

WILDERNESS:
Restrictions to take effect in 2020

Continued from page 1

same-day and next-day permits will be available for people who want to head to the wilderness on the spur of the moment," said Kim McCarrel, spokeswoman for Oregon Equestrian Trails. "Many equestrian trail riders are concerned that the soaring popularity of our wilderness trails is having a detrimental effect on the wilderness experience. While not everyone agrees a permit system is the right answer, most of us believe that steps need to be taken to limit the damage."

Deschutes National Forest Supervisor John Allen and Willamette National Forest Supervisor Tracy Beck believe this decision strikes a balance between providing access to current users, providing a quality recreation experience, and preserving the opportunity for future users to experience the wilderness character of these areas as intended by Congress.

Local trails advocates are supportive of the plan.

Catherine Hayden, board chair of Sisters Trails Alliance provided *The Nugget* with a statement on the draft decision:

"As a trails organization, STA is a strong advocate for trails and trail access," Hayden wrote. "But we also consider ourselves to be stewards of our natural public lands. We recognize that not all trail users are human. We also have first-hand

experience seeing the impact of unintentional overuse on trails we maintain. We recognize the difficult decision to balance trails access with trails protection in order to preserve a good trails experience — especially in wilderness — for both current and future users. Whether it is urging trail users to practice common-sense trail etiquette, to carry out their trash, STA urges all trail users to respect our trails — even if that may sometimes mean waiting for a permit. Rafting on popular rivers is often by permit only, because too many users at one time spoil the experience for all users. Certain trails in wilderness areas are the same as some rivers. The Obsidian Trail has been on a permit system for years, which has helped maintain the quality of that trail.

"Everyone has a different threshold of what is crowding or a degraded trail experience, but the proposed system aims to protect areas that are at most risk for what almost anyone would consider overuse and degradation. Once a wilderness area is degraded, it may never be fully restored; better to take action before it is too late.

"STA supports this action by the Forest Service — both because it is right and because the FS is putting in place an adaptive, data-driven system that can be modified depending on how it works for users."

Sharri Bertagna, proprietor of Hike-N-Peaks, an outdoor mercantile in Sisters, offered one such modification. She said she would like to see the September ending period on the permits pushed

up to just after Labor Day to allow locals free access to the forest through most of September.

"It's my favorite time to be out there," she said. "For us locals, give us something to hold on to, making it a little earlier."

Forest Supervisor Allen told *The Nugget* that the decision allows for "adaptive management" based on how the system affects users and the wilderness. Some adjustment of the timeframe may be possible in some areas. However, he noted, use remains heavy through autumn.

"We're keeping our mind open for specific trailheads, but I don't think we would roll back that September 30 timeframe broadly," he said.

Overall, Bertagna believes the permitting is a valid response to heavy use.

"I think it will make for a better experience for all traveling out in the woods," she said.

Allen said that the Forest Service has more than two decades of data to measure against in gauging the effectiveness of the restrictions.

"We've inventoried 90 percent-plus of the overnight campsites in these wilderness areas," he said.

Other metrics include condition of trails, including the durability of waterbars (anti-erosion trail features that

used to last two or three years and are now worn down or displaced in a year due to heavy trail traffic).

Allen said that "adaptive management" could move in a variety of directions, but "we really don't want to roll back and be more restrictive."

Brad Chalfant, chair of the Deschutes Trails Coalition said, "While members of the Deschutes Trails Coalition, a homegrown collaboration between local trail user groups, conservation organizations and business, may differ on preferred solutions, we all understand that portions of the Cascade wildernesses like Three Sisters have seen unacceptable impacts to the land, wildlife and wilderness experience. The staff of the Deschutes National Forest are to be applauded for taking a methodical, open and thoughtful approach to developing solutions to ensure that the Wilderness, its resources and experience will continue to be there for our children and generations to come."

The draft decision is subject to objection procedures. The public has an opportunity to file an objection within 45 days of the legal notice of the proposed decision. Following objection resolution, the forest supervisors will issue a final decision in February of 2019 and implementation is expected to begin in 2020.

FIRE: Occupants quickly evacuated home

Continued from page 1

Fire District responded with five emergency vehicles and eight personnel. An additional unit from Black Butte Ranch Fire District and three additional units from Cloverdale Fire District also responded to the fire with a total of eight additional personnel.

Shift Commander Thornton Brown said, "The occupants did the right thing by quickly evacuating the home, calling 911 and alerting the neighbors."

Fire professionals note that the incident is a good reminder when visiting unfamiliar places (vacation homes, hotels, businesses) to locate at least two exits in the event of an emergency.

Have a story idea for **The Nugget?** We'd love to hear it! Send an email to editor@nuggetnews.com

Quality Truck-mounted CARPET CLEANING
Quality Cleaning 16 years in Sisters!
Reasonable Prices — Credit Cards Accepted —
ENVIROTECH
541-771-5048
Licensed • Bonded • Insured • CCB#181062
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL

Residential • Farm & Ranch
Patty Cordoni
Principal Broker/Sisters Branch Manager
Cascade Sotheby's Farm, Ranch, Vineyard Division Manager
patty.cordoni@cascadesir.com
541.771.0931
Cascade Sotheby's International Realty

Free Class
WHAT is an HECM?
Home Equity Conversion Mortgage — The GAME-changing loan to improve one's retirement years. Come and learn...it's not what you think!
3 CLASSES | 6 SESSIONS
FREE to the Public
Thur., Nov. 15, Tues., Nov. 27, or Tues., Dec. 4
10-10:50 a.m. Purchase Info.
11-11:50 a.m. Refinance Info.

PREMIER MORTGAGE RESOURCES
Kathy Kemper-Zanck
Senior Mortgage Advisor
Cell 541-749-0610
Fax 541-610-1813 | NMLS 255580
473 W. Hood Ave., Ste. 103
Sisters, Oregon 97759
Equal Housing Lender | NMLS #1169

We are thankful for your business and wish you a Happy Thanksgiving!

Debbie Brown 541-419-8156
Corrie C. Lake 541-521-2392
LEGACY REALTY
WWW.LEGACY.PROPERTY

Raise a Paw for Furry Friends!

Pet Photos with Santa!
Saturday, Dec. 1
11 am to 2 pm
Inside at the Sisters Art Works Open House
204 W. Adams

Furry Friends Foundation, needs your support to feed Sisters pets this holiday! Make your tax deductible donation payable to Furry Friends Foundation, PO Box 1175, Sisters, OR 97759 or drop off your donation at 204 W. Adams, Ste. 109. Donate online at www.furryfriendsfoundation.org

204 W. Adams, Ste. 109
541-797-4023 • Sisters Art Works
(next to the Habitat Restore Parking Lot)

SISTERS FEED, CENTRAL BARK, American Nutrition, The Nugget Newspaper, SISTERS ARTWORKS