

## SHOOTING: Forest offers many potential sites for activity

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described it.

Some of them are active rock pits that the Forest Service contracts out to ODOT for mining for road cinders, and, as such, are subject to period temporary closure.

The most popular spot is at Zimmerman Butte about 4.5 miles west of Sisters. It is a deep cinder pit with a significant backstop, and is easily accessible from Highway 20 by any type of vehicle. That also means it gets heavy use. That use is within earshot of many local residences, and some of those living nearby have complained of the shooting noise. (Disclosure: Jim Cornelius shoots several times a week at Zimmerman Butte).

In a letter to the editor last year, Stephen King, who lives at Cascade Meadow Estates, said 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. I would urge the Forest Service to do a better job of managing these areas.”

Local resident Pete Kershaw wrote to *The Nugget*, “Target practice at the Zimmerman Cinder Pit has been going on for decades. We have lived within earshot of it since 1992. Until about 10 years ago, the noise was just a single shot to a target...The normal hours were mostly weekends between 8 a.m. and early evening. I took part in this sport at the Pit and greatly enjoyed it. Shooters

picked up their brass and cartridges, etc.

“...It’s a different crowd up there now. Some are not sportsmen at all. They litter the area and the firing goes on non-stop with every type of rapid-fire rifle along with the exploding targets. Shooting starts at daylight and goes well after dark. Rapid fire that is easily heard in the residential communities of Indian Ford, Cascade Meadow Ranch, and Tollgate and other surrounding areas. This annoyance needs to be curtailed.”

area, under the auspices of a shooting sports organization called Trash No Land [www.TrashNoLand.org](http://www.TrashNoLand.org). That organization promotes safe, responsible shooting in the National Forests.

Safe, responsible shooting includes observing basic safety protocols, including treating all firearm as loaded and being aware of and accounting for any other recreational activity in the area, and practicing good stewardship by picking up empty cartridge casings and packing out whatever targets and target stands are brought into a shooting area.

Tannerite exploding targets are not allowed anywhere on the National Forest. Shooters should not fire at trees, which damages them to the point of killing them, and can pose a fire hazard if using steel-jacketed bullets.

As all types of recreation increase on the National Forest and as more people move into the urban-wildland interface, citizens and the Forest Service that serves them will continue to have to find ways to balance sometimes competing values and activities.

## Local shooting pits, including distance from Sisters:

Cache Cinder Pit: 15 miles (four-wheel drive, high clearance vehicle recommended).

Four-mile Cinder Pit: 7 miles (200 yards of range; high-clearance four-wheel drive vehicle required).

Garrison Cinder Pit: 7.3 miles (medium-sized pit; high clearance vehicle recommended).

Melvin Cinder Pit: 8 miles (easy access; small pit suitable for handgun/shotgun).

Pole Creek Cinder Pit: 9.8 miles (small pit; relatively easy access, four-wheel drive recommended).

Schilling Cinder Pit: 19.7 miles (easy access; high-clearance vehicle; suitable for rifle/pistol/shotgun).

Reid emphasizes that the Forest Service does not manage or regulate the shooting sites.

Other sites on the District see less use than Zimmerman Butte — in part because they are less accessible. That can actually make them more attractive to shooters looking to evade a crowd.

Last August, about 20 shooting enthusiasts along with Forest Service personnel and local law enforcement officers, gathered on Saturday morning to conduct a stewardship cleanup at the Zimmerman Butte shooting



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

John Cornelius runs an AR-15 rifle at Zimmerman Butte, where tall backstops and a lack of obstacles creates a safe shooting environment.

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