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Cover photo: A Pacific fisher in snow. Photo courtesy of Troy Lilly and Forest Wander Photography.

*Refuge  
for Wild  
Nature*



# KS WILD NEWS

The Journal of the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center  
Winter 2015

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# UPCOMING HIKES

## Saturday, December 20: Fungi With A “Fun-Guy” Hike

Enjoy a 2-3 mile casual stroll through the woods in search of mushrooms to explore the science of fungi and learn basic identification. This hike is not intended to identify or harvest edible mushrooms. Carpool leaves the Ashland Outdoor Store at 9am.

## Saturday, January 10: Sterling Mine Ditch Trail Hike

Explore 4-5 miles of the stunning oak-covered hills of the Little Applegate. The famous Sterling Mine Ditch Trail offers views of the Siskiyou Crest and the Little Applegate Valley. Carpool meets at the Ashland Outdoor Store at 9am and the Ruch Country Market at 10am.

## Saturday, January 17: Rough & Ready Creek Hike

Beautiful Rough and Ready Creek in the Illinois Valley is home to some of the most diverse plant life in the region. Learn about KS Wild's Adopt-a-Botanical Area program. Carpool meets at the Ashland Nature Shop at 9am and the Grants Pass Rite-Aid (1642 Hwy 238) near the Goodwill trailer at 9:30am.

## Sunday, February 8: Mount Ashland Snowshoe Hike

Enjoy beautiful views and alpine landscapes on this moderate but flat 6-mile snowshoe hike from the back parking lot at Mount Ashland to Grouse Gap. Snowshoes and poles are available for rent from the Ashland Outdoor Store. Carpool meets at the Shop N' Kart parking lot at 9am.

For all hikes: Bring plenty of water, comfortable walking shoes, warm layers, and a lunch. Call Morgan at (541) 488-5789 or visit [www.kswild.org/hikes](http://www.kswild.org/hikes) for more information, directions, and to RSVP.

## KS WILD'S MISSION

*The Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center is an advocate for the forests, wildlife and waters of the Klamath and Rogue River Basins of southwest Oregon and northwest California. We use environmental law, science, collaboration, education and grassroots organizing to defend healthy ecosystems and help build sustainable communities.*

# NEWS AROUND THE KS

Covering nearly 11 million acres, the Klamath-Siskiyou region stretches from the Umpqua in the north to California's wine country in the south, from the Pacific Ocean to the mighty Cascades. The mountain ranges and river valleys that define this region harbor renowned biological diversity and are some of the most spectacular in America.

## 1) GAS EXPORT INPUT NEEDED

Visit [rogueriverkeeper.org](http://rogueriverkeeper.org) to learn the latest update and help prevent the construction of the Jordan Cove liquified natural gas export terminal and pipeline.

## 2) KALMIOPSIS RIVERS AT RISK

Mining companies want to develop industrial nickel strip mines in the headwaters of the Smith and Illinois Rivers.

## 3) RESTORATION VS EXPLOITATION

Common-sense reforms on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest are threatened by clearcut logging. See Page 6.

## 4) FOREST & FIRE

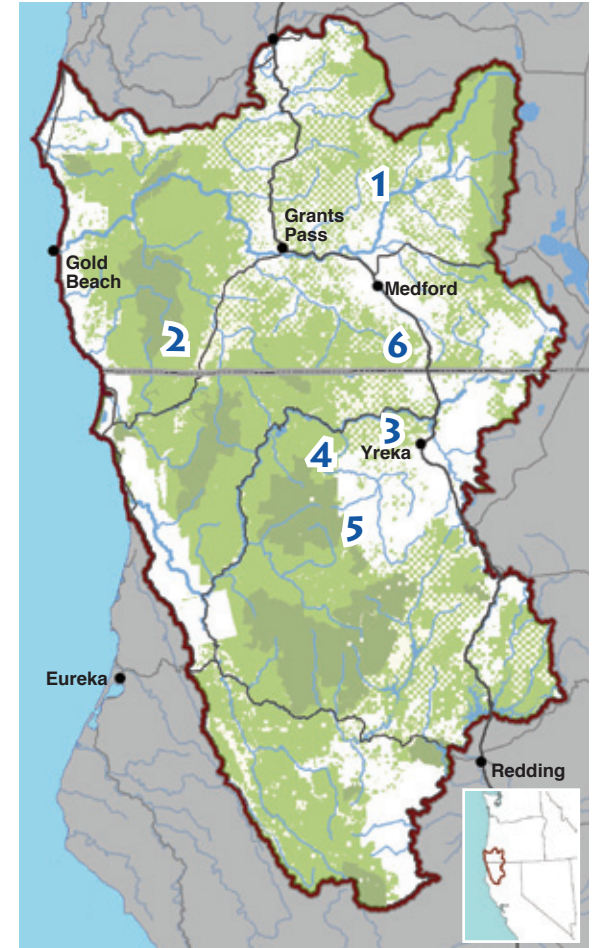
The summer of 2014 brought several major wildland fires. After fire, forests naturally create important habitat for insects, birds, and mammals. Yet, agencies continue to aggressively push harmful post-fire logging. See page 5.

## 5) ETNA SUMMIT FEATURED HIKE

This magical spot in the High Siskiyou Wilderness is blanketed by thousands of acres of old-growth forests while boasting soaring peaks, alpine meadows, and pristine watersheds. See page 12.

## 6) BOTANICAL SPOTLIGHT: DUTCHMAN PEAK

Adopt-a-Botanical Area volunteers Doug and Tabitha Viner lead an expedition to explore a scenic botanical area and learn about the region. See page 11.



Joseph Vaile

# INTO THE REFUGE OF THE KLAMATH-SISKIYOU

Refuge. What does it mean to you? A safe place? A shelter for plants and animals? A place to refresh our souls? To me it's all of the above.

Recently, I was reminded of how lucky I am to live in and work for the Klamath-Siskiyou region, a true refuge for wild nature. On an early fall morning, I took my 3-year-old for a walk on the banks of the Wild and Scenic designated section of the Rogue River. Just as it's a sight to see rafters tumble down the Class IV rapids of Rainie Falls, people also flock there in search of jumping salmon, usually abundant this time of year in that very spot. We weren't the only ones looking for fish: about a mile down the trail we saw an osprey dive-bomb into the river to catch its prey.



M. Crouch

**ROGUE RIVER THUNDERS OVER RAINIE FALLS:** Families gather to watch kayakers brave the falls in the summer, and return in the fall to catch impressive runs of salmon returning upstream.

Here at KS Wild, we work to ensure places like the Wild Rogue are kept intact. We work to protect and restore the forests, the rivers and the wildlife throughout the Klamath Siskiyou. Our goal is to build a more sustainable relationship with the magnificent natural world around us.

The following is a recap of some of our work in 2014 to save this refuge.

## A REFUGE FOR WILD CRITTERS

KS Wild has been working to protect species like the recovering gray wolf, owls that depend on old-growth forests, and rare salamanders that live nowhere else in the world but the Klamath-Siskiyou. Through outreach, community support, and engaging in land management decisions, we have secured protection for many of the older forests in the region where these species live.

Since 2001, KS Wild has been fighting for the protection of the Pacific fisher, a mammal that once ranged throughout the West Coast but is now reduced to two small populations, one in the Sierra Nevada and one in the Klamath-Siskiyou. This year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is expected to list the species as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, partially due to many fishers being poisoned by the use of chemical pesticides found at illegal marijuana grow sites.

## A REFUGE FOR WILD RIVERS

The rivers of the Klamath-Siskiyou are known across the globe for their purity, their wildness, and their beauty. And there are so darn many of them! The Smith, Rogue, Klamath, Trinity, Illinois, Chetco and more. The list goes on. The sheer density of wild rivers is unmatched.

That is why KS Wild has been working overtime on a campaign to keep large-scale industrial nickel mining from forever harming one of the most magical places in the region—the North Fork of the Smith River. The Red Flat Nickel Corp. is also attempting to mine on Hunter Creek and the headwaters of the Pistol River near the Oregon Coast. While the fight is not over, after receiving thousands of comments, in late summer this year the Oregon Water Resources Department denied a water rights application for their planned drilling. This is an important first step on the path to long-term protection for this incredible river.

## A REFUGE FOR PEOPLE

KS Wild has been working tirelessly to protect special places in the Klamath-Siskiyou mountains. In the last year KS Wild advanced national legislative protections for the Oregon Caves National Monument and many special places on Bureau of Land Management lands in southern Oregon, including the Wild Rogue River, the Illinois Salmon and Botanical Area and an expansion of the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument. Not many places like this region still exist.

More and more, people are realizing how important it is to be nourished by their connections and experiences in these wild places through hiking, rafting, fishing, and sight-seeing. Our work to protect these special places will ensure that future generations have the same opportunities to experience this wild country that we enjoy. This region is a refuge for the soul.

As my son and I stood and watched the osprey dive on that fall day, all I could think about is how marvelous it is that we were able to see that sight. In the Klamath-Siskiyou, wildlife are still able to flourish. Despite all the environmental losses throughout the world, the Klamath-Siskiyou is a place where wild critters live along wild rivers surrounded by wild landscapes, and perhaps a few people here and there witnessing the magic of it all.

- a note from KS Wild's Executive Director, Joseph Vaile



Daniel Wakefield Pasley, Yonder Journal

**BALDFACE CREEK:** This pristine tributary to the North Fork Smith River offers clear cold water to fish, and unparalleled adventure opportunities to explorers. Badface Creek is threatened by industrial nickel mining proposals. Join the campaign to protect this incredible place once and for all.

# FORESTS & FIRE

The forests of the Klamath-Siskiyou have evolved over millennia to accommodate and recover from wildfire. Species such as Knobcone pine reproduce only when fire in excess of 350 degrees opens the hard resin cones and allows for germination. Meadows throughout the region depend on wildfire to reduce conifer encroachment and provide rare plants with their place in the sun.



George Sexton

**FIRE-ADAPTED FORESTS:** Natural forest recovery after wildfire is quick and beautiful. Scientists agree, allowing nature to recover naturally after fire is best.

Fire has always been the driving force behind the unique biodiversity and beauty of our wildlands. While the words “forest fire” dominate headlines and evoke emotional reactions, we need to start thinking about how to live with and maintain the “fire forests” that surround our homes and communities.

## SIGNS OF PROGRESS

In many areas we are starting to accept and address the challenges that come with living near “fire forests”. People are coming together to develop community wildfire protection plans, home owners are creating defensible space to protect their property, and the Forest Service and BLM are starting to attempt to reverse the increase in fire hazard associated with fire suppression and past clearcutting.

## SALVAGE LOGGING: RETURN TO THE BAD OLD DAYS

Unfortunately, in many instances recovering post-fire forests are still subject to clearcutting and then replanted with dense fiber plantations that increase, rather than decrease, fire hazard. The lure of quick profit has so far largely drowned out the scientific consensus that salvage logging harms conifer recovery, destroys sensitive soils, and harms watersheds when they are at their most vulnerable. When asking the Forest Service to re-think its aggressive salvage clearcutting proposal for the Biscuit Fire Forester Dr. Jerry Franklin, author of the Northwest Forest Plan wrote that:

*“Salvage logging of large snags and down boles does not contribute to recovery of late-successional forest habitat; in fact, the only activity more antithetical to the recovery process would be removal of surviving green trees from burned sites. Large snags and logs of decay resistant species, such as Douglas-fir and cedars, are critical as early and late successional wildlife habitat as well as for sustaining key ecological processes associated with nutrient, hydrologic, and energy cycles.”*

It’s time that we heed what the science is telling us and focus our efforts on thinning dense second-growth stands and protecting homes and structures while allowing wildfire to play its natural role in the backcountry.

# RESTORATION VERSUS EXPLOITATION

Here in the Klamath-Siskiyou we are fortunate to have more intact wild forests and unspoiled creeks and rivers than most places in the country. The habitat provided by these native forests and clean streams is the backbone for biodiversity and vitality as we enter an era of increasing climate change. We are uniquely positioned in both time and geography to make a real difference in retaining healthy fish and wildlife populations into the future.



George Sexton

**CLEARCUT OR RESTORATION?:** The Shasta-Trinity National Forest calls this clearcut of old-growth Ponderosa Pine a “restoration” project.

## THE LANGUAGE OF DENIAL

The desire to protect the diversity and abundance of life on Earth is so universal that even those who are directly harming our shared public forests and rivers tend to describe their actions in earth-friendly terms. The BLM calls clearcutting “regeneration harvesting” while the Forest Service describes aggressive logging of sensitive post-fire landscapes as “fire recovery.” Similarly, when miners use suction dredges to suck up streambeds they often describe the mining as “habitat restoration” and some public lands cowboys talk about the grazing of high elevation meadows as “fuels reduction.”

Almost no one involved in resource extraction on public lands thinks or speaks of their activity as damaging forests and watersheds that belong to all of us in order to make money for a select few. The increasing loss of wildlife and water quality is always due to that elusive “other guy.”

## LEARNING AND ENGAGING

Collaboration is becoming an increasingly important part of protecting healthy wildlands and watersheds and restoring public lands that have been abused. Collaboration shouldn’t mean slapping a few sideboards onto timber sales and mining proposals to reduce some of the damage. Instead, collaboration can provide an opportunity to define what we want our public lands and waters to provide in the future. How do we retain the unique biodiversity, water quality, and recreational values that we were bequeathed by past generations? How do we resolve economic and ecological tug of wars?

One way to tackle these questions is to become familiar with the language and the actions of the land management agencies and industries that rely on public lands for private profit. By supporting KS Wild, you provide a real voice for restoration and allow us challenge private exploitation for short-term gain.

# SAVING COHO SALMON

Salmon define the Pacific Northwest. These fish hatch in streams throughout our region, travel to the ocean where they grow to adulthood, and then find their way back to their original home waters to spawn. It's a truly amazing journey.

The salmon species that once flooded our rivers have dropped off significantly throughout recent decades due to alterations in stream habitat, the introduction of pollution, and the installation of dams that block salmon migration patterns. In particular, coho salmon of southern Oregon and northern California have suffered a drastic reduction in their population, and the species is now listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Perfectly timed with the salmon migration swimming upstream this fall, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries office released the Final Recovery Plan for the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Evolutionarily Significant Unit of Coho Salmon, an extensive roadmap to recovery for the species throughout its range. The report contains significant input from state fisheries managers at Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, bringing specific local expertise into the larger plan.

The Recovery Plan identifies specific recovery actions for each watershed within the coho salmon's range that are critical to ensure that we continue to have coho return to our local streams every fall to spawn. In fact, the range of coho salmon extends from the Elk River in the north to the Mattole River in the south, and almost perfectly overlaps with the area where KS Wild works in the Klamath-Siskiyou region.

Most strikingly, the recovery plan serves to highlight the importance of work being done by KS Wild, Rogue Riverkeeper and our allies to protect this fish from further decline. Many of the plan's recommendations include actions that KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper work on every day. The plan also provides more information on which actions are most important to restore coho salmon populations for future generations.



National Park Service

**SALMON NATION:** Scientists agree that protecting forests and rivers is the fastest way to recover our region's iconic coho salmon.

In the Coho Salmon Recovery Plan, federal biologists highlight the need to:

- **Improve timber harvest practices** to increase riparian conifer vegetation that provide important shade that keeps water cool and later large wood habitat, in particular by revising Oregon Forest Practices Act.
- **Remove dams**, especially the Copco 1, Copco 2, Iron Gate and JC Boyle dams that block fish passage on the Klamath River.
- **Improve agricultural practices** that divert stream flows and put warm, dirty water back into our streams.
- **Improve suction dredging practices** to prevent damage to important spawning habitat.
- **Reduce pollution and Increase regulatory oversight** of industry, municipalities and agriculture.
- **Increase instream flows and flow timing**, in addition to concerns about pollution it is important that salmon have enough of the most basic ingredient, water!
- **Increase and retain large woody debris, boulders, or other instream structure** that provide important habitat.
- **Re-connect channels** to existing off-channel ponds, wetlands, and side channels that are critical to rearing young fish.
- **Limit erosion from dirt roads that dump tons of sediment into streams** every year, smothering spawning beds.
- **Re-connect and restore estuarine habitat** near the mouths of many rivers.
- **Reduce impacts of gravel and gold mining** on the banks and gravel bars of streams.

This plan has been nearly 10 years in the making and the scientists have clearly identified what we can do to help. Please visit our website and urge the Governors of Oregon and California to direct their state agencies to implement the recovery plan!

## FAREWELL STEVE ROWE

We lost a valuable community member this fall with the passing of Steve Rowe. Steve was the long-time proprietor of the Ashland Outdoor Store and champion for the Rogue River and its iconic salmon and steelhead. Steve was an avid fly fisherman and spent much of his time on the Rogue River fishing and enjoying its beauty. Our thoughts are with Steve's family and close friends. Rogue Riverkeeper is deeply honored to be a beneficiary for donations in Steve's memory. We thank Steve and his family for their support of Rogue Riverkeeper's work for clean water and healthy fish. We will miss Steve and his unbridled passion for the outdoors and the Rogue watershed.



Charles Gehr

### ROGUE RIVERKEEPER MISSION:

*To protect and restore water quality and fish populations in the Rogue Basin and adjacent coastal watersheds through enforcement, advocacy, field work and community action.*

[www.roguekeeper.org](http://www.roguekeeper.org) — (541) 488-9831



# 10TH ANNUAL DINNER FOR THE WILD!

It was a magical night. Over 300 dedicated KS Wild and Rogue Riverkeeper supporters packed the house to celebrate another year of protecting and defending the unique Klamath-Siskiyou region.

**Please support those who support us!** The following businesses and individuals donated generously to our annual event. Event sponsors are in bold.



## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FEATURED SPONSORS

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**Sunday Afternoons, Inc.**

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 Pacific Domes  
 TreeHouse Books  
 Village Shoes



All photos courtesy of Keith Henry.

## EXPLORING OUR BOTANICAL AREAS: DUTCHMAN AND OBSERVATION PEAKS

The intrepid, and extremely well organized Botanical Area Adopters Doug and Tabitha Viner oriented us on a map and explained the potential alternative routes for our day's tour.

September 21st was a little late for wildflowers, so we choose to climb to the most scenic vista. The Dutchman Peak Fire Lookout slowly emerged over the crest as we approached the more than 7,000 foot summit. Built in 1927, this structure is one of the highest altitude lookouts, as well as one of the only remaining continually staffed lookouts in Oregon. The 15 of us drank up the far-reaching view that surrounded us.

The adjacent Observation Peak and Dutchman Peak Botanical Areas are located along the Siskiyou Crest, just 8 miles southwest of Mt. Ashland. They straddle the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and Klamath National Forest with valleys providing views south to Shasta and the Marble Mountains.

Despite the proximity to Ashland, the two areas are not heavily traveled, and it is recommended to either have a car with high clearance or approach from the Applegate. Those who make the journey to these botanical areas in late June and July will be rewarded with a spectacular show of wildflower magnificence. Over 170 plant species can be found in this subalpine area. It is a nexus of botanical influences from the Sierra Nevada, High Cascades, Great Basin, and Siskiyou Mountains. Memories of the landscape's beauty linger still. We can't wait to go back next summer!



Doug Viner

**BOTANICAL WONDERLANDS:** KS Wild's Adopt-a-Botanical Area volunteer program engages over 100 volunteers to oversee and protect more than 120 Botanical Areas throughout the region. Interested in volunteering? Give us a call at (541) 488-5789.



Doug Viner

## FEATURED HIKE: ETNA SUMMIT A PLOWED ROAD TO WINTER ADVENTURE

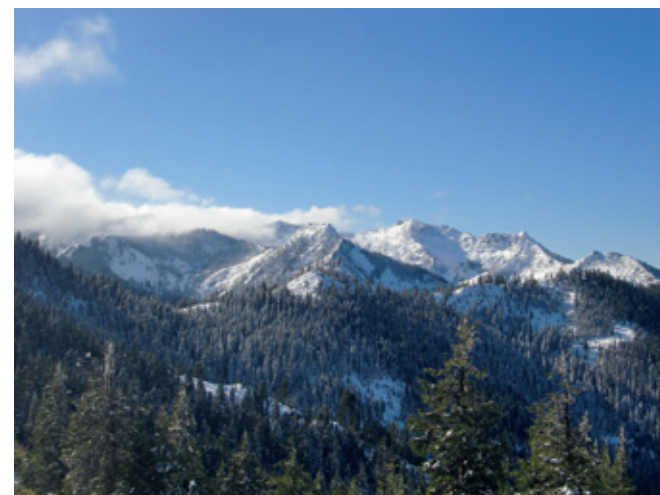
On a crisp clear winter day there is nothing quite like the view from Etna Summit. The Trinity Mountains shine in the distance while the nearby Marble Mountain Wilderness and Russian Wilderness Areas vie for exploration and adventure. The spectacular ridgeline views offer visions of intact wildlands and unspoiled watersheds that are a perfect antidote to short days and cabin fever.

The road to this high elevation pass is plowed and accessible by car year-round and provides a jumping off point to travel either north or south on the Pacific Crest Trail. Perhaps the easiest and most popular winter adventure is to snowshoe or ski the 41N18 road a few easy miles into the Taylor Lake Basin. The dramatic Taylor Lake Cirque is the kind of high elevation wilderness wonderland that usually takes days of hard work to reach, but here can be enjoyed as a vigorous day trip.

Another option for wonderful winter views is to trek north along the PCT from Etna Summit to gain views of the Mill Creek and Big Creek watersheds. Look carefully down the North Russian River to see the mosaic of rejuvenating effects of wildfire in this fire dependent landscape. Unfortunately the Klamath National Forest is pushing a controversial "salvage logging" timber sale aimed at turning some of these wildlands into fiber plantations. See page 5.

Despite the paved plowed road, Etna Summit is a very wild and remote corner of the bioregion. The steep approach can be slippery, the wind can be fierce and the sun can go down in a hurry. So be sure to be safe. Lots of layers, a good map, a buddy and a definite return time are all essentials for adventures in winter wildlands.

**Getting there:** From I-5 take the south Yreka exit and follow Highway 3 to the town of Etna. Hang a right in Etna and follow road 1C01 as it winds up to the summit.



George Sexton

**STUNNING WINTER VIEWS:** The Russian Mountains beckon winter wilderness explorers. Perfect for hiking, snowshoeing, back-country skiing or photography, the trip to Etna Summit is well worth the journey.

# FOCUS ON OUR KS WILD FAMILY

## PACIFIC FISHER (*MARTES PENNANTI*)

The Pacific fisher, *Martes pennanti*, is an ecologically important forest carnivore threatened by extinction. Part of the weasel family, fishers generally roam throughout a home range of 50-150 square miles. Fishers live in mid-elevation old-growth forests of the northern United States and Canada and prey mostly on small and medium-sized mammals but also have been known to eat berries and fungi. Amazingly, they are one of the only predators of porcupines, which they flip over and attack from the underside.



Troy Lilly

The Pacific fisher once ranged from British Columbia, south through Washington, Oregon and northern California, reaching its most southern extent in the Sierra Nevada. Historically trapped for fur, and now threatened by logging and development, their populations have dropped to about 15% of their original size in California, Oregon and Washington. Now fishers are additionally threatened by forest thinning, cars, and rodenticide use on illegal marijuana grow sites.

KS Wild has been fighting for the protection of the Pacific fisher for more than ten years. This year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is expected to list the species as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, partially due to many fishers being poisoned by the use of chemical pesticides found at illegal marijuana grow sites. As the listing process continues, KS Wild will continue to advocate for the Pacific fisher to ensure this special mammal continues to thrive in the wilds of the Klamath-Siskiyou.

## WELCOME JORDAN BECKETT, PUBLIC LANDS ADVOCATE

KS Wild is thrilled to welcome Jordan Beckett as our newest part-time staff member. As Public Lands Advocate, Jordan plays a key role by working on grazing issues, watershed protection and forest management. Jordan maintains a public interest law practice that is focused on western public lands management. Jordan earned a JD from the University of Oregon School of Law and a certificate from their Environmental and Natural Resources Law Program. Jordan also has degrees in English literature and political science from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Prior to joining the staff, Jordan developed an affinity for the wild places in southern Oregon and northern California when he was KS Wild's law clerk in 2010. Welcome Jordan!



George Sexton

The Adventures of Bigfoot!



Episode 5



Robyn Janssen

Happy Winter from the  
Klamath Siskiyou,  
a refuge for wild nature!

## PLEASE SUPPORT THOSE WHO SUPPORT US!

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