

Campfire restrictions enacted in region

With hot and dry conditions expected to continue, an increasing number of wildfires around the Northwest, and fire suppression resources already responding to a number of wildfires around Oregon, the Prineville District Bureau of Land Management, the Deschutes National Forest and the Ochoco National Forest, including the Crooked River National Grassland, are implementing campfire restrictions and Industrial Fire Precaution Level III.

Effective Tuesday, July 24, open fires, including charcoal briquette fires, are prohibited on the Sisters Ranger District, except in the following designated campgrounds: Allen Springs, Allingham, Blue Bay, Camp Sherman, Candle Creek, Cold Spring, Driftwood, Gorge, Graham Corral, Indian Ford, Jack Creek, Link Creek, Lower Bridge, Lower Canyon Creek, Perry South, Pine Rest, Pioneer Ford, Riverside, Scout Lake, Sheep Spring, Smiling River, South Shore, Three Creek Lake, Three Creek Meadow, Three Creek Horse Camp and Whispering Pine.

In addition to campfire restrictions, smoking is restricted to an enclosed vehicle or building, in a designated campground, in boats on lakes and rivers, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is clear of all flammable

material. Portable cooking stoves, propane campfires or lanterns using liquefied or bottled fuel may be used in all areas.

Officials want to remind the public that using explosive target material, such as Tannerite, explosives, and fireworks continues to be prohibited on all federal lands.

Additionally, the Prineville BLM, Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Crooked River National Grassland will move to an Industrial Fire Precaution Level III (IFPL). The IFPL applies to permitted and industrial operations, including woodcutting, on federal lands.

IFPL III is considered a "partial shutdown" and restricts the use of chainsaws to loading sites on tractor/skidder operations to between the hours of 8 p.m. to 1 p.m. Only cable yarding systems that use non-motorized systems are allowed. Industrial welding and mechanized loading operations are also restricted to the hours of 8 p.m. to 1 p.m. Industrial and permitted operations may request a waiver from the Forest Service or BLM depending on land ownership at the activity location. It is the responsibility of all operators to know and follow the requirements of the current fire precaution level.

Commercial and personal-use woodcutting is prohibited at this and all higher levels.

SPRD: Community dinner planned for August 9

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staff on day-to-day operations. His first day he held a staff meeting during which the employees were able to give voice to their concerns and questions. There was a general consensus that the staff "felt let down by the board," regarding the situation with recently departed executive director Todd Garrett.

Tryens let them know that up until the July 10 board meeting, when Garrett displayed an emotional outburst, the board had not witnessed that type of behavior. Prior to that meeting, the board had been in the position of hearing opposing stories from Garrett and the staff.

"After last Tuesday," Tryens told the board, visitors, and former Senior and Adult Program Director Shannon Rackowski at a July 17 board meeting, "we saw the problem (the board had been telling Garrett to fix) was unfixable. We then took immediate action. We are sorry it (the situation with Garrett) caused pain."

Former chairman Bob Keefer added that the

attorney working with the board advised them they couldn't speak with the employees about what was occurring. In public agencies like SPRD, the executive director is the only employee the board hires, fires, and manages. The executive director does all the employee management of the district staff.

Tryens told *The Nugget*, "As a board, we can't reach down into the organization and go around the executive director to the employees." He went on to say, "It's a difficult balancing act to be a proactive board without being an interfering board."

When asked if the board had considered bringing in an outside organizational consultant to help right the ship, Tryens indicated that Keefer is working on securing an interim executive director who specializes in coming into districts in need of some healing and reorganization.

Tryens also indicated before the interim arrives, the board will spend time reflecting on what didn't work and where they want to go from here, and they may need some help with that.

Tryens said, "My highest priority is that not a single kid knows anything is other than happy and normal here at SPRD. I want all our patrons

to know we are solving our issues. And community events will go as smoothly as they always have."

Tryens is also contacting a number of community partners, sponsors, service clubs, and senior groups to touch base, answer questions, hear concerns, and receive feedback.

Rackowski was afforded the opportunity to address the board about her concerns, her reasons for resigning, and for withdrawing from producing SPRD's popular August luau. She has been offered the opportunity to produce the luau again, but it is her decision.

As of Monday morning, Rackowski had opted out of her role in producing the luau and the board announced that there will be a different event in its place.

Board chair Jeff Tryens informed *The Nugget* that "SPRD is continuing the summer community dinner, but in different form. The luau will not be held this year because we lack the expertise on staff to organize and lead this event. As a result, the board decided to take a different direction. Board members and staff will host a free community dinner on August 9 to thank the community for its support for recreation in Sisters."

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