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What does winter hold in store for Sisters?

By Ron Thorkildson
Correspondent

It shouldn't be much of a stretch to suppose that wildfire-weary residents of Central Oregon — and much of the entire western U.S. — will welcome the onset of the fall and winter seasons. Since early August, smoke-filled skies haven't just been an annoyance to outdoor enthusiasts, but have posed health risks in many areas.

The key to returning to some semblance of normalcy is, of course, the weather.

At this writing, cooler and wetter weather from the Gulf of Alaska has moved into the Northwest, helping to slow the spread of these fires. But what lies ahead for the remainder of fall into the winter? Does a low-elevation September snowfall portend an early or harsh winter?

The short answer is — no. It's no secret that seasonal weather forecasts over the



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Recent cool, wet weather cleared out the smoke and blanketed the mountains with their first snowfall of the season.

past couple of years have not verified well. The El Niño monster of 2015-16 was supposed to menace Southern

California with torrential rains and numerous mudslides. None of that materialized, as rainfall amounts

were barely normal. Here in our neck of the woods a

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City orders halt to tree cutting project

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

The City of Sisters issued a stop-work order to the Sisters School District last Thursday, ordering them to cease tree removal on the District's campuses. The City asserts that the District project has removed too many trees.

"It has come to the City's attention that the School District has not complied with the Urban Forest Board's (UFB) approval to remove trees on the District's properties," the notice read. "Due to this violation of the approval granted by the

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Vacation rentals under review in Sisters

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

At the request of the Sisters City Council, the Sisters Planning Commission is currently reviewing code regarding vacation rentals in town.

There are currently 39 permitted vacation rentals in town, which amounts to about 3 percent of the 1,300 residential dwelling units in the city. A vacation rental is considered a short-term dwelling unit that is rented out for 30 or less consecutive days. With the upsurge in Air BnB and VRBO-type rentals everywhere, the Council is looking for recommendations regarding the regulation of vacation rentals to

help maintain the livability of the community and avoid or mitigate negative impacts.

There are currently local renters who are losing their housing due to long-term rental units being converted by their owners to short-term units, impacting an already tight rental market here in Sisters.

Although there are currently only 39 identified vacation rentals, 25 percent of those have come on line in 2017. There may also be units that are not known to the City. Based on what has been occurring in other small towns in the U.S., the Council would like to get out in front

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Birds on the move across Sisters

By Jim Anderson
Correspondent

"There's three birds over the butte on the east side, just under those puffy clouds," Chuck Gates said, looking through his binoculars.

"Got 'em," Peter Low responded, getting his scope up to his eye. "Looks like turkey vultures."

That's the kind of conversation that goes on most of the day during the East Cascade Audubon Society's (ECAS) annual Green Ridge Hawk Watch, an event that's been going on for over 10 years in Sisters Country.

Anyone interested is welcome to join experts and novices from next Saturday, September 30 to October 21-22. The roads to the site are well marked from Road 12 to Prairie Farm and Green



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Participants of the ECAS Hawk Watch on Green Ridge.

Ridge Lookout, but if you've never been up in that part of Sisters Country it might be best to meet the group at 9 a.m. in the Indian Ford Campground.

You will need a good set of binoculars (and optional spotting scope). Bring along

what food you enjoy in the outdoors, water, and dress in layers for the weather. If there's a good wind coming out of the southwest there will be plenty of birds riding the currents along the edge of

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