

ADAPTIVE: Program is part of Sisters Trails Alliance series

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believe,” he said, “that access to the outdoors is an essential component to a healthy and thriving life and that no matter age or ability you should still have access to these spaces and activities.”

STA board member Greg Vandehey said, “STA is very excited to meet and hear Pat Addabbo speak about Oregon Adaptive Sports. We are particularly interested in how they are connecting people, regardless of capabilities, to our great outdoor experiences here in Central Oregon. This is certainly supportive of our own STA mission statement, and we are all anxious to hear how OAS is changing lives through outdoor recreation.”

Another STA member, Ann Marland, feels personally vested in the OAS presentation. “I have a developmentally disabled friend, Lizzy, that has been involved with OAS for a long time,” Marland said. “She golfs in the summer and snowboards in the winter. One of the things we do together is hiking the STA Elk Ranch Trail, but her favorite is the Whychus Creek Overlook which is handicap-accessible. I’m hoping to bring her to the OAS event.”

Regarding the upcoming event, Catherine Hayden, STA’s current board chair, echoed her associates thoughts. “STA believes trails

are for everyone, and Oregon Adaptive Sports embodies that in their mission to provide life-changing outdoor recreation experiences to people with disabilities. I’m excited to learn more about the various activities that OAS promotes. I think there are some possibilities for collaboration between our two organizations. It would be great if members of STA became volunteers with OAS, as well.”

Oregon Adaptive Sports was founded in 1996 by a local group of volunteers who wanted to allow local youth with disabilities to participate in snow-sports alongside their classmates during school trips to Mt. Bachelor. Today, OAS serves hundreds of individuals of all ages and abilities by participation in 10 different year-round sports and activities. Their mission is “to provide life-changing outdoor experiences to individuals with disabilities while contributing to our vision of a day where every person, regardless of ability, has access to the benefits of outdoor recreation.”

OAS strives to include individuals of all abilities, including those with physical, cognitive, chronic, developmental, intellectual, or other diagnoses or disabilities. OAS uses specialized adaptive sports equipment and trained volunteers and staff to accommodate each individual’s unique needs and goals. Some examples of

difficulties OAS helps participants overcome include spinal cord injury, visual impairment, cerebral palsy, autism, Down’s syndrome, spina bifida, spinal muscular atrophy, ALS, muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis.

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— Catherine Hayden

OAS also employs people with disabilities. Nancy Stevens is the OAS outreach coordinator. An avid outdoor athlete in many sports including downhill and cross-country skiing, cycling, running, paddling, and hiking, Stevens has been blind since birth but still lives a fully active and outdoor-centered lifestyle. She also provides instruction to volunteers on guiding individuals with visual impairments.

For his part, Addabbo looks forward to developing partnerships with organizations like STA and sees the

organizations’ missions as complimentary. “OAS and our participants benefit significantly from the countless hours of work conducted by trail alliances that develop and maintain these critical access avenues into Oregon’s great outdoors.”

Through sponsorship of public presentations such as this one, STA is working to promote outdoor public recreation and education in Sisters Country. This next event will be held on Thursday, November 15, in the Sisters Camp Sherman Fire Station Community Hall in downtown Sisters at 301 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, but donations would be appreciated.

A \$5 amount has been suggested. Light refreshments will be served.

Four years ago, STA’s speaker series was launched by the late Bjarne Holm, for whom STA posthumously named the series in 2016. Since its inception, the purpose of STA’s speaker series has been to enhance outdoor public recreation opportunities in the Sisters area and to educate the public about outdoor recreation and the natural world.

For more information about STA or performing volunteer work on trails or other outdoor-related projects, contact the organization at 541-719-8822 or visit www.sisterstrails.org or follow STA on Facebook at Sisters Trails Alliance.

OSP finish testing backlog of rape kits

PORTLAND (AP) — The Oregon State Police say they have finished testing a backlog of thousands of evidence kits collected after sexual assaults.

KOIN-TV reported Wednesday that more than 5,000 kits were stored as evidence for years and were discovered in 2015.

New legislation passed in 2016 allowed testing of those kits, and a grant paid for more staff at the crime lab and outside testing to allow OSP to complete the work.

There have been three indictments in Multnomah County in unsolved cases from 2006, 2010 and 2011.

And in Lane County, a man was sentenced earlier this year for raping a teenage girl in 2005 after a match from a kit.

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