

Remove weeds to reduce fire danger

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Due to the extreme fire danger in Sisters Country, the City of Sisters is reminding property owners to be diligent in keeping invasive and noxious weeds and grasses cut down and/or removed.

As they dry out, the vegetation supplies fuel for quick-moving fires like the one currently burning on the Warm Springs Reservation. Weeds are also unsightly and some of them are considered noxious invasive species that compete with native plants.

According to City code, it is the responsibility of property owners to remove possible fire hazards from their property. Some of the usual culprits needing to be removed include spotted knapweed, cheat-grass, and any dry fuels that pose a threat to fire safety.

Community Development Director Patrick Davenport wants the citizens to be aware that his staff is out canvassing the City for offenders. Any who are identified will receive a warning letter from the city instructing them to remove the weeds and grasses.

They will be given ample time to get the job done. If there isn't compliance, a second letter will go out, followed by a third if needed. There is a fine of \$50 per day of noncompliance after receipt of the third letter.

Sisters families enjoy Creation Vacation Camp

Seven Sisters Habitat for Humanity and Family Access Network families recently participated in the fifth annual Creation Vacation Camp at Suttle Lake United Methodist Camp.

Campers enjoyed delicious and nutritious food and an individual family cabin on the beautiful grounds of the camp. Special activities were planned for all age levels. The children's ages ranged from eight months to 17 years.

The Creation Vacation Camp ministry was initiated by the United Methodist Church Camp and Retreat Ministries in 1997. Families from Idaho and Oregon have participated during those nine years, and for the last five summers, the program has extended to families from Sisters Habitat for Humanity and FAN.

Creation Vacation offers low-income families the opportunity to experience a few days of family vacation, enjoying a supportive community and the wonder of creation that we know as camp. For many, it is a respite from the struggles of daily life.

Adult topics and experiences included parenting discussions, yoga, home maintenance, spiritual centering, nutrition and yummy, healthy snacks, and chair massages. Family activities included a star party after an introduction through "Tour Through The Cosmos." A session on stream ecology opened everyone's eyes to the amazing things in the local environment in Lake Creek as it exits Suttle Lake.

Campers participated in many games; archery; face painting; origami; making birdhouses; and nature



PHOTO PROVIDED

Campers at Suttle Lake enjoyed a wide range of special activities.

hikes. Boating, swimming, tie-dyeing of T-shirts and — due to extremely dry conditions — faux campfires, were enjoyed by all ages. A "variety show" between dinner and the campfire on the last night of camp had everyone in stitches as campers and staff shared presentations. Participants were dressed in colorful, fanciful costumes as they sang, danced, competed and shared in the fun.

A serious reading reminded everyone how important Creation Vacation Camp is to families.

Comments made by families have included, "It's the best family time of the year! It is awesome fun! We love everything about this camp!!! It is a fantastic opportunity for our family to create treasured memories."

Efforts will continue to secure stable funding and inclusion of more families in 2016 so that they will be able to participate in this potentially life-changing experience. Research has shown

that improved family bonds and relationships are associated with family camp. It has also shown that outdoor programs appear to produce positive outcomes that continue after the experience.

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