

# Writing prize event to go virtual

In compliance with Oregon Governor Kate Brown's current COVID-19 phased reopening schedule, the High Desert Museum and the Waterston Desert Writing Prize will hold the September 10, 2020 Prize awards ceremony virtually.

The 2020 Prize winner, finalists, and the inaugural winner of the student desert writing prize will be honored at a ZOOM event at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 10, hosted by the Waterston Desert Writing Prize Board and the High Desert Museum.

That virtual celebration will include readings, the awarding of the coveted Waterston Desert Writing Prize — a \$2,500 cash award as well as a two week artist's residency at PLAYA, Summer Lake, Oregon — and announcements regarding future plans and the growth of the Prize.

Environmental writers Robert Michael Pyle and Dahr Jamail, to have been featured in this year's "A Desert Conversation" panel discussion, a staple of Prize festivities, will be invited to participate in 2021. The 2020 creative writing workshops will also be postponed.

What this means is a big celebration in 2021. The Waterston Desert Writing Prize looks forward to both celebrating the winner, finalists and student winner at the seventh annual Waterston Desert Writing Prize awards ceremonies in June 2021, and retroactively honoring the 2020 winners and finalists.

In the meantime, social media will bring the September 10 ceremony to the public live. An invitation to, and details about, that ZOOM gathering will be sent out closer to the date.

The 2020 Waterston

Desert Writing Prize winner, Hannah Hindley, Tucson, Arizona, submitted a proposal titled "Thin Blue Dream," a collection of interconnected stories that explore the Sonoran Desert's disappearing waterways, the fish that used to call them home, and the successes and complications that come with efforts to help restore depleted tributaries with city effluent.

"It's a strange story of ghost rivers, dead fish, and resilience in the heart of urban spaces in the desert," said Hindley.

Currently completing her Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Nonfiction at the University of Arizona, Hindley is also a wilderness guide and naturalist.

Finalist Eli Beck, Salt Lake City, Utah, was recognized for his submission, "Rude Awakenings," an examination of wilderness therapy programs in the Four Corners region of New Mexico. He will weave in the fraught natural and political history of the landscapes that these young people find themselves in, and describe the "minimal impact" these teenagers are taught in their interactions with the land.

Beck says, "My hope in writing this book is to allow the unexamined habits of our culture to appear in full contrast against the backdrop of the desert, and to promote a message of reconciliation among our fractured landscapes, families and selves."

Leath Tonino, Ferrisburgh, Vermont, submitted "Nooks and Crannies: Mapping the (Unmappable) Waterpocket Fold with Prose Vignettes," a documentation of his outdoor encounters in this iconic location. For 15 years, Tonino has been exploring Utah's Waterpocket Fold,

the sandstone that forms the spine of Capitol Reef National Park.

Tonino says, "The version of desert literacy that I hope to advance has less to do with knowing what a place is and more to do with a distinct style of engagement, i.e. how to be with our not-knowing, with the fact that we simply can't reduce the Fold to one interpretation or understanding."

Student contest winner Al Lehto submitted an essay about the many hours their artist mother spent painting in the Badlands (now a federally designated wilderness area) just east of Bend, and the times they would join her. There, according to Lehto, their mother found solace, escape and inspiration.

Al wrote, "As I've grown older, my mom's passion for the aged trees has been more natural, and brought me closer to understanding her compassion for wildlife and longing for the great wide spaces they offer."

# Forest Service opens some day-use sites

The Deschutes National Forest opened most developed day-use sites and boat ramps on the national forest.

Those sites remaining closed have hazard trees or still have significant snow, the Forest Service reported.

"I am happy to share that we are opening many of our boat launches and trailheads that provide access to the landscape and recreation we all enjoy so much," said Forest Supervisor Holly Jewkes last week. "We appreciate your understanding as we work to restore services to these sites. In the meantime, we will not be charging day use fees."

The specific status of each site on the Deschutes National Forest can be found at [www.fs.usda.gov/main/deschutes/home](http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/deschutes/home).

Though these sites are considered open to the public, restrooms will not be regularly cleaned or maintained, nor will garbage services be provided. The public

should be prepared to recreate responsibly without these services, "pack it in, pack it out," and put campfires dead out.

All campgrounds on the Deschutes National Forest remain closed. Dispersed camping is still allowed.

"We are working to open some campgrounds on the forest the first weekend in June. We will continue to open more campgrounds as safety issues are addressed and services can be provided," said Jewkes.

Responsible recreation practices include:

- Maintain at least six feet distancing from others and respect other people on trails.
- Alert other trail users of your presence and step aside to let others pass.
- Pack out your trash and leave with everything brought in. Pack it in, pack it out.
- Pack out your used toilet paper (use a small plastic bag) and bury human waste at least eight inches deep.



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