

# Professional trail builder to speak in Sisters

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Correspondent

As part of the continuing quarterly speaker series offered by the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA), the organization will be hosting a presentation by nationally recognized professional trail builder and trail consultant, Woody Keen. Scheduled to speak next week, Keen's topic will be "Leave No Child Indoors: How to Make Trails Interesting for Children."

Among his many trail affiliations, Keen spent six years on the board of the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). The IMBA was founded in 1988 to promote mountain-biker education and trail management programs. Today, the organization boasts more than 170 chapters.

While much of Keen's focus can be expected to be upon the mountain biking world, it should be noted that, as a professional trail builder and consultant, he has been involved in the building, design, and study of trail systems for all types of trail users, including hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, off-road vehicles, and even designated bike parks. "I see the relative impacts of all user groups on a very regular basis," he said.

In fact, he has conducted extensive research on the environmental impact of all types of trail users. He also served for four years as the president of the Professional TrailBuilders Association.

While he works all over the nation, and outside the U.S., Keen is no stranger to Sisters, having presented "Road to Trail Conversion Workshops" here in 2013 and 2014 on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service and the STA. He has also worked with the Bike Park 242 Committee, in the development of a local

bike park for the Sisters Park & Recreation District. (See related article in *The Nugget*, February 4, 2015.)

Next Thursday's talk is in keeping with Keen's stated goals of sharing trail education and trail wisdom. "Trails are a wonderful outdoor recreation activity for all, including families and children," he said. "Trails can help fight obesity, reduce stress, improve overall fitness, and expose visitors to the natural world helping to fight Nature Deficit Disorder in children."

Nature Deficit Disorder is a term coined by Richard Louv, author of "Last Child in the Woods." In this book Louv postulates how today's societal standards and technological distractions combine to deprive people, particularly children, of the benefits of the natural world.

Keen's presentation next week will, he says, "focus on why trails are an important recreation facility and provide ideas on ways to make trails interesting to children and their families."

STA board member Bjarne Holm has volunteered to coordinate STA's speaker series, and is quite enthusiastic about Keen's appearance at the STA forum in Sisters.

"Everyone I have spoken to about him refers to him almost with reverence," Holm said. "I am certainly looking forward to meeting him. When Woody recently helped present the Bike Park 242 proposal here in Sisters, a mountain-bike-skills training facility, the reception was overwhelmingly positive. Woody is great at conceptualizing, planning, and executing projects. He works with the needs of equestrians, hikers, cyclists and all the other trail-user groups."

Holm finds Keen's appeal to youth of particular importance. "In our current times,



PHOTO PROVIDED

Woody Keen, a renowned professional trail builder and trail consultant, will speak in an event sponsored by the Sisters Trails Alliance.

televisions, computers, and social media are pulling young people away from the natural environment in which they live," Holm said. "That's what makes Woody's topic of engaging the younger members of our community with nature out on trails so important. Children need to be connected with nature so they can grow up emotionally healthy and physically healthy, and so they can productively engage in our society."

Next week's program is the fifth in STA's quarterly series of free public presentations designed to promote outdoor public recreation and education in Sisters Country. The presentation will be held on Thursday, April 23, in the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Station Community Hall in downtown Sisters at 355 S. Elm St. Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the formal program will begin at 7 p.m. The program is free and open to the public.

The Sisters Trails Alliance is a community volunteer organization dedicated to the planning, constructing and maintenance of walking, hiking, cycling, and equestrian trails in Sisters Country. The STA believes that trails are an indispensable ingredient for the quality of life and economic vibrancy in Sisters

# Outlaws to host bingo fundraiser

The Outlaws invite folks in Sisters Country to join in a family-friendly evening out on Monday April 27.

Outlaws Together Bingo has become an integral part of the Sisters High School Athletic Department philosophy as teams work together toward a common cause. Sisters Park & Recreation District has partnered with the school district this year to include a community dinner served by Three Creeks Brewing Co. from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., with bingo immediately following.

The bingo grand prize is a 32 GB Apple iPad mini with retina display.

The event will be held in the Sisters High School commons.

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