

WILDFIRE:

Projects help protect Sisters Country

Continued from page 3

biologist, explained that a small restoration project in / Glaze Meadow built trust and a collaborative spirit with environmental groups that helped get the major Sisters Area Fuels Reduction Project (SAFR) off the ground. SAFR treated thousands of acres, including the area that would be hit by the Pole Creek Fire.



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Dense, untreated woodlands are vulnerable to devastating fire. Treated areas withstand fire well and slow its progress.

“First we did it on 1,200 acres, then we did it on 20,000 acres,” she said. “And SAFR really saved Sisters.”

Fire manager Rod Bonacker explained how that happened. He was part of the team that was trying to get ahead of the spreading conflagration, building fire breaks at night.

“Strategically, we needed to stop the fire spreading east and southeast,” he said.

When a moving wildfire hits previously thinned and treated areas, it tends to drop to the ground and slow down, giving firefighters an opportunity to fight it safely and get containment lines around it. Areas treated in SAFR provided an opportunity for fire crews.

“That’s where we elected to do our work,” Bonacker recalled. “We were essentially linking those treated units that we already had. We essentially put a U-shaped control line around the southeast and the south end of the fire.”

Without those previously treated areas, “we would have had 10 times more work to do,” Bonacker said.

In contrast to treated areas, spots that were dense and overgrown after decades of fire suppression took a heavy hit.

Just south of the area where the field trip was held is an area where the main fire ran up against a fire crew’s burnout. Where treated areas withstand fire and come back healthy and even stronger, the wildfire created 100 percent mortality in the overgrown stand.

“You have a snag patch,” Bonacker said.

How to get those treatments done on the scale required to truly enhance forest health and the safety of local communities is a vexing question for forest managers.

Retired Sisters District Ranger Kristi Miller explained that it takes several years to prepare the environmental analysis for a project — and the public doesn’t always like what they see in a project — particularly the prescribed burning that can smudge up Sisters Country on the first nice days of spring.

“Mostly what they don’t like is the cutting of the trees and the smoke in the air,” Miller said.

However, she noted,

Sisters has seen the devastating smoke impacts of weeks of uncontrolled wildfire — and prescribed fire and thinning is a small price to try to avoid that.

“In Central Oregon, it’s not a matter of if you’re going to have fire move across your landscape, it’s when,” Miller said. “It’s better to control when you have fire and how much smoke you put into the air than to let Mother Nature do it.”

Chang said that citizens should prod their elected officials to advocate more strongly for federal funding for fuels-reduction projects.

“We often hear from elected officials that environmental review is the hold-up,” Chang said. “The big challenge is not environmental review. We need our elected officials advocating for that funding from Congress. We are ready to go on the work. What we need is a Marshall Plan for funding to get this done.”

Chang is running to unseat Phil Henderson from the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners. Henderson, who represents the County on the Deschutes Forest Collaborative, says that funding isn’t the crux of the issue. He said he would be happy to advocate for funding from Congress if the Forest Service needs that support — but he sees the bottleneck in another area: limitations on the number of days when the Forest Service can burn.

“That’s the big bugaboo,” he said. “It’s not having the resources, it’s having the days to do it. “I don’t really think our problem... is really a shortage of dollars to do the treatment. We can’t do the treatments we have.”

Chang acknowledged that the coronavirus pandemic and the economic fallout from it could have as yet unforeseen impact on funding. But he noted that forest restoration has been used in the past as economic stimulus.

He believes the work can provide jobs and is a long term investment in the health of forests and communities like Sisters.

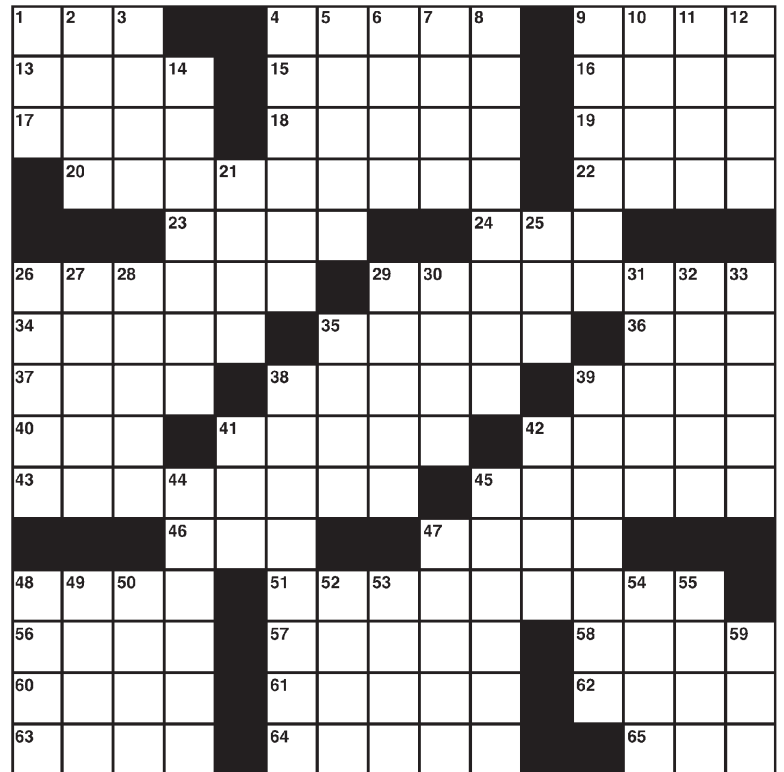
“This is a great time to be advocating for these funds,” he said.

The Nugget Newspaper Crossword

By Jacqueline E. Mathews, Tribune News Service

- ACROSS**
- 1 Olive of cartoon fame
 - 4 Island in the Bay of Naples
 - 9 Explorer Marco
 - 13 Phobia
 - 15 E.T., for one
 - 16 Like eager beavers
 - 17 Destiny
 - 18 Dressed to the ___; smartly attired
 - 19 Give, but expect back
 - 20 Geometric shape
 - 22 Peeves
 - 23 Part in a film
 - 24 Cheap container
 - 26 Hardships
 - 29 Couch potato
 - 34 French ___ soup
 - 35 “The Mary Tyler ___ Show”
 - 36 Arabian or Aegean
 - 37 First man
 - 38 Halt temporarily
 - 39 City in western Germany
 - 40 Continuous noise
 - 41 Undergarments
 - 42 Purple ___; NH’s state flower
 - 43 Carryalls
 - 45 Sell on the street
 - 46 ___ moment; instant of realization
 - 47 Paper fastener
 - 48 Spill the beans
 - 51 Overexerting
 - 56 Cartoon bear
 - 57 Get up
 - 58 Role on “Cheers”
 - 60 Chief Norse deity
 - 61 Furniture dings
 - 62 Equipment
 - 63 Stiller & Savage
 - 64 Browned bread
 - 65 Scale divisions: abbr.

- DOWN**
- 1 “Knock it ___!”
 - 2 Lease length, often
 - 3 Not punctual
 - 4 Panama & Erie
 - 5 Skirt style
 - 6 ___-Pong
 - 7 Feel dizzy
 - 8 Lacking confidence
 - 9 Losing color
 - 10 Superior to
 - 11 Sausage shape
 - 12 Probability
 - 14 Place for a home pool table
 - 21 Having mixed emotions
 - 25 Ice ___; cold period
 - 26 Highways
 - 27 Mumbai’s nation
 - 28 Big fellow
 - 29 Broth & chowder
 - 30 Team defeat
 - 31 ___ as the hills
 - 32 Of the kidneys
 - 33 Waltz or twist
 - 35 Letter carrier’s sackful
 - 38 Enjoyable
 - 39 Placing an eBay offer
 - 41 “Quiet!”



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

— Last Week’s Puzzle Solved —



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- 42 Like pricey hamburger
- 44 Forest homes
- 45 Man of the cloth
- 47 Sunbathes
- 48 “Come with liquor, if you want any”
- 49 Mother ___; rich ore deposit
- 50 Opposin’
- 52 The Bee Gees, e.g.
- 53 Panama’s neighbor
- 54 Christmas song
- 55 Seize
- 59 Sra. or Mme.

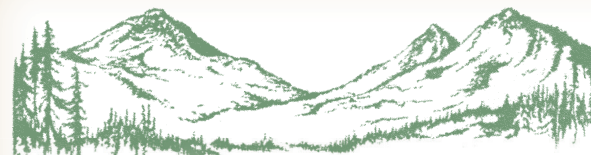
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