

STA invites Sisters to “Toast the Trails”

The Sisters Trails Alliance (STA) invites the public to join in a “Toast the Trails” event at Cork Cellars Wine and Bistro on Tuesday, November 27, from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

“This will be a fun opportunity to socialize with fellow trail lovers, all while supporting the organization that keeps your local trails in fantastic shape,” said STA Program Manager Kate Donovan. “Visit with us before heading over to the Science Club talk at the Belfry!”

STA is a non-profit organization whose mission is to connect people and communities to each other and their natural surroundings. The organization maintains the Peterson Ridge Trail system, produces a free trail map, hosts an annual speaker series, and advocates at the local, regional and national level for trail-users and trail-related issues. STA relies on memberships, donations and Toast the Trails fundraising events to support its work.

Tickets for the event are \$10 and include a glass of wine and light hors d’oeuvres. Tickets can be purchased at www.sisterstrails.org or at the door.

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Ranger: Fire not shooting-related

By **Jim Cornelius**
Editor in Chief

Sisters District Ranger Ian Reid told *The Nugget* last week that an approximately half-acre fire in the vicinity of Zimmerman Butte on the evening of October 26 was apparently caused by someone burning camp trash in a fire.

The Nugget contacted Reid after receiving a letter to the editor concerning the blaze (see *The Nugget*, November 14, page 2).

Letter-writer Stephen King expressed concern that the fire was caused by shooters using Tannerite, a commercially available compound that makes for an exploding or “reactive” target, initiated when struck by a bullet. Zimmerman Butte is a cinder pit on Forest Road 500 west of Sisters, a popular target shooting area, recommended for that use by the Forest Service.

District Ranger Reid said that the fire was not actually in the shooting area at the cinder pit but in the brush nearby.

He said that there was no sign that Tannerite was involved in the ignition of the blaze.

Reid responded to the October 26 fire personally, along with several trucks from Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire. Reid said there were no Forest Service resources available at the time because the agency had stood down as fire season was coming to an end.

Reid said that shooting of Tannerite targets is prohibited in the area and that his agency responds to reports of its use.

King acknowledged the revised information after being contacted by *The Nugget*. He expressed ongoing concern about the use of the site.

“My point is simple, people have the right to shoot on forest land, but when it gets to larger use it needs to be managed,” he told *The Nugget*. “I spoke with Deschutes County and they said given usage profile, if it was under their jurisdiction it would require a gun-range permit. Many hours of noise on a daily basis is unacceptable.”



PHOTO BY CEILI CORNELIUS

Zimmerman Butte is a popular shooting area, recommended by the Forest Service because its high backstop enables safe shooting practices.

The Forest Service closed the McKenzie Gravel Pit west of Crossroads to shooting last June due to user conflicts and safety concerns and has encouraged shooters to use four other sites in Sisters Country that are deemed “more suitable,” including Zimmerman Butte.

Shooting is an allowed use in all areas of the National Forest, except where it is specifically prohibited.

Target shooters are urged

to observe safe shooting practices.

The primary consideration is to be sure of your target — and what lies behind it. A good backstop helps ensure that “stray” bullets or ricochets don’t pose a danger to people hiking or riding in the forest. Most local shooters congregate at one of Sisters Country’s many gravel pits where piles of dirt and cinder, and tall slopes keep the activity confined and safe.

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