

Birds and fire safety discussed over coffee

By Laura Mancuso
IVN editor

The Coffee & Quail community event had an audience of 50 people at the Illinois Valley Senior Center March 11, ready to learn about quail while sipping on coffee donated by Coffee Heaven.

This event, in partnership with the Illinois Valley Fire Resiliency Oversight Group, was put on by engagement coordinator Cheryl Nelson for IV-FROG and Illinois Valley Soil and Water Conservation District. A variety of speakers sparked the audience to ask thoughtful questions and participants were able to take away valuable education materials.

Science communications manager Elva Manquera-DeSheilds from the Klamath Bird Observatory out of Ashland gave a presentation about how birds are surviving in their ecosystem, oak systems in Southern Oregon and of course, the California quail.

Some fun facts presented by Manquera-DeSheilds were seven simple actions people can take to protect birds living around humans which included: Drink shade-grown coffee, reduce plastic use, window safety with proper decals or hanging shiny objects, plant native plants, avoid pesticides, keep cats indoors and support community science by watching birds.

Some facts about the California quail that live in the Valley: They live in shrubs like blackberry bushes, eat seeds on the ground and especially like to eat from burn piles. Quail are ground nesters and each female quail can lay up to 16 eggs twice a year. They love it if you spread peanuts around for them to eat and also love to eat acorns, bugs, pinecones and grass. Quails are often called "chickens of the forest." The difference between mountain quail and the California quail is that mountain quails live at higher elevation and are more elusive than the Californians.

Next, Nelson showed a short film about Valley residents that have used the service of IV-FROG and then further described how the nonprofit organization can help woodland owners make their property firewise.

There was grant money obtained for a Wildfire Fuels Reduction Program that landowners can apply to for assistance.

"There are two things to consider in applying for the program: 1) it is for low-income landowners; and 2) it is for landowners that want to invest by paying a portion of the costs," explained Nelson.

Nelson also passed out literature from Fire Adapted

Communities Learning Network regarding wildfire recovery and educational information about "Indigenous Peoples Burning Network."

Other speakers included Suzanne Vautier from Cultural & Ecological Enhancement Network talking about the endangered purple martins at Lake Selmac that had birdhouses put up by CEEN volunteers after Pacific Power removed poles that the martins used for nests. The power poles were removed due to damage done by acorn woodpeckers. You can visit the birdhouses to look for the purple martins on the south side of the lake, off Reeves Creek Road.

Selma resident Tracy Knopf was present to talk about the assistance that she received from IVSWCD on her woodland property on Crooks Creek Road. They partnered to repair and restructure a damaged creek bank by planting native plants, restructuring the tree system and removing invasive Himalayan blackberries. Knopf explained that no heavy equipment was used to protect the soil. The crew used weed eaters and chainsaws. After the repairs, Knopf reported seeing more wildlife: kingfishers, quail, geese, varied thrush, turkeys and more.

The event ended with a raffle drawing for a pretty felt birdhouse

donated from Bear Images and the winner was I.V. Garden Club member Kathy Lombardo.

Oregon State University, Oregon Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service and your local IVSWCD are good places to start inquiring about available programs that may help offset costs to woodland owners for wildfire fuels reduction. You can contact Cheryl Nelson at 541-592-3731 or 541-415-0603 and community@ivstreamteam.org.

Event partners included: Klamath Bird Observatory, Coffee Heaven, OSU, IVSWCD, I.V. Fire, I.V. Watershed Council, ODF, Grayback Forestry and IVCanDo.



(Photo by Laura Mancuso, Illinois Valley News)

IV-Frog engagement coordinator Cheryl Nelson (left) thanks the Coffee & Quail sponsors along with artist Sarah Mayer for her artwork for the quail in the Coffee & Quail event invitation and science communications manager Elva Manquera-DeSheilds from the Klamath Bird Observatory (right) Saturday, March 11 at the I.V. Senior Center.