



SO*BA Bee Buzz

November 2014

Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association

Next Meeting: Monday December 8 at 7:30 PM at Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, 569 Hanley Rd., Central Point, OR ([map](#))

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It's Time to RENEW your SOBA membership!

It's a good time to renew your SOBA membership for 2015. You can use PayPal on the website or send a check to SOBA. See the [Join SOBA](#) page on the website for details.

Sources for Local Bees

Applegate Apiaries
Andrew Watson
541-846-0404
boradabeeedoc@gmail.com

Old Sol Apiaries
John Jacob
541- 582-2337
oldsolbees.com

Julian Lewis
541- 535-5817
lewis_adams_00@yahoo.com

David Alassa
541- 858-6824

If you would like to be listed here, email sobeekkeepers@gmail.com

SWARM CALL LIST

Members on the 2014 Swarm Call List have been contacted via email.

Current SOBA members who would like to be on the Swarm Call List, please email sobeekkeepers@gmail.com with "Swarm Call List" as the subject.

Newsletter Contributions

Do you have information that you would like to see in the newsletter? Send it to sobeekkeepers@gmail.com with "Newsletter" as the subject.

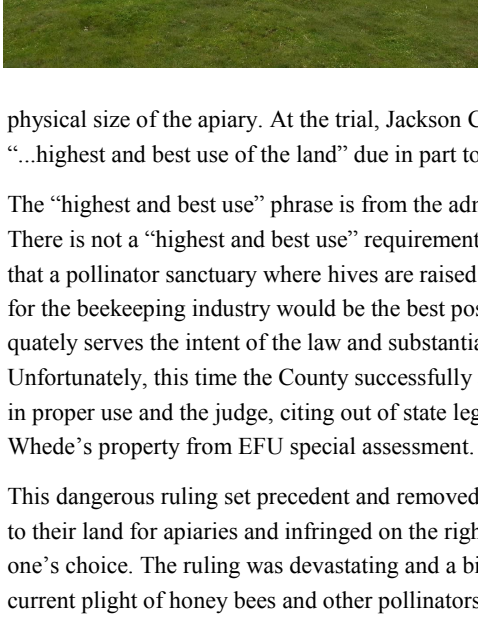
DECEMBER MEETING MOVED to December 8

Honeybees, Jackson County, and the Oregon Department of Revenue—A Saga

Contributed by SOBA President John Jacob of [Old Sol Bees](#).

Honeybees are the backbone of our modern agricultural economy. Essential pollination services are provided to growers of key cash crops such as nuts, berries, tree fruits, and innumerable seed crops by Oregon's commercial beekeepers. Together these crops keep farmers, pickers, packers, and retailers employed, as well as food on our tables. Honeybees are the key to making all of this happen. Unfortunately, honeybees are under attack on many fronts including pesticides, mites, diseases, and extreme habitat loss. Given the current state of affairs, one would wonder why Jackson County and the Oregon Department of Revenue would seek to disqualify honeybees as acceptable farm use.

This story really begins in 2000 when Jackson County sought to disqualify a 1,700 acre farm in Ashland that hosted 3 apiaries of 50 to 60 hives each (Young v Jackson County). The bees were used in pollination and substantial honey production, and the land was maintained with pollinator habitat in mind. After a brief trial, the landowners and beekeepers prevailed and a solid legal precedent was set for the County and State to uphold the letter of the law. Oregon state law **defines honeybees as livestock** and states that "...farm use is defined as employment of the land for the primary purpose of obtaining a profit in money by feeding, breeding, managing, or selling livestock, poultry, fur-bearing animals, or honey bees or the produce thereof."



physical size of the apiary. At the trial, Jackson County argued that honeybees were not the "...highest and best use of the land" due in part to the soil type and water rights.

The "highest and best use" phrase is from the administrative rule book and not the letter of the law. There is not a "highest and best use" requirement in the letter of the law. Further, one could argue that a pollinator sanctuary where hives are raised for pollination and queens are reared to start hives for the beekeeping industry would be the best possible use for this dry land farm. Apiculture adequately serves the intent of the law and substantially furthers Oregon's overall agricultural economy. Unfortunately, this time the County successfully argued that, due in part to soil type, the farm was not in proper use and the judge, citing out of state legal precedent, upheld the disqualification of the Whede's property from EFU special assessment.

This dangerous ruling set precedent and removed incentive for landowners to give beekeepers access to their land for apiaries and infringing on the right of landowners to farm the livestock or the crop of one's choice. The ruling was devastating and a big shock given the great public awareness about the current plight of honey bees and other pollinators and our favorable legal precedent in 2000. The stated intent of EFU zoning laws is to preserve farmland, and despite apiculture being the backbone of agriculture and very low impact on the land, we were going to be forced to farm something else or pay much higher taxes. The potential negative impacts of this ruling were so dire that the Whedes and Old Sol Apiaries vowed to keep fighting and filed an appeal to fight for our rights as landowners and beekeepers.

The appeal would not happen for almost another long year until August 26, 2013 (Whede v Jackson County & Oregon Department of Revenue). We were able to obtain excellent legal representation from "Oregonian's in Action" attorney Lynn Stafford for trial. John Jacob and Dewey Caron were the expert witnesses for the Whedes and the all day trial in Salem seemed to go extraordinarily well. We were able to demonstrate very significant downstream economic contributions to our agricultural economy through beekeeping and raising queens and the importance of clean forage. Jackson County's witness had a very difficult time fielding the judge's questions and seemed to anger the court at times. Despite this apparent success, it still took the about 14 months for the judge to make the ruling that struck down the disqualification of the Whede's property and permitted an EFU special assessment.

Judge Breithaupt's ruling will clearly be good for beekeepers, pollinators, landowners, and Oregon's agricultural economy. Further, we now have at least two legal precedents in Oregon that demonstrate beekeeping is an acceptable farm use.

One may be tempted to savor the sweet nectar of victory and the rule of law in this case, however a somewhat bitter tinge is left behind regarding the waste of taxpayer's dollars by the County and the Department of Revenue. The ORS statutes are very clear and most taxpayers would recognize the letter and the intent of the law and that the law explicitly states honeybees are livestock and acceptable as farm use. One can only hope that Jackson County assessors and the Oregon Department of Revenue can do the same and in the future make better use of our tax dollars.

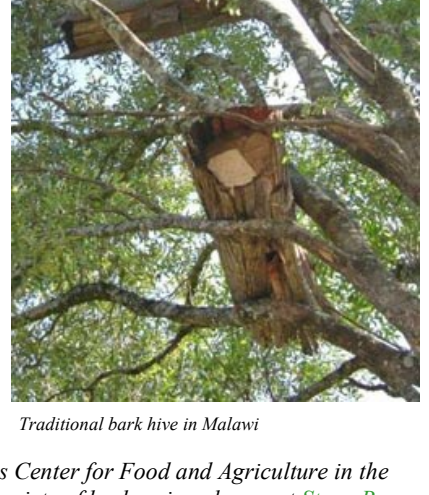
Subsequently in 2012, on a different piece of land in Rogue River, another Jackson county tax assessor again sought to remove 20 acres of a 40 acre farm from EFU special tax assessment because they were asserting that honeybees were insufficient use to qualify as farm use based partly on soil type. Despite over triple the number of hives per acre than in the previous case in 2000, and the fact that the legal minimum annual farm income requirement was met consistently by the Whedes (Whede v Jackson County), the County only agreed to grant a mere one acre of farm use for the

February Speaker: Beekeeping in Africa

The SOBA meeting on February 2 will feature a presentation by Dan Carr on Beekeeping in Africa.

Dan Carr will talk about his experiences working with the wonderful beekeepers and farmers of Malawi and Uganda. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in a rural village called Mwazisi in northern Malawi from 2007-2010. He learned to keep bees from a Malawian school teacher, and together they started the Mwazisi beekeepers association.

After returning to the United States and managing Stone Barns' bees for three years, he was invited by the USAid Farmer to Farmer program to go back to Africa to work on a special project with a beekeepers cooperative in Kasese, Uganda called the Liberty Development Foundation LIDEFO. We will talk about the differences between African and western bees and the most suitable hives for Africa, and the wonderful people Dan had the pleasure to work with in the Warm Heart of Africa (Malawi), and the Pearl of the Nile Uganda.



Traditional bark hive in Malawi



Dan Carr is a Livestock manager and head beekeeper at Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in the Hudson Valley of New York. He manages 30+ hives and teaches a variety of beekeeping classes at [Stone Barns Center](#). He was born and raised in Broomfield Colorado, and graduated from the University of Montana with a BA in Political Science and History. He spent three years as an agriculture and environment Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi, where he fell in love with bees, and has been a beekeeper ever since.

November and December in the Apiary



Here in the Northwest, excessive moisture in our hives is one of the biggest concerns. Make sure lids are watertight, that hives are tilted so water drains out and away, and that there is sufficient ventilation. This is even more important in January when brood rearing and metabolism increase hive moisture.

If you are not sure that the bees have enough ventilation, on a warm day (45 degrees or above) quickly check the inside of your top to see if it is wet or has mold. If so, consider adding a shim, stick, or thin piece of wood between the top and inner cover. You can also staple a screen to the bottom of an empty super or hive body, fill it with wood chips or other absorbent material, and place it between the inner cover and the lid.

At this time the bees are clustered together in dormancy, except for those periodic warm spells that allow the bees to break their cluster, move closer to stored honey, and make those all important cleansing (defecating) flights.

These periodic warm spells afford the opportunity to visually assess the health of our hives and to do emergency manipulations, if necessary. As a rule, never open a hive during the winter unless there is a good reason and the temperature is at least 45°F. Work around the cluster rather than through it. Take note of the colonies that are flying little or not at all during these periodic warm spells. Do a cursory check for weight (lift the hive to assess) and to determine whether or not the hive is alive (place your ear against the wall, thump it with your hand, and listen for the buzz).

For hives low on stores, feed fondant or frames of honey, or possibly retire the colony. Do not feed syrup at this time. Bees cannot remove the extra moisture, and too much water in the bees diet in conjunction with confinement leads to dysentery. An ideal way to feed fondant is to use lids with rims and to pour the fondant directly into the void. These lids can have up to 5 pounds of feed and last 2-3 weeks.

Drivert sugar has been discussed as an alternative to regular fondant (or dry sugar) on the OSBA Message Board. Drivert has existed for at least 30 years as a potential alternative for emergency feed. It is composed of 92% finely pulverized sucrose along with 8% invert sugar. According to C&H, drivert is "a dry fondant sugar used in icings and pan-coated confections."

For dead-outs, determine why the hive succumbed (usually queenlessness) and make sure frames are free of scale from American foulbrood. Shake out the dead bees. Then clean and return the equipment to storage.

Check your apiary occasionally — especially after a wind storm. Make sure that the lids are secure and verify that animals (e.g., mice, bears, and humans) have not been bothering (e.g., chewing, eating, or vandalizing) the hives.

December is a great time to plan for the year ahead. Build and order equipment, replenish supplies, place your order for queens, packages, and nucs, and stay warm!

Adapted from our friends at the Oregon State Beekeepers Association by [Bee Girl](#) with additions by John Jacob at [Old Sol Apiary](#).

SOBA Members Corner

Mother Earth News features a book about urban beekeeping: "Keeping Bees in Towns and Cities" by Luke Dixon. Read an excerpt from the book on [common winter beekeeping problems](#).

Sabrina at sabrinabeale@live.com would like to buy **local beeswax**. Contact her if you have some you would like to sell.

The **Oregon Master Beekeeper** program is full for 2015 in our area. You can join the waiting list for 2016 at the [OSU OMB site](#). If you would like to be a mentor so that there can be more students in the Rogue Valley in 2015, contact [Carolyn Breece](#).

Ashland folks are getting together at the Playwright Pub (258 A St, Ashland) on **Thursday December 11 at 7 PM**. We get together on the second Thursday of each month.

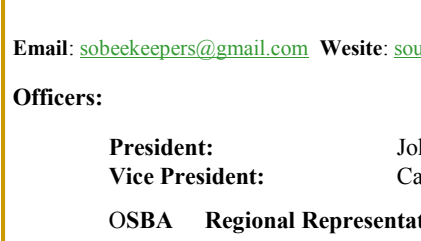
Sub-Regional Bee Club News

Illinois Valley Bee Club

When: Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM
Where: Kerby Belt Building, Kerby
Contact: Ron Padgett - padgett25@frontiernet.net

Douglas County Bees

When: First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 to 8:30
Where: Douglas County Courthouse Room 311
Contact: for any questions phililhebeeguy@gmail.com



The **Southern Oregon Beekeepers Association** meets at 7:30 pm on the first Monday of each month at the Southern Oregon Research & Extension Center, 569 Hanley Rd., Central Point. Meeting location changes will be noted in the newsletter. Come early to the meeting (6:30) and watch a hive inspection demonstration (March—September).



Email: sobeekkeepers@gmail.com **Website:** southernoregonbeekeepers.org **Phone:** (541) 862-1604

Officers:

President:	John Jacob	Secretary:	Dana Rose
Vice President:	Carl Lorenz	Treasurer:	Cheryl Housden
OSBA Regional Representative:	Sarah Red-Laird		
OSU Liaison:	Rick Hilton		

Questions or comments? Email us at sobeekkeepers@gmail.com.

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