

Oregon urges Court to uphold 112-year sentence

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon is urging the U.S. Supreme court to uphold the 112-year sentence given to a man who killed his parents before fatally shooting two students and wounding two dozen others at a high school 20 years ago.

The Oregonian/OregonLive reports 36-year-old Kipland Kinkel filed a petition in early August to the nation's highest court for a review of his sentence in the May 1998 shootings in Springfield, Oregon.

Oregon solicitor general Benjamin Gutman filed a brief in response, saying the sentence shouldn't be overturned because the Oregon Supreme Court found it reflected his "irreparable corruption rather than the transience of youth."

Attorneys Thaddeus Betz and Marsha Levick have argued their client never got the chance to demonstrate that he's not "permanently incorrigible."

Commentary...

Tread lightly and be neighborly

Jim Cornelius
Editor in Chief

There are a lot of people out in the woods these days. Some are hiking; some are riding mountain bikes; some are riding horseback; some are running off-road vehicles; some are target-shooting. In winter, some are cross-country skiing; others are snowshoeing or simply playing in the snow; some are riding snowmobiles.

With recreation on the Deschutes National Forest increasing 15 to 20 percent over the past three years, the traffic is getting heavy — and the potential for conflict rises.

Sheer numbers have an impact all by themselves. Our most beautiful areas are also our most popular, and they are in very real danger of being "loved to death." The Forest Service announced last week a draft decision on limiting access and creating a permitting system for wilderness areas that are seeing the highest volume of traffic, and the heaviest human impact.

There's something in Americans that bristles at being told we can't go somewhere, at whatever time we choose, particularly on

public lands that belong to all of us. At the same time, we recognize that the wilderness experience isn't exactly enhanced by sharing it with the multitudes, particularly when too many in the maddening crowd don't respect the grandeur — and fragility — of what to them is a giant playground.

The Forest Service seems to have done a pretty good job of balancing competing values — access and experience — in their plan. They listened to local input regarding the desire to retain some spontaneity in our plans, holding out some same-day and next-day permits. We may not like it that such a permitting system is necessary, but hopefully it will have the desired effect of enhancing the wilderness experience and easing the burden on the land.

Conflicts also arise in the forest closer to Sisters. Last week, a letter to the editor urged the Forest Service to more aggressively manage the shooting area at Zimmerman Butte, arguing that "corralling shooting into one location for hours a day causes noise pollution, physical harm for people with PTSD and potential

fire danger, within a mile of Sisters."

Zimmerman Butte is as safe an area for shooting as it is possible to designate in a National Forest. The deep cinder pit features massive backstops, easy vehicle access and a wide open area free of brush. The fire danger cited in the letter came not from shooting activity but apparently from a careless fire — a problem anywhere and everywhere in our forests.

Corralling the activity at Zimmerman is precisely the right management choice — even though those of us who used to have the place more-or-less to ourselves most of the time now have to account for more shooters on our range.

Shooting is allowed

anywhere in the National Forest where it is not specifically prohibited. Closing or restricting safe shooting areas would only disperse that activity out into the forest where it might be considerably less safe.

Most of us engage in one or more recreational activities in our forests. Most of us appreciate some of those activities more than others. As more and more people come to Central Oregon to "get away from it all," we're going to run up against each other more frequently in the forest and on the trail. We all have to be tolerant and coexist. We all have to be mindful of others and of the land and clean up after ourselves.

Tread lightly and be neighborly. We're all in this together.

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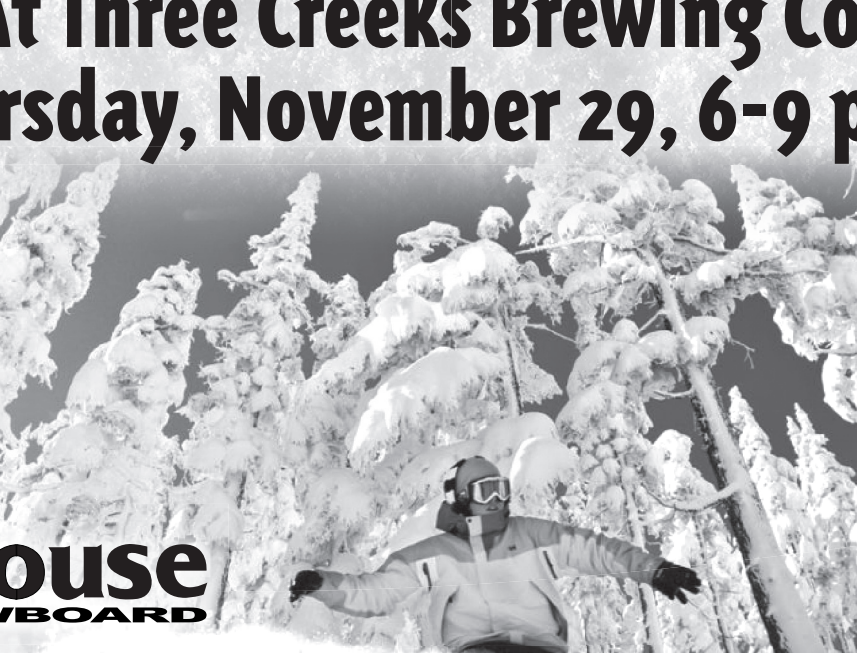
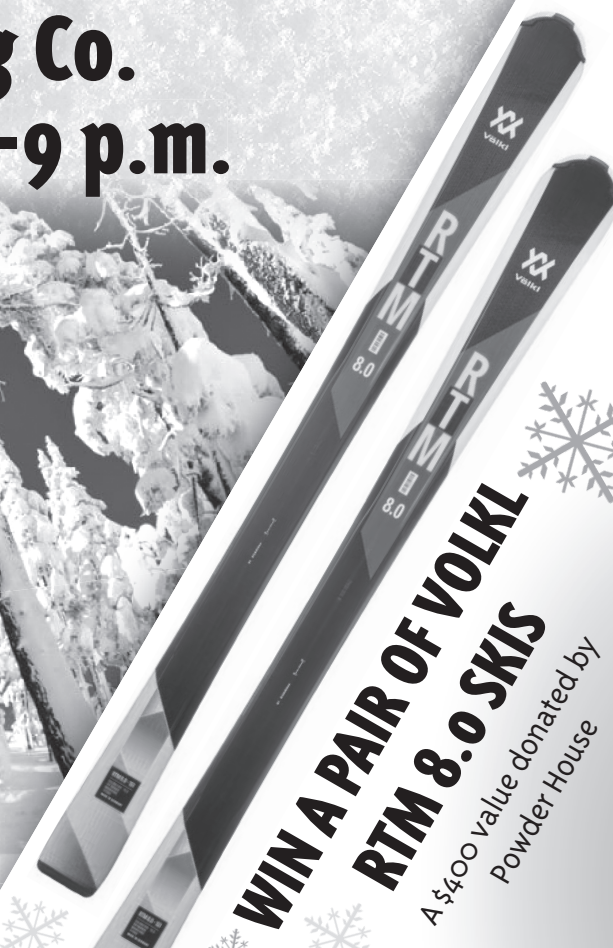
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