

Bike trail advocate to speak

By Craig F. Eisenbeis
Correspondent

Mountain bike trail advocate Mike Ripley will be the guest speaker next week for the Bjarne Holm Memorial Speaker Series, which is put on by the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA).

Ripley, owner and operator of Mudslinger Events, will speak on trail advocacy from the perspective of someone who puts on a variety of trail events every year. He typically organizes about 13 mountain bike events per year. For example, in just the next few months, some of those events will include the Mudslinger XC, the Sisters Stampede, and the High Cascades 100. He is co-founder of the Corvallis Mountain Bike Club and founder of the Team Dirt chapter of the International Mountain Biking Association.

STA Board Chairman Chuck Humphreys is enthusiastic about Ripley's upcoming visit.

"Working with Mike is rewarding," he said, "because he understands the value of trails for such a wide range of users — kids, recreationists, competitors — and he is as dedicated to supporting work on trails as he is to using them. We are lucky to have someone with his energy and creativity working with us in Sisters."

One of Ripley's signature accomplishments was the development and design of the Alsea Falls trail system

in the coast range southwest of Corvallis. This trail system was completed in June of 2015 and saw more than 12,000 users by the end of its first year.

"We just think it's a great thing to be able to get people to be out in the outdoors," he said. "People are losing connection to the outdoors; so, if I can provide a conduit for people to be able to get in touch with nature and have a good time on their bike and get home safe, then I'm super-excited. That's why I guess that's my profession. I just love building trails..."

The son of Oregon millworkers, Ripley is a native Oregonian and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force Reserve. Based in Monroe, Oregon, he and his wife, Andi, have three daughters.

Oregon Trail Runs is the "running wing" of Mudslinger Events, and Ripley says, "Our goal is to provide fun and challenging events for any range of runner in your family. I love the outdoors and am active in trail work statewide." Upcoming trail running events include the Cottage Grove Half Marathon, the Spring Fling Trail Run, and the Mary's Peak Trail Run, with distances of 50 miles, and 50 or 25 kilometers.

The STA's speaker series on environment and recreation is offered quarterly. Next week's program is the 12th in the series, which was recently named the Bjarne Holm



PHOTO PROVIDED

Mike Ripley will speak next week on trail advocacy, mountain biking.

Memorial Speaker Series, in memory of the late founder of the popular series.

These free public presentations are designed to promote outdoor public recreation and education in Sisters Country. This event will be held on Thursday, January 26, 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.

For further information about STA or performing volunteer work on trails or other outdoor-related projects, contact the organization at 541-719-8822. More information can be found at www.sisterstrails.org or on Facebook.

SPRD offers watercolor pet portraits class

Sisters Park & Recreation District will offer watercolor classes by Jodi Schneider McNamee.

Jodi is an accomplished, credentialed art teacher, photographer, author of several published books, and journalist, specializing in true animal stories as weekly featured articles, along with her pet column in *The Nugget*.

"I believe it was my early years spent in nature that inspired me into painting animals. Watercolor is my choice of medium, there is a softness with watercolor that I enjoy," she said.

Jodi Schneider McNamee is a member of the Sisters Arts Association, and spent over 15 years teaching art in Pomona Adult Education, and watercolor classes at Napa Valley College, Napa Valley.

Classes will be held at SPRD on Thursdays, February 9, 16, 23, and March 2, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Supplies are included with your registration of \$50. Early sign-up is recommended. All levels are welcomed. All that is required from participants is a photo; Jodi offers an easy technique to transfer your photo to watercolor paper.



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Artist Jodi Schneider McNamee will teach at SPRD.

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