

Forest Service seeks to protect caves

On the Deschutes National Forest there are approximately 700 known caves, which are often abused by forest users, including vandalism, lighting fires, playing music, excavating and removing geologic and archaeological resources, installing permanent anchors or bolts for climbing, leaving human and domestic animal body waste, and disturbing bats and other wildlife.

The Deschutes National Forest is seeking public comment on a proposed Cave Management Forest Order that would prohibit specific activities in and around caves where these activities are causing adverse impacts to cave resources. Most of these prohibitions are taken from existing forest orders and the proposed order would combine these orders into one with some additional changes.

In addition to current prohibitions, the proposed Cave Management Forest Order would:

- Protect all cave sinks and a 50-foot buffer from any cave entrance or opening.
- Prohibit lighting, maintaining, attending, or using any burning material; digging, excavating, and/or depositing any foreign material; playing live or recorded music; broadcasting glitter, dust (beyond what is naturally produced by walking and crawling), smoke, or other substances into the air; slacklining; and depositing any domestic animal body waste within all caves.

- Prohibit entering or being in Lava River Cave (west tube, show cave) from October 1 through April 30 (winter closure), or until the beginning of the open season, whichever is latest; entering or being in Lava River Cave (west tube, show cave) from May 1 to September 30, or after the end of the open season, whichever is earliest, between the hours of 5 p.m. and 9 a.m.; entering or being in the last 300 feet of the west tube (west tube, show cave); entering or being in the gated east tube of the cave year round; and climbing or bouldering within the cave, cave sink, and within 50 feet of any cave entrance, opening, or cave sink.

- Prohibit entering or being within Skeleton Cave year-round and climbing or bouldering inside or outside the gate at the cave entrance from October 1 through April 30.

- Close year-round Bat, Charlie the Cave (both upper and lower chambers), Cody Borehole, Eternity, Infinity, Lavacicle and Wind caves.

- Seasonally close Arnold Ice, Lee's, Lower Quartz Mountain, and Skylight caves

October 1 through April 30.

The public comment period will end on July 23. The draft environmental assessment is available online at www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57443. Written comments must be submitted using one of the following methods:

- Electronic comments can be submitted to comments-pacificnorthwest-deschutes@usda.gov. Electronic comments must be submitted as part of the email message or as an attachment in Microsoft Word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), or portable document format (.pdf) only.

- For electronically submitted comments, the sender should receive an automated acknowledgment from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive automated acknowledgment of the receipt of the comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

- Postal mail or hand-delivery (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Forest Supervisor Holly Jewkes, c/o Sasha Fertig, 63095 Deschutes Market Rd., Bend, OR 97701.

- FAX: 541-383-5553.

Only people who submit timely and specific written comments will have eligibility to file an objection. Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act. Additional information can be obtained from Environmental Coordinator Sasha Fertig, 541-383-5563, sasha.fertig@usda.gov.

Hazardous waste disposal event set in Sisters

This summer, Deschutes County's Department of Solid Waste is hosting special one-day collection events in La Pine, Redmond and Sisters where residents can drop off household hazardous waste for free.

"This is a great chance for people to get rid of their household hazardous waste, which can be difficult to dispose of in a safe way," said Timm Schimke, Deschutes County's Director of Solid Waste. "Events like these help people dispose of hazardous items correctly and helps keep them out of the landfill."

At each event, residents can drop off household hazardous waste products such as lawn and gardening materials, photo and swimming pool chemicals, paint and related products, cleaning solutions, motor oil and used gas, batteries, fluorescent bulbs and tubes, and small propane tanks.

Business-generated hazardous waste, medical waste, explosives, fireworks, drums, compressed gas cylinders and barrels will not be accepted.

The Sisters event is set for Saturday, August 1, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Sisters Recycling Center 328 W. Sisters Park Dr.

For more information, call the Department of Solid Waste at 541-317-3163.

CITY OF SISTERS COVID-19 Situation Report

By Cory Misley
City Manager

The City of Sisters supports creating a community as safe and prosperous as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The science shows that use of face coverings significantly reduces the spread of the virus, especially in indoor environments.

Governor Brown's order to wear face coverings in public indoor spaces is an attempt to keep Oregon open. If we cannot diligently exercise social distancing, hand washing, and wear face coverings, while public health officials continue to expand testing and contact tracing, we may move backwards in the phased re-opening.

As we are all hearing, many states around the country are experiencing significant surges in case counts and many are tightening restrictions reminiscent of the beginning of the pandemic. It is critical that everyone embrace the simple act of wearing a face covering in public indoor spaces for their own sake and even more their neighbors and fellow Americans. Regarding enforcement, if it unfortunately comes to that, below is a statement from the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office that provides law enforcement service to the City of Sisters.

The Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer Lieutenant William Bailey, also serving effective July 1, 2020 as the City of Sisters interim Lieutenant or de facto police chief through the new law enforcement contract, shared a message for the community regarding COVID-19 and face coverings.

"Central Oregon law enforcement agencies have received questions about what our roles are in enforcing the Governor's order to wear face coverings inside public buildings. It has always been our goal to help community members understand the health and safety guidelines that have been put into place across Oregon. Our philosophy of enforcing this and other orders will continue to be education and to seek voluntary compliance. As the Governor has stated, the expectation is that OSHA Oregon will take the lead in enforcing her facemask requirement. Law Enforcement will respond to and investigate all calls for service from business owners who report disputes or disturbances related to the face-mask requirement, and then take the appropriate enforcement action if necessary. Unless the call requires a law enforcement response, call OSHA at the toll-free number, 800-922-2689."

Learn more at www.ci.sisters.or.us

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