

STA charts its course for 2016

By Craig F. Eisenbeis
Correspondent

“This organization has never been as strong as it is today!” Chuck Humphreys proclaimed as he kicked off last week’s annual meeting of the Sisters Trails Alliance.

Established 15 years ago, the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA) has grown to become a principal advocate and facilitator of outdoor recreation in the Sisters area. An all-volunteer organization, it is dedicated to the planning, construction and maintenance of non-motorized trails in Sisters Country.

Asked to comment on the organization’s overall perspective, Humphreys said, “Our motto is ‘Trails for Everyone,’ and we believe in making sure that everyone, regardless of ability, has access to the forests around us. When we can’t build trails, we want to reach out to the community.”

In that regard, he also spoke of a large donation recently received from the friend of a person injured on the highway while bicycling to Sisters from Black Butte Ranch.

“He made the donation when he heard there was a possibility of a new paved trail from Black Butte Ranch

to Sisters,” Humphreys said.

A few of STA’s highlighted accomplishments for the year included the distribution of 20,000 trail maps; reconstruction of the Whychus Creek Trail at an old irrigation crossing; rerouting a portion of the Metolius-Windigo Trail due to forest-fire damage; and 2,508 volunteer hours — including three Presidential Awards — for volunteer work on more than 100 miles of local Forest Service trails that STA supports.

Regarding STA’s volunteer work, Ann Marland, STA’s community outreach director, said, “Volunteers are the backbone of the Sisters Trails Alliance, and with them we’ve built and maintained approximately 112 miles of mountain biking, hiking, and equestrian trails.”

Marland herself was one of those to receive a Presidential Award for her volunteer work last year.

Keynote speaker for the event was Rocky Houston, the state trails coordinator for Oregon and manager of the Recreation Trails Grant Program for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Houston works with federal, state, regional, and local

organizations to plan, fund, and develop trails throughout Oregon.

Houston discussed the State’s trail programs and presented some interesting demographic information on trail usage in the state. One of the more interesting factoids presented was that low-income Oregonians are less likely than others to take advantage of Oregon’s free trail system — something that he is interested in changing. One of his chief goals is to get all Oregonians outdoors to experience the natural environment of Oregon.

The Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council (ORTAC) is another of Houston’s responsibilities. ORTAC was established in 1971 as part of the Oregon Recreation Trails System Act. The purpose of the act was to support a growing outdoor recreation demand and promote public access to the outdoor wonders of Oregon.

One of ORTAC’s principal areas of focus is that trails should be established in and around population centers to promote more outdoor activities. As such, work with organizations such as STA is a natural fit. Houston also



PHOTO BY CRAIG EISENBEIS

Chuck Humphreys, board chairman for the Sisters Trails Alliance, opens last week’s annual STA meeting.

pointed out that ORTAC has a current vacancy that needs to be filled by a new member from the geographical area that includes Sisters.

STA’s annual meeting also presented the opportunity to recognize contributions by some of its key members. John Rahm received the Peterson Ridge Trailblazer Award, Ken Serkownek was named Volunteer of the Year, and Stella Dean was Trail Steward of the Year.

Rahm’s certificate read, “In recognition of your long, generous, and tireless contributions to trails in Sisters Country, especially the Peterson Ridge Trail, and your enduring inspiration, service, and support of the Sisters Trails Alliance.”

Dean’s recognition came as a result of her leadership

role in STA’s Adopt-a-Trail program, which encourages individual members to take personal responsibility for coordinating the maintenance of a specific trail in the STA system.

To close out the meeting, attendees were treated to a veritable blizzard of door prizes, which were presented courtesy of several local sponsors, including Sisters Athletic Club, Eurosports, Blazin Saddles, The Open Door, and Cork Cellars.

For further information about STA or performing volunteer work on trails or other outdoor related projects, contact the organization at 541-719-8822. Additional information about STA can be found on their website at www.sisterstrails.com. A revised website is expected this week.

5th Annual

Sisters 2016 Science Fair

The Nature Science

Sponsored by
Sisters Science Club

Sat., Feb. 20
12-4 p.m.

Sisters High School

1700 McKinney Butte Rd.





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Experiment with gyroscopic science ● Try elliptical billiards

Experience the planetarium ● Learn from our students’ exhibits

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