members and over 4,500 online supporters!
- Passed legislation to protect 140 miles of Rogue tributaries as Wild & Scenic!
- Established annual Rogue Riverkeeper events like the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, Winter Speaker Series and Salmon Strolls!
- Protected 320 miles of streams with stronger stream buffer rules for private forest lands in the Siskiyou Region!
- Celebrated 10 years of Rogue Riverkeeper!
- Conducted 9 years of water quality testing to let you know where it is safe to swim!
- Held one of the largest rallies at the state capitol to oppose the Jordan Cove LNG export project!
- And stopped the Jordan Cove LNG export project every step of the way!

The Rogue will need your voice. Rogue Riverkeeper is in good hands with our amazing new Conservation Director Emily Bowes, support from KS Wild staff, and a new Program Director coming on this fall. I am confident that the team will do amazing things for clean water and our communities, and as always, your support will be crucial.

As climate change continues to threaten the Rogue Basin, drought will have impacts on our waterways like we've never seen. This summer, we challenged a proposal by Hellgate Jetboat Excursions to dredge 9 sites on the Rogue due to low water conditions. We partnered with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to monitor fish passage and barriers in a nearly dry Bear Creek. And our Water Quality Monitoring program tracked high bacteria levels in low water streams so you knew where it was safe to recreate. Rogue Riverkeeper will be working closely with partners across the watershed and state over the next several years to identify solutions to these climate driven challenges. I hope you will be there to support them.

It has been an honor to work with this program and to serve as your Rogue Riverkeeper. Our lives are made up of multiple chapters and it is simply time for me to turn the page. I will not be far and I will always do all that I can for the river and its communities.

*For the Rogue...always and forever,  
Robyn*

*P.S. I also want to thank my KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper family for their insane passion, knowledge, dedication, hard work and incredible support over the years. Thank you to: Joseph, Alexi, Holly, Michael, Emily, Brandy, Jessica, Allee, Rich, George, Lesley, Forrest, Sara, Stacey, Gary, Morgan, Tim, Tracy, Shannon, Laurel, Jeff, Manny, Jesse, Amy, Katie, Joe, SJ, Shelley, Bob, Laurel, Stu and countless others who've been there along the way.*

# BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH FIRE

As we enter into fall and cooler temperatures set in, the change in seasons offers us a different way to interact with our landscape. In the Klamath-Siskiyou, this time of year brings an end to the wildfire season. The fall and winter also offer us the opportunity to get more prescribed fire back on the landscape. With more moisture in the air and cooler temperatures, the conditions for intentionally burning the landscape are safer and fire is easier to control.



Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association

Living in the Klamath-Siskiyou means living in a fire-adapted environment. The forest ecosystems around us need fire to survive.

Participants learned how to use a drip torch to safely apply fire.

One of the best ways to restore our landscapes and build resiliency is to use more fire. This is not new—Indigenous people in our region and around the world have used fire as a tool for millennia. By applying fire back on the landscape we can protect our homes and communities by reducing dangerous fuel build up. Fortunately, engaged and inspired local residents are doing all they can to prepare the area for wildfire. Many have moved from making their own property fire resilient to working on wildfire issues at the community and regional levels.

## ROGUE VALLEY PRESCRIBED BURN ASSOCIATION

In the spring, KS Wild staff participated in a community prescribed burn located in the Applegate Valley in southern Oregon. This community burn was initiated because of the growing desire for the area to develop a Prescribed Burn Association (PBA). A PBA is a group of local landowners and other concerned citizens that form a partnership to conduct prescribed burns. PBAs have successfully increased prescribed fire use by landowners and land managers, mainly by making it easier and safer to use prescribed fire. This is a 'neighbors helping neighbors' model making this work more affordable by people volunteering their time, skills, and equipment.

There is a lot that goes into planning a prescribed burn. You need to assess your property to understand how fire is going to behave on the landscape and your plan needs to involve fire professionals. Leaders of the burn develop a plan, which includes a qualified 'Burn Boss' who conducts the operation. There are typically multiple fire engines, wildland firefighters, and forest restoration experts on site. Keeping the project small enables the community to get a feel for how a burn is conducted while leaving plenty of time to answer questions and discuss the process. Community members learn how to use a drip torch, maintain a small burn, and create small fuel breaks.

Participating in a prescribed burn like this allows people to have a better understanding of prescribed burning, and experience working together as a community to accomplish good work on the land. The Rogue Valley PBA is the first one in Oregon, but they are a common model throughout the Midwest and Southeast where they have been operating successfully for decades.

Recent wildfires have left people feeling scared with entire communities destroyed, loved ones lost, and trauma setting in. Even the smoke from prescribed fires can be triggering for survivors of wildfire—bringing back feelings of fear and panic. Yet, if we're going to protect our communities in the long-run, we need to change how we relate to fire. Part of building a relationship with fire means doing something more than fighting an all out war on fire—we will lose too many of those battles. We also need to become comfortable using fire. As a community, we need to embrace prescribed burns as tools for forest health and resiliency and for protecting our homes.

*Alexi Lovechio is National Forest Organizer and podcast co-host of One Foot in the Black.*



Alexi Lovechio

Community members and professional firefighters shared tools and resources on how to conduct a prescribed burn.

## RESOURCES

For more information on the Rogue Valley PBA and to learn how to get involved, email Aaron Krikava: [aaronkrikava@yahoo.com](mailto:aaronkrikava@yahoo.com).

KS Wild's **Forest & Fire Toolkit** lists funding opportunities to help prepare your property for wildfire through hazardous fuel removal, defensible space, and prescribed fire. Visit our website to learn more: [www.kswild.org](http://www.kswild.org)



# WE HAVE A NEW OFFICE!

But first, a bit of background. If you have been a member or supporter of KS Wild for some time, you likely knew Gary Powell. Gary joined the staff at KS Wild in 2005 as a canvasser and was with the organization for over 13 years.

For over a decade, Gary enthusiastically knocked on doors in Ashland, Talent and Mt. Shasta to talk to folks about the importance of our surrounding public lands and rivers, and to invite them to join in KS Wild's efforts to protect and restore wild nature in this extraordinary corner of the planet. Gary not only helped build and strengthen our grass-roots support base, he also demonstrated by example what it means to commit oneself to a larger cause and make a big difference one day, one step, and one knock at a time.

Whichever way you knew him, he was hard to forget. And in true Gary fashion, he has left a permanent imprint in the community and Railroad District neighborhood of Ashland.

After a short battle with cancer, Gary passed on in 2019, followed shortly thereafter by his husband, Geronimo Diaz. As a legacy and lasting gift, Gary left his home to KS Wild.

Rogue Riverkeeper Robyn Janssen and volunteer Gordon Longhurst designed the remodel to work within the existing home's floor plan to preserve the 1920's character while also creating more functional space for offices and staff. Over the past 5 months and thanks to Uber Hammer Construction, the property has been converted from a residential home to a commercially zoned office space to support KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper staff and programs. Big changes include backyard parking, accessible ramps and access, new landscaping, and a fresh exterior paint color.

Our vision for this space is that it not only serves as KS Wild's home office but a welcoming and inclusive space for community members, partner organizations, neighbors and friends. Gary was well known in the community as an ardent advocate for immigrant and LGBTQ rights, the arts and the environment. We will continue that advocacy by hosting small events and gatherings to bring people together to educate, collaborate and celebrate with one another.

We are thrilled about our new home and eternally grateful to Gary and Geronimo for their generosity, dedication and love for KS Wild. We can't wait to open the doors and welcome you in.

***A huge thank you to Gordon Longhurst and contractor Chris Wren with Uber Hammer for their vision, hard work and generosity with this project.***

# LOCAL BUSINESSES KEEP THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU WILD!

Local businesses help KS Wild thrive through financial support, community partnerships, and in-kind gifts during our annual fundraising events. KS Wild understands how the special challenges of a global pandemic and devastating fires in and around our communities have added special challenges to our local business community. **This year, KS Wild made the hard decision to not host our annual dinner**, which is normally a time when we honor the local business owners who support our work. Thank you to all the businesses that have supported that event in the past with financial and in-kind gifts.

**We would like to extend a very special thank you to these local businesses for their financial support this year.**

**Adam Richards-Attorney at Law • Arta River Trips • Anthology Wood •  
The Ashland Fly Shop • Be Cherished • Crystal Clear Satellite •  
Dan the Backhoe Man • Diggin' Livin' Farm and Apiary •  
The Downey Co. Home Builders • Full Circle Real Estate • Gervais Inc •  
Herb Pharm • KSW Architects • Mallory Sanford Construction •  
Oregon Caves Chevron • Oregon Solar Works • Patagonia • Plant Oregon  
• Redwood Nursery • ROW Adventures • Seven Seeds Farm •  
Southern Oregon Mediation Center • Sunday Afternoons •  
Wild Rose Herbs - Mountain Rose Herbs**

KS Wild business supporters understand the values intrinsic to the natural areas in our region. Promoting stewardship of public lands that reduces fire risk, while increasing protections for wild places, wild rivers, and wildlife is good for tourism and great for the local economy. To learn more about supporting KS Wild, email [brandy@kswild.org](mailto:brandy@kswild.org).



# WELCOME TO THE KS ...AND THANK YOU!

## WELCOME KELSEY FURMAN

Kelsey Furman joins the ForestWatch team as our new Deihl Legal Fellow from Lewis & Clark Law School. She will be supporting our Conservation Director George Sexton on timber sale analysis, legal reviews, and court challenges against the BLM, US Forest Service, and US Fish & Wildlife Service. At law school, Kelsey was the editor of the school's student law journal, and we are excited to welcome her not only to KS Wild, but also to southern Oregon.



## THANK YOU, PABLO SAN EMETERIO

Hats off to Juan Pablo San Emeterio, third year law student at Lewis and Clark College, for his fantastic work for KS Wild as our 2021 summer law clerk. Writing legal briefs from scratch while working remotely is extremely challenging, but Pablo made it look easy. Pablo's hard work and good cheer will be missed, but he isn't going far — having landed a Fall externship with our friends at Cascadia Wildlands, Pablo will still be advocating for the forests and watersheds of the region.



Join KS Wild and American River Touring Association (ARTA) for 5 days along the Rogue Trail with raft support and delicious meals.

For more information:  
[www.kswild.org/events](http://www.kswild.org/events)

ROGUE RIVER TRAIL  
RAFT-SUPPORTED HIKE

MAY 2022



# SALMON WALKS ARE BACK!

Every autumn Chinook salmon swim back up the Rogue River to their birthplaces in local rivers and streams. On these annual hikes, we look for salmon in local waterways that flow through our cities and towns and learn about where salmon live, their behavior, and ways we can help them on their journey home. These educational walks are free and great for people of all ages.



## BEAR CREEK STROLL @ LYNN NEWBRY PARK IN TALENT

Sunday, October 10 10am-Noon

Friday, October 15, 10am-Noon

## RAINIE FALLS HIKE

Friday, October 22, 9am-4pm

## APPLEGATE RIVER STROLL

Saturday, October 30 10am-Noon

Once you sign-up online you will receive details including meeting locations and what to bring. [kswild.org/events](https://kswild.org/events)

*ONLINE:*

## SOUTHWEST OREGON WILD RIVERS TOUR

**Tuesday, October 26, 6pm**

Southwest Oregon has a stunning collection of extraordinary wild rivers and salmon streams. Join us with experienced river runners Tim Palmer and Zach Collier for this special tour of wild waters, including renowned rivers but also lesser-known tributary creeks and canyons that are just as remarkable. Learn more about current efforts to better protect these amazing places—through the River Democracy Act, the Southwest Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protect Act, and the Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act—and how you can help. Sponsored together with our local partners at the Kalmiopsis Audubon and the Native Fish Society. To register, sign up at: [kswild.org/events](https://kswild.org/events)



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Cover: Squaw(k) Lake during the initial attack of the Maple Dell fire in July.  
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. Photo by Lesley Adams.