

O P I N I O N



Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

On Sunday afternoon, November 4, there was extensive loud automatic rifle fire all day at Edgar Lake on Stevens Canyon (near Indian Ford Road) followed by loud explosions that actually rattled windows of homes over one mile away.

This area does not have high berms for shooting and has become an area of extreme noise pollution for homeowners and an unsafe area for hikers, equestrians and cyclists.

I filed an incident report with the Forest Service. The Forest Service has it designated as a winter game passage area. I think all the game is hightailing away.

Sad that this is allowed to go on so close to many Sisters homeowners and lovers of the great outdoors.

The Forest Service personnel were very courteous at the Sisters Ranger station, and a helpful enforcement officer followed up with me and indicated he would follow up and patrol the area the following weekend.

Gary Wehrle



To the Editor:

Last week there was the suggestion that the Zimmerman Cinder Pit might be more

effectively "managed" by the Forest Service. If the Forest Service were good neighbors they would stop the noise: as in stop the shooting. This would protect sensibilities and protect P.T.S.D. people from physical harm?

With the added specter of wildfire to lend emotional leverage to the "management" agenda: one might wonder how wildfire could emanate from a bare red cinder pit completely devoid of any trees or brush.

In the coming year we shall see the government party and its supporters attempting to "manage," not only where we shoot but what we shoot with. It seems that flyover country deplorables must be brought to heel by their political masters if America is to be "Fundamentally Remade."

Larry Benson



To the Editor:

Reference your article (page 19) on the supermajority. Main menu for the upcoming session is which tax to pass: carbon tax, value-added tax or gross receipts tax (back-door sales tax). Or maybe all three!

Such hard decisions.

John Morter

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Rain 52/30	Rain/Wind 46/35	Rain/Snow 44/28	Partly Cloudy 43/28	AM Showers 45/30	Cloudy 47/34

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SPRD's Operation Shipshape in full swing

By Jeff Tryens
SPRD Board President

In preparation for the arrival of a new permanent executive director, the board of the Sisters Park & Recreation District has initiated a series of actions dubbed Operation Shipshape. Thanks to the generosity of Sisters Country voters, the board is finally able to tie-up a lot of organizational loose ends caused by chronic underfunding. Everything from a barely functioning office computer network to an irrigation system on life support has come under scrutiny thanks to Interim Executive Director Courtney Snead.

Operation Shipshape, drawing on the funds made available by the local option tax levy, takes on five key issues: 1. tightening financial management practices; 2. updating staffing policies; 3. upgrading office technology; 4. clearing the maintenance backlog; and 5. increasing staff compensation.

The financial management initiative is two-pronged. First, the budget process will be overhauled to bring it into clearer alignment with state law. According to Interim Executive Director Snead, "the budget has been adopted in compliance with local budget law, but the process we are undertaking will improve the readability and transparency of the budget document so the public can easily ascertain how its tax dollars are being used." Second, the board will adopt a more formal approach to financial controls, providing a framework for staff to improve internal financial checks and balances that are crucial for a mature public organization.

With guidance from Snead, the board adopted a new organizational structure and, again, is putting much-needed procedures in place. Structurally, a single recreation programs director will handle all recreation programming from kids' sports to adult exercise classes and an event coordinator will assure that all SPRD-sponsored and supported events are handled

professionally and efficiently. Pre-school and after-school programs will continue in their current forms. Also, by year's end, all staff and instructors will, for the first time in memory, have up-to-date job descriptions and hiring agreements.

The old adage about things being held together by baling wire and chewing gum is not far from the truth regarding SPRD's computer network. Constant breakdowns, antiquated software, poor security and terrible internet access plague the "system." While longer term fixes will be needed, the board is currently spending significant sums on replacing the network's server hub, upgrading software, securing the system from possible hackers and finding reliable technology support services.

From a falling-down rain gutter to exposed irrigation wiring, SPRD is faced with myriad physical plant issues that Snead is prioritizing. First up will be: making the front door at the Collfield Center, SPRD headquarters, easier to open for people with disabilities; rekeying the locks on all the doors — a long-overdue task; fixing the ball field irrigation and, of course, securing the rain gutter. Further down the line, improvements will include upgrading the small playground behind the Coffield Center, improving landscaping around the building, and collaborating with the skate park committee to resurface degrading areas of the skate park.

Finally, the board approved a long-overdue across-the-board 3 percent cost of living increase in July and is instituting a first-ever retirement plan designed to encourage employee contributions by matching employees' contributions up to 3 percent of their annual salary.

Through these efforts the board hopes to provide the new permanent executive director with the freedom to immediately focus on engaging with the community and honing SPRD's strategic vision rather than having to deal with a punch list of problems to be fixed.

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