

Popular trail writer to make Sisters encore

By Craig F. Eisenbeis
Correspondent

Popular trail writer William L. “Bill” Sullivan will be speaking at The Bjarne Holm Speaker Series, which is sponsored by the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA). His appearance will mark the series’ first-ever “encore” performance.

Perhaps the Northwest’s best-known trail writer, Sullivan will be speaking in Sisters next week. His appearance last year was so well received that he was asked to return for yet another trail update; and, with all the local changes taking place, an update is definitely in order.

For many years, Sullivan has been a principal source for trail and hiking information in our area. He is the author of 22 books, including the updated “100 Hikes” series. His “100 Hikes in the Central Oregon Cascades” is considered by many to be the hiking bible for Sisters Country, and it has been fully updated for this year.

His presentation will highlight recent changes and additions to local hiking options, as well as anticipated restrictions to wilderness hiking opportunities due to be implemented next year. The program will include a slide show featuring the exceptional photography for which his presentations have become known. The event is being co-sponsored by Paulina Springs Books.

Over the last five years, STA has sponsored a series of public talks focused on local outdoor recreation

and natural-resource issues. The Bjarne Holm Speaker Series was launched by the late Bjarne Holm, for whom STA named the series in 2016. Since its inception, the purpose of STA’s series has been to enhance outdoor public recreation opportunities in the Sisters area and to educate the public about the natural world.

Regarding the upcoming event, Catherine Hayden, STA’s current board chair, said, “It’s such a treat to have Bill return to the speaker series. His presentations are wonderful, and I look forward to hearing this one.”

Very familiar with the Sisters area, Sullivan has hiked Sisters Country since the early 1960s, as well as cross-country skied the area in winter. He has made it a point to personally hike every trail, so his writing relies on his personal experience. Further, he updates the book every year and rehikes the trails on a regular basis.

Many of Sullivan’s fans no doubt envy his job, but it’s not always what it seems.

“Hiking for a living is a tougher job than most people imagine,” he says. “Actually, it wouldn’t be that hard if I just published a book and walked away without looking back. Some authors do that. But I print updated versions of my Central Oregon guidebook every single year. I even offer a free book to anyone who finds a correction I haven’t yet posted on my website’s ‘Trail Updates’ page at www.oregonhiking.com.”

His newest Central Oregon update brought with

it some especially challenging work.

“This past year,” he said. “with all the fires and the upcoming permit changes, I basically had to rewrite the book for trails near Sisters. So I’ve published a new edition with a new cover and lots of new hikes. Two summers of wildfire burned nearly two dozen trails. Nineteen of the most heavily used paths are likely to be impacted by limited-entry permits in 2020.”

Still, he thought those challenges brought with them some new opportunities.

“I set out to look for new trails — or overlooked trails — that did not burn and are not plagued with overcrowding. And guess what? I found some terrific gems not far from Sisters. In sharing what I’ve found, my goal is to entice people to explore some new places. The best way to walk lightly on the land is to leave the crowds behind. Let me help you find some new hikes in the Central Oregon Cascades!”

Donna Timmerman, a former STA Board member and current Bjarne Holm Speaker Series Committee member, said, “I have attended four of Bill’s presentations and always enjoy his insights and updated trail information. He’s an excellent speaker and makes his already interesting topics more personalized. He gives you the low-down on current maintenance of the trails systems so you can plan your hikes better, too. We’re

very fortunate to have him present his Central Oregon slide show here in Sisters.”

Sue Tank is the manager of Paulina Springs Books and is quite pleased to be co-hosting Sullivan’s upcoming visit.

“His talks are something we look forward to,” she said. “We really like Bill and are looking forward to his talk and slide show presentation. He will talk about new hikes in the area, and that will be reflected in this new updated edition of 100 Hikes in the Central Oregon Cascades.”

Through sponsorship of these free public presentations, STA is working to promote outdoor public recreation and education in Sisters Country. This next event will be held on Thursday, May 9, in the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Station Community Hall in downtown Sisters at 301 S. Elm St. Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the formal program will begin at 7 p.m. The program is free and open to the public. Snacks and refreshments will be provided. Donations to help offset expenses are appreciated;

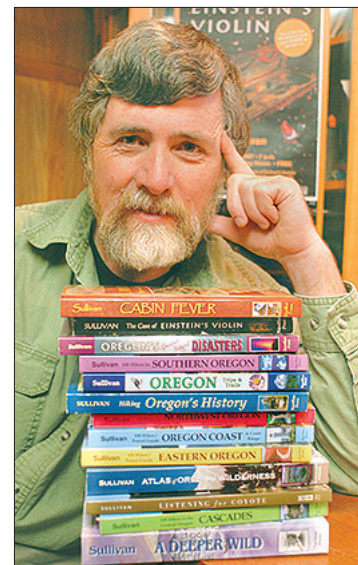


PHOTO PROVIDED

Bill Sullivan will be speaking next week in Sisters.

a \$5 amount is suggested. Donors will be eligible to win raffle prizes donated by REI.

Sullivan’s featured books will also be available at a 10 percent discounted price, and there will be a drawing for a free book.

For information about STA or performing volunteer work on trails or other outdoor-related projects, contact the organization at 541-719-8822. Additional information can also be found on their website at <https://sisterstrails.org> or follow STA on Facebook at Sisters Trails Alliance.

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