

October 2015



Caspar Community News



Center photo: Sienna M Potts; moon photo: Ron LeValley

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fridays, 9:30am
October 2 & 16, November 6 & 20
Caspar Community Board
All Welcome

Sunday October 4
10am - 2 pm
Canning Workshops with Marty

Friday, October 9, 6:30 - 9 pm
Caspar Pub Night
Guest Chef: Dana Levy-Wendt

Wednesdays 12:15-12:45
BOOKMOBILE
October 14 & 28, November 11 & 25

Saturday, October 24 10am-1pm
HEADLANDS WORK DAY

Sunday, October 25, 9 - 11 am
Caspar 4th Sunday Breakfast

Friday, November 13, 6:30 - 9 pm
Caspar Pub Night
Guest Chefs: Kim Badenhop, Michael, Rochelle, & Sienna

Saturday
November 14, 6pm
**Annual Harvest Dinner
& Silent Auction**

Sunday, November 22, 9 - 11 am
Caspar 4th Sunday Breakfast

A complete schedule can be found at our website.

**Sunday October 4
4 pm
Community Meeting
& Potluck**

- 4:00 sharp Greet and meet everyone
- 4:15 Discuss emergency preparedness, escape hwy 20, shelter at CCC, barrel
- 4:30 Upcoming events, pub night discussion
- 4:45 Surprise! Come and hear . . .
- 4:50 Wool Mill Proposal – Sarah Bodnar
- 5:00 Potluck

The Valley Fire showed many of us how vulnerable and unready we are for the stresses that can happen in our peaceable realm – earthquake, forest fire, toxic spill, massive storm, prolonged drought... Since we are not facing any weighty community measures, the Caspar Board thought it would be good to gather together anyway, in the interests of building community.

This will be a short (one hour) meeting, followed by our traditional potluck ...with a twist that you'll have to come to the meeting to discover! See you there...

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also in this issue... **Headlands**
Canning **Gorse, Glyphosate,**
Events **& Greed** (opinion)

More About Upcoming Events

Sunday, October 4, 4-6pm

Caspar Community Meeting & Potluck

We will discuss emergency planning, upcoming events, local investment possibilities and more. We keep the meeting to an hour so we can enjoy the potluck and continued conversation in smaller groups.

Friday, October 9, 2015, 6:30-9:30 pm

Caspar Pub Night

Friendly OPEN MIC for singers and musicians: 3 songs onstage, sound tech on-site. Guest Chef Dana Levy-Wendt. Delicious dinner food, beer and wine are available for sale. FREE -- all ages welcomed. We always need more help than we can get! If you can join our crew, please contact: 964-4997 or caspar@mcn.org

Saturday, October 24, 10am-1pm

Caspar Headlands Work Day

Clean up the Caspar Headlands every 4th Saturday from 10am until 1pm. Meet at the gate at the south end of Caspar Road, beside the old Company Store. Lunch provided.

Sunday, October 25, 2015, 9-11:30 am

Caspar 4th Sunday Breakfast

The menu varies with the season and includes vegan and gluten-free options.

Friday, November 13, 2015, 6:30-9:30 pm

Caspar Pub Night

Caspar Community celebrates five years of Pub Nights with the help of Celebrity Chef Kim Badenhop and a nod to Mendocino's Mushroom Festival on Friday, November 13, 2015 from 6:30 - 9:30 pm at the Caspar Community Center. We will be serving delicious local food, beer and wine for sale. Our friendly Open Mic with on-site sound tech provides local entertainment. Family friendly, no cover charge. We always need more help than we can get! If you can join our crew, please contact: 964-4997 or caspar@mcn.org

That's not all! Check our calendar for other events (English Country Dance on October 3rd, Tannahill Weavers on October 16th, Farm to Table Harvest Moon Feast & Pie Auction on October 25th) & weekly classes (Dance Medicine, Tango):
<http://casparcommons.org/calendar/>

Saturday, November 14, 6pm

Annual Harvest Dinner & Silent Auction

On Saturday, November 14th, at 6 pm we will have our Annual Harvest Dinner and Silent Auction at the Caspar Community Center. This will be a truly gourmet dining experience featuring local foods, prepared by Caspar's finest chefs. Local beer and wine (by the glass or bottle) will be available for sale. The usual dazzling array of silent auction items will be there for you to bid on -- support your community and get your holiday gifts at the same time! Reservations are required and can be made by emailing caspar@mcn.org or calling 964-4997. That's also how to offer your help or donate items for the auction.

Sunday, November 22, 9 - 11 am

Caspar 4th Sunday Breakfast

The menu varies with the season and includes vegan and gluten-free options.

Saturday, November 28, 10a-2p

Caspar Headlands Work Day

Clean up the Caspar Headlands every 4th Saturday from 10am until 2pm. Meet at the gate at the south end of Caspar Road, beside the old Company Store. Lunch provided.

Friday, December 11, 6:30 - 9:30 pm

Caspar Pub Night

Friendly OPEN MIC for singers and musicians: 3 songs onstage, sound tech on-site. Snacks, beer and wine are available for sale. FREE -- all ages welcomed.

**Please note! There is NO
4th Sunday Breakfast
in December.**

Thursday, December 31, 8p-12:30a

New Years Eve Dance Party

Join us at the Caspar Community Center to bring the New Year in with style! Music by Mixed Nuts: "swing, latin, calypso, and craziness." Along with great appetizers and a beer, wine and champagne bar it is bound to be a fun way to celebrate.



Last Canning Class of 2015

Last canning workshop for 2015 will be held Sunday, October 4th at the Caspar Community Center from 10-2. Participants need to bring a good knife, cutting board, apron, and something to share for lunch. All materials and canning jars are provided by Marty. There is a charge of \$20 to cover materials. Everyone is welcomed so there is no registration.

We are going to make a wonderful butternut squash soup (vegan) and a delicious chili which will show how to convert a wonderful recipe to a good canning recipe. At the Farmers Market on Wednesday, there was an abundance of pears, apples, carrots and oranges are just coming into season. Pear-Apple ginger marmalade, two different chutneys with apples and carrots, salsa, two different pickles using all the end of the season vegetables. Old Mill Farm has donated some organic pig fat and you will be able to take home some fabulous lard (which would be greatly appreciated by anyone who makes pastry and is one of the best cooking fats).

If you have any questions please contact Marty Johnson at 961-1066.

—*Marty Johnson*



photo credit: Sienna M Potts



photo credit: Sienna M Potts

Saturday, October 24 10am-1pm HEADLANDS WORK DAY

We continue to gather at 10 am on 4th Saturdays at the trailhead at the south end of Caspar Road, there to resume our monthly assault on the aliens attempting to take over our lovely headlands. In September we had great success uprooting and cutting Heather, one of our more gentle but persistent invasives.

The results of nearly a year of monthly efforts is beginning to show. While the aliens grow every day, it's heartening to see how well a few hours of our time every month are helping to keep trails open and begin to push back the onslaught.

We welcome new weed warriors, and offer a gentle initiation to the art. As always, wear stout shoes, tick-resistant clothes and a hat, bring water and your favorite implement(s) of destruction.

We'll work for three hours, and then someone will feed us lunch. Bring your friends.

Until Saturday, October 24th!

Gorse, Glyphosate, & Greed



photo credit: Caroline Schooley

smart enough not to completely eliminate its only food source. Gorse itself is unbelievably hardy, enthusiastically regenerating itself from seed, branch, or root. Heavy equipment used in abatement efforts must be carefully steam cleaned after use, or seeds and twigs on it will start an infestation wherever the equipment next works (hence the infestation at Caspar Dump.) Cutting Gorse's tops merely encourages stronger root systems on the resurgent plants. Branches, stems, and roots contain 30% or more of flammable oil, and Gorse thrives on fire, shooting its thousands of fire-resistant seeds 30 feet; these seeds have a half life of 30 years, meaning that at the end of three decades, half of the seeds are still

While grubbing out a firmly rooted Gorse plant on our Headlands, I was thinking about some of the more ironic facts of human life. Gorse, *aka* furze and *Ulex europaeus*, would not be here if not for another alien life form, namely: us. Local legend says that a Scots dairy farmer, having achieved some prosperity in Caspar, traveled to the Auld Country and saw the miraculous hedgerows of evergreen thorny bushes with bright yellow flowers even in the dead of winter. On stony Scottish soil, sheep and cattle keep Gorse confined to hedgerows between fields. Our early Casparado clipped some starts, wrapped them in a napkin, tucked them into his luggage, and brought them home to plant in place of those pesky barbed wire fences that were always falling down. What could possibly go wrong?

When his little gorse clippings encountered the richer soil and balmier Caspar climate, they took off. No herd of cattle or sheep had a chance of confining Gorse to the edges of our fertile, clement fields.

Over the years, many methods of controlling gorse have been tried, and most have failed. The biological control often seen here, the Gorse Spider Mite *Tetranychus lintearius*, another European native and **one of Gorse's ten known predators**, is

good to grow.

Gorse is one of Caspar's nightmares. In 1987, a fire started in a Gorse patch on the north side of town. Because the roots are as oily as the stems, Gorse burns underground. The fire was stopped before it took houses ... that time.

[\(Read Jerry Juhl's Fire in the Gorse here\)](#)

With ongoing drought and the Valley Fire on everyone's mind, Gorse abatement resurfaces as one of Caspar's hottest topics. In 1999, the Caspar Community identified Gorse and Eucalyptus as two of our most dangerous neighbors. Since then, much of the Eucalyptus has been removed, and many of the worst Gorse patches have been attacked, with some success.

The fact remains that one Gorse bush is too many. While newcomers admire its cheery yellow blossoms during the darkest days of February, we know that its forbidding spikes and stubborn persistence are best confined to its native Western Europe. **The Mendocino Fire Safe Council**, whose mission is "to help the citizens of Mendocino County survive and thrive in a fire-prone environment" has a Caspar contingent who help property owners get funding to attack their Gorse infestations.

continued next page...

Gorse, Glyphosate, & Greed continues

The abatement conundrum with a plant as stubborn as Gorse is that once planted, it takes almost super-human persistence to wipe it out. Chop its top, and it comes back with strengthened roots. Introduce Spider Mites, and up to half the Gorse crop will be set back a year or two at most. Mow it for a few years, and your reward is a "lawn" of ground-hugging Gorse. Burn it, and it spews seeds that resprout in a year. Uproot it, and inevitably it regrows from little bits of root that break off and remain in the soil. Stuart Tregoning and Ralph Eagle developed a technique involving mowing, ripping the soil up to expose the roots, and then following up annually without fail by pulling up the shallow rooted sprouts ...but skip a year, and you get to start all over again. State Parks has invested a great deal of money in first-year abatement, but without perpetual follow-up, the Gorse regrows. Caspar Community has had the greatest success of any (although the maintenance effort continues) on our Headlands, where uprooting and stacking the plants with the roots exposed has decreased the Gorse coverage by half.

What's wanted, of course, is a silver bullet, something as simple and sure to end gorse as thrusting a gorse clipping into the ground is sure to start an infestation. The good news and bad news rolled up in one is that such a silver bullet exists ...and so far, Casparados choose not to use it: Cut the gorse stem at ground level and immediately, carefully, paint it with the herbicide glyphosate, and that Gorse plant is done. A crew with good loppers, a chain saw, a pint of chemical, and a carefully wielded paint brush can finish off an acre of Gorse in a day. True, all the cuttings need to be dealt with, and the existing seed stock will be viable for a few decades; annual grubbing up of the sprouts will be absolutely required. But most of the heavy work will be done once ... and the followup can be carried on by livestock as picky as horses, who appear to love the tender little Gorse seedlings.

Here's where the tale gets really twisted and interesting. You may know glyphosate by its proprietary name, RoundUp, and disparage it because of its corporate parent, Monsanto. Gorse and Monsanto have a lot in common.



Their goal is to dominate as much territory as possible. Greedy and utterly devoid of human ethical considerations, they are willing, nay, eager, to use underhanded means to achieve their goals: Gorse employs chemical warfare (allelopathy), dispersing a toxic oil on the soil beneath it that poisons every other growing plant. Monsanto uses lawyers. Where Gorse may be held responsible for burning down small cities, Monsanto is responsible for demonizing Genetically Modified Organisms, thereby compromising a technology that could, if ethically pursued, mitigate global hunger and malnutrition.

Gorse isn't just a local plague. Other farmers imported it unknowingly to Australia, Hawaii, Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Scandinavia, even to some subarctic islands. Gorse was the principal cause of a fire that destroyed Bandon, Oregon, in 1936.

While you may join me in hating Monsanto, it's worth remembering that we, too, are invasives. Had George Bennett, the founder of Bandon, not also been the culprit who imported Irish Gorse, the city would still have its pretty pre-1936 downtown. Nobody is willing to admit their family brought Gorse to Caspar – scions



Gorse, Glyphosate, & Greed continues

photo credit: Michael Potts

of the two likeliest families point fingers at each other – but some non-native immigrant did. Every time we bring home an exotic plant, we run the risk of loosing a plague. That's how Eucalyptus, Himalaya Blackberry, Monterey Cypress, Vinca, Pampas Grass, and a long list of other invasive exotic plants got here ... and so that is certainly an important part of our story: if we are to become successfully naturalized within our environment, we have to be very, very thoughtful about who we invite to our garden parties.

But the main theme of this piece is Gorse, and what we are willing to do to rid ourselves of it. If I could accomplish one thing in my lifetime and feel my life had been productive, it would be to completely remove the threat of Gorse from Caspar. I am as passionate about

that as was George Bennett about finding an easy way to grow fences around his Bandon holdings. While I deplore Monsanto's business model – developing trademarked life-forms that are resistant to poisons that make it possible for sloppy industrialized agricultural practices to wrest maximum short-term profits from the soil, and sue anyone who says them Nay – I am not afraid of glyphosate. Monsanto's last trademark expired in 2000, and companies besides Monsanto make it, so confusing the Gorse Abatement

One of three major Gorse infestations on Caspar Headlands, June, 2015

conversation with references to Monsanto isn't useful. I'm an old and careful fellow, and I'll cheerfully assume the health risk of applying the chemical to the cut stems. As long as I can get down on my hands and knees to pull up Gorse seedlings, I'll go out onto our patch, the Caspar Headlands, and pull up seedlings (since State Parks rightly won't let us use goats or horses.)

So why don't we just do it already? There might be two basic reasons, but the over-riding reason is that Caspar is a community that works by consensus. We acknowledge and honor the nay-sayers, the one (or two) firm,



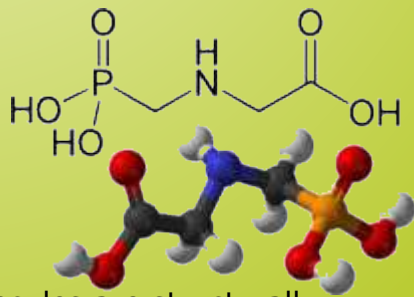
photo credit: Sienna M Potts

Skye and Will ripping out Heather, September, 2015

Gorse, Glyphosate, & Greed concludes

idealistic voices that say, "Let's not support Monsanto. Let's not take any risks with herbicides." Those with broader experience in the battle to abate exotic infestations have told us, "Without chemicals, you will never get rid of Gorse." They told us the same thing about Eucalyptus, and, after eight years, we have nearly proved them wrong. I disagree with those idealistic voices, but I honor them in their firmness.

So every fourth Saturday finds me, and a doughty crew, out on the Caspar Headlands ripping out Gorse plants ... and heather, and broom, and thistle, and the Eucalyptus stragglers. Join us. There's plenty of work to do. And afterwards, we eat lunch together.



How glyphosate works

Glyphosate molecules are structurally similar to the amino acid glycine, and bind to the active sites on the EPSP synthase enzyme – the engine that produces the proteins plants need to grow – where glycine is meant to fit. With all the glycine sites plugged by glyphosate, a plant cannot produce the essential proteins (phenylalanine, tyrosine, and tryptophan, among others) it requires to grow or heal. In the constant ferment that characterizes life in the soil, without the ability to grow, the plant is rapidly reincorporated back into the ecosystem. During this process, the glyphosate is broken up into its constituent chemical building blocks, all non-toxic.

This edition of
Caspar Community News
was laid out by Michael Potts

The next edition will appear in November. Submissions of activities, events, or information of interest to Casparados is invited. Send them to lists@casparcommons.org BEFORE OCTOBER 20th

Why glyphosate is dangerous

Humans live in symbiosis with a multitude of "passengers" that enable us to digest food and stay healthy. While many of us cringe when we think about this, one to two percent of our body mass, a mere estimated ten billion discrete organisms, are microbes that manage processes we need to live. Some of these are susceptible to glyphosate. Preliminary research has shown, for example, a probable link between glyphosate and non-Hodgkins lymphoma in agricultural workers who apply large amounts of glyphosate. There can be no doubt that ingesting glyphosate is a bad idea, and so spraying it, even on your lawn to control crabgrass, is unwise. That it is the most used agricultural herbicide, something like 200 million pounds a year, is horrifying.

Despite the fact that Monsanto no longer corners the glyphosate market, it continues to spew allelopathic lies about the chemical's safety, the same way any entrenched corporation – remember the tobacco industry's denials? – fights to protect its territory, no matter how tainted. Lately, Monsanto has apparently ingested the University of California at Davis, thereby rendering any of UCD's findings suspect to those of us who mistrust Monsanto, and corporate personhood in general ... but that leads to another article by another author. Jim?

–Michael

Opinions in Caspar Community News

The foregoing article, like the one in September about cows, is strictly the opinion of the author, and in no way represents, or is endorsed by, the Caspar Community Board. If by chance something in an article in our *News* offends, step up. Take your turn on the soapbox. Exchange of opinion, and the resulting changes in dearly held opinions, characterizes Caspar's recent history, and makes us a stronger community.

And another thing: we're a largely volunteer driven outfit. Laying out the *News* is a labor of love. If you'd like to take a turn, or if you like what we do, speak up.

We  Caspar