

# USFS retiree mans lookout tower

By Jim Anderson  
Correspondent

What does a person like Sandy Sharp do when she retires after working for the U.S. Forest Service for over 19 years? She becomes a Fire Prevention Volunteer on Green Ridge Lookout, of course. All through the summer, 36 volunteers take turns staffing the lookout, some for a week at a time, others, like Sharp, one day a week.

Last year, when Sharp went to Green Ridge it was at the time of the Bridge 99 Fire, and after the sun went down she had second thoughts about what she had let herself in for. Several little fires flared up during the night that caused her loss of sleep, but after a talk with herself, she thought, "They're not going let me get cooked up here..." and settled down for a peaceful night's rest.

Before she went to work with the USFS, Sharp lived in a lighthouse on Lake Superior working for the National Park Service. She was an interpreter, telling stories of early navigation to the visitors to the islands on which the lighthouse stood.

Her career with the Forest Service began on the Superior National Forest in Minnesota with its million-acre Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness, which has similar recreational opportunities to the Deschutes — fishing, hunting, camping, canoeing, swimming, hiking, snowmobiling and skiing.

Not too long after she started work, the 1995 government shutdown took place. At the same time, Sharp's mom, Barbara — one of the



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Sandy Sharp, volunteer fire lookout on Green Ridge, explains fire-finding techniques to Reuben Anderson and his son, Truman.

first members of the newly formed Central Oregon Audubon Society in Bend — was diagnosed with cancer.

Sandy used her time when the government ran out of money to travel to Bend to help care for her mom, and she ended up working on the Deschutes National Forest under what was known as a Hardship Detail, a position established by the USFS for people who had to care for family while working for the service.

She was required to return to her home duty station in northern Minnesota after her mother died, but the Deschutes detail was extended an extra 120 days so she could get matters settled. Besides, the Skeleton fire had broken out and they weren't ready to release her from the detail.

She wound up doing another long detail the next year (1997) when the Deschutes asked her back on her own merit in hopes that

she could stay permanently.

Unfortunately, after the shutdown hiring and permanent transfers were frozen.

"But," Sandy says, "1998 was the magical year for me to leave Minny-soda for GOOD!"

She went from a job recording the early history of timber-workers in the Bend area to being a "front-liner" — a name the Forest Service has given to those who are the first people to greet visitors to the National Forests. It was a position she held for 12 years in the Sisters District Office, before her retirement.

In her new role, Sharp travels 50 miles from her home to the lookout twice a day, and she says, "It's such a beautiful trip I hardly notice the miles, no matter if I'm coming or going, I'm so looking forward to my day in the lookout."

# Meet and greet set with new superintendent

Parents and community members will have an informal opportunity to meet Sisters School District's new superintendent at a "meet-and-greet" set for Monday, September 14, 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the Sisters Elementary School commons.

Curtiss Scholl took up the reins of leadership here in July. He has

expressed interest in maintaining the close volunteer ties and strong community support that mark Sisters schools.

All parents, students, staff and community members are welcome to attend this community event. For more information, call Mel Petterson at the Sisters School District office, 541-549-8521, Ext. 4013.

# USFS moves forward on Chush Falls

Sisters District Ranger Kristie Miller has signed a decision to designate a permanent trailhead outside the Three Sisters Wilderness for Chush Falls, a popular day-use area in the wilderness.

The action will decommission about 1.33 miles of Forest Service System roads; close about 1.45 miles of Forest Service roads; and convert about 1.39 miles of Forest Service roads to a Class 2 trail to reduce impacts

to the wilderness.

The action will also designate a new snowmobile route using the existing forest road system and remove the remnants of the Snow Creek snowmobile bridge that was destroyed during the 2012 Pole Creek fire.

The new snowmobile route will provide continued winter recreation connections. A re-route of the Cross District Snowmobile Trail will ensure continued access.

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