

O P I N I O N

EARLY HOLIDAY DEADLINES FOR THE NUGGET



The Nugget will be closed on Tuesday, December 25 and Tuesday, January 1.

Early deadline for display advertising and the events calendar for *the issue of December 26* is **Thursday, December 20 at 5 p.m.**

Deadline for classified advertising, announcements, letters to the editor and press releases for *the issue of December 26* is **Friday, December 21 at 12 p.m.**

Early deadline for display advertising and the events calendar for *the issue of January 2* is **Thursday, December 27 at 5 p.m.**

Deadline for classified advertising, announcements, letters to the editor and press releases for *the issue of January 2* is **Friday, December 28 at 12 p.m.**

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 Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned.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:

Mark Floyd's story last week (*The Nugget*, December 12, page 17) drives home the consequences of global warming on everyone, not just those that live on the edge of the ocean. The impacts are being felt everywhere now, including Central Oregon. We all had to breathe toxic smoke from California for months this year, which may raise the cancer rates for all affected. There are weather disasters in the U.S. reported on the news every two or three days now, including hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, wildfires, droughts, or deep snow.

These are not normal, and are causing governors to declare "emergency" status so the federal government will contribute recovery money.

This is a global crisis that will only get a lot worse if every one of us does not do our part. Mitigation is necessary, but this is only a band-aid. The trends MUST be reversed. Doing our part does not mean just supporting transition

from coal-fired power plants to green energy, although this is important. CO₂ emissions from cars and trucks are equal to emissions from power plants, likely even bigger in Oregon because we rely so much on hydro-power.

Therefore, doing our part means buying electric vehicles, fuel-efficient vehicles and hybrids. It means limiting unnecessary travel in gas vehicles. It means turning the engine off when parked. The emissions from your car don't just dissipate on the ground locally, they migrate to the upper atmosphere where they contribute to global warming.

Every household and business should be replacing incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, so that other polluting power plants are not used for our power and California and Washington get clean power from us when we have excess. Every household should be buying efficient heat-pumps and avoiding burning

See **LETTERS** on page 20

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Mostly Cloudy 47/33	Showers 51/31	AM Snow Showers 40/25	Rain/Snow 43/32	Rain/Snow 42/34	Rain/Snow 40/31

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Slow down on wilderness restriction

By Barry Clock
Guest Columnist

I'll have to admit that I'm shocked at the lack of response in the letters to the editor section, to the commentary ("*FS wilderness restrictions are too severe*," by Craig Eisenbeis, *The Nugget*, December 4, page 5).

I can appreciate the issue of overuse of certain areas. It does appear something should be done in regards to those areas and the trails that access them. But I oppose the favored paid/reservations required/quota system to hike numerous area trails, proposed by the Forest Service. It will last until October. It's excessive and drastic for a beginning approach to overuse, instead of starting slowly and carefully.

Why is the USFS using such a wide brush on this issue? Instead of restricting only the trails and areas of the *very* highest need. Those trails where it is overwhelmingly obvious to *all* that some controls must be put in place before those select areas are "destroyed" by overuse.

Then, annually, see how those new restrictions actually worked. And if they are shown to be not enough, in a measurable way, and beyond all doubt — then implement additional restrictions. With public input of course. And if it's found that certain trails and areas need fewer restrictions, or none at all, then implement that as well, with removal of restrictions.

I disagree completely with charging money for the trail hiking permits. It provides *every incentive* for the USFS to do the wrong thing, to increase its cash income and restrict trails to the *maximum*. And also every incentive for the USFS to require permits and reservations on more and more trails. The more trails with required permits, the more money for the USFS. The higher and higher the fees per hiker, the more money for

the USFS. The fewer the number of permits, the more money the USFS can charge per permit, because of the scarcity of desired permits.

The USFS is trying to "sell" back to us, the use of the lands that we all own. That bothers me. I would maybe agree, if the USFS budget clearly requires small fees to maintain those restricted trails. But *only* as a *last resort*!

To keep the severe trail permit restrictions in place until October each year is ridiculous — clearly overkill. What is the goal? To only allow "free" hiking when the weather makes it impossible to do so? Come on!

Rigid restrictions that cost money to just hike a trail are the exact opposite of what is needed in a clearly troubled America. Nature offers us *all* a retreat from the "insanity" of parts of life in America today. Offers us a real world, where the artificial tech world fades into the background for a few hours or days. That's terribly important to provide to all of us but especially the young. We are lucky enough in Central Oregon to live next door to that "real" world of nature. And we're going to surrender our ability to use it?

Please, please start slow, and then proceed carefully and methodically. As uncomfortable and messy as the process is, include the maximum general public in the process at every possible opportunity.

I had hoped I wouldn't be around to see this day come. I'd much rather lose my right to vote or my right to free speech than to lose my "right" to sometimes just get away to beauty and nature on a moment's notice. Rather than to lose my ability to totally forget about money, problems and *all* that, for a few dozen hours or a few days every year. Even if I don't use it, just knowing I can ... is worth the world to me. I'm completely serious. I know that is true for many others that live here.

Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.