

Sisters Country birds

By Douglas Beall
Correspondent

Visiting the Cascade forests in late fall and winter, the fluted notes of the varied thrush (*Izoreus naevius*) can often be heard echoing through the canyons. The elegant orange of the varied thrush can be seen throughout winter.

Closely related to the robin, they also can be seen on lawns and roadsides foraging for seeds, berries and grubs. The varied thrush breeds mostly in Canada and Alaska, males arriving first to sing and claim their

territories. Then building their nests with spruce, fir and hemlock twigs, which are lined with moss, fine grasses and dead leaves. The nest is normally located in a conifer about 10 feet high, and contain 1-6 blue with brown speckled eggs. Hatching in 10-14 days, the young are fed worms and insects until they leave the nest in 13-15 days.

When varied thrushes gather they are referred to as a "mutation" or a "hermitage" of thrushes. To view more images of this thrush, visit <http://abirdsingsbecauseithasasong.com>.



PHOTO BY DOUGLAS BEALL

Varied thrush.

Bus barn to be built at high school

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

The new school district transportation facility is closer to becoming a reality. The City is currently reviewing the district's site plan application, which was filed last week.

Once the site plan is approved, the district can submit its request for a building permit and construction can begin once the building permit is issued. The proposed bus barn and shop is slated to be built in the current high school student parking lot that also serves as access to the Coffield Center, the Sisters Park & Recreation District building.

In May 2016, Sisters voters approved a \$10.7 million school bond measure. In addition, the district unexpectedly received a portion of a \$4 million state matching grant. The grant pool was based on need, which meant Sisters was at the bottom of the list based on demographics. Those districts like Sisters, who didn't qualify based on need, entered a lottery for funds.

Several districts ahead of Sisters in the lottery didn't pass their bonds, knocking them out of the running for matching funds and moving Sisters up the list. According

to district Superintendent Curt Scholl, all of the schools that passed their bonds received a percentage of the grant money.

The Sisters School Board gave its approval to use some of the supplementary grant funds to fund construction of a new transportation facility and shop near the high school.

The existing bus barn, which sits on a small piece of land adjacent to the elementary school on North Cascade Avenue, has outlived its usefulness, and the tiny shop in which bus repairs are made is inadequate.

By placing the new facility at the high school, the district will be able to incorporate space and equipment to support career technical education classes like auto shop and metal shop. The new facility will also provide for greatly upgraded maintenance facilities for the district busses.

One question that has arisen in the mind of the public is whether the planned placement of the structure and its attendant traffic pattern is the most viable site for the footprint.

Traffic coming off of McKinney Butte and traveling to SPRD will be forced to jog across the parking lot closer to the high school and possibly come into conflict

with cars and students in the parking lot, creating safety concerns.

The current footprint for the new facility sits on the southwest edge of the student parking lot, adjacent to the disc golf course and will block traffic that historically has accessed SPRD along that section of the parking lot.

SPRD Executive Director Liam Hughes said he had only had a casual conversation with the school district regarding plans for placement of the new transportation facility and had never been shown the formal drawings prior to the site plan application to the City.

According to City Senior Planner BreAnne McConkie, a suggestion was made to the architect for the school district that there might be issues with the location of the new bus barn and/or traffic flow around it. As of press time no changes were forthcoming.

Because the land-use application is a Type 2 decision made by City staff, no public hearing on the matter is mandatory. Public comment can be made to the City, however, by email or letter.

The School Board was scheduled to meet on Monday, November 6 at 1 p.m. and discussion of the new bus barn was on the agenda.

Check us out on

facebook®

Become a fan and receive notifications of breaking news, local events and more!

www.NuggetNews.com