

Forest Service wildlife biologist to speak in Sisters next week

By **Craig F. Eisenbeis**
Correspondent

In the latest installment of its continuing quarterly speaker series, now known as the “Bjarne Holm Memorial Speaker Series,” the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA) will host a presentation next week by Monty Gregg, the Forest Service district wildlife biologist for the Sisters Ranger District.

He will be speaking on “The Balancing Act of Forest Management.”

The STA named their quarterly environment and recreation talks The Bjarne Holm Memorial Speaker Series, in memory of the recently deceased founder of the popular series. (See related story page 3.) In fact, prior to his death, Holm made sure to complete the arrangements for Gregg to give this talk.

Gregg’s appearance on the STA’s agenda hardly comes as a surprise. “I have worked with STA over the years on various proposals,” he said. Gregg worked closely with the STA on the development of the Peterson Ridge Trail system and has recently been a key provider of advisory information to STA on trail development.

“Being a trail-runner has provided insight into STA’s proposals,” Gregg said, “and as a wildlife biologist it has helped me emphasize the importance of trail development and design to minimize impacts to wildlife habitat.”

Gregg’s role with the STA has been at the logical intersection of his personal and professional interests.

“It is my primary

responsibility to assist with the development and implementation of projects that maintain and promote habitat for a variety of wildlife species which include but are not limited to threatened, endangered, sensitive, and special-status species.”

Typically Gregg’s projects address restoration activities to improve forest resiliency to insect, disease, and recovery from wildfire.

“Over the past 20 years,” he points out, “due to the increase in the population of Central Oregon, the Deschutes National Forest has become highly urban and the amount of recreation use across the forest has greatly increased.”

As a result, he explained, trail use and development in the Deschutes National Forest has increased rapidly among all user groups — both motorized and non-motorized; and it is necessary to carefully manage the increasing use.

Chuck Humphreys, STA’s board chairman, sounded very enthusiastic about Gregg’s upcoming presentation.

“As a wildlife biologist he opened my eyes to the fact that the forest has many constituents, and not all of them are humans interested in recreation,” said Humphreys. “He

has given us a lens to see our trails in a wider, forest-wide perspective.”

Gregg is a third-generation eastern Oregonian who was born and raised in Redmond and grew up enjoying the Deschutes National Forest. A Wildlife Sciences graduate of Oregon State University, he was employed by the Forest Service the day after he graduated. He began work as a wildlife biological science technician on the Mt. Hood and Winema National Forests. Shortly thereafter, he transferred to the Sisters Ranger District as a wildlife biologist; and, after a five-year stint at Bend/Fort Rock, he has served as the Sisters Ranger District wildlife biologist for the past 11 years.

He is a member of the Oregon Chapter of the Wildlife Society, and the restoration subcommittee of the Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project. He actively collaborates with the East Cascades Audubon Society, the Mule Deer Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Oregon Hunters Association, Trout Unlimited, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, the Heart of Oregon Corps, the High Desert Museum and the Oregon Zoo.

He also provides his professional expertise to the Interdisciplinary Environmental Education Program at Sisters High School.

His personal interests include pretty much anything that he can do outdoors, including running, hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, and wakeboarding. An avid hunter, he especially loves backcountry hunting. With his wife and two children, he spends as much of the summer as possible on family camping trips that usually involve a boat and a body of water. He says that, since the eighth grade, running has been his greatest personal passion; and he is currently a cross-country coach at Mountain View High School and a member of the Central Oregon Running Klub.

Next week’s program is the 14th 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, November 17, 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. Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

The Sisters Trails Alliance is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit community organization dedicated to the planning, construction, 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 Country. Volunteer help and new members are always welcome.

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 can also be found on their website at www.sisterstrails.org or follow STA on Facebook at Sisters Trails Alliance.



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