



**Fit For Sisters**  
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Columnist

**Where to find stability and balance**

The body is a very integrated machine, down to the framework of the muscles, tendons, ligaments, and bones. When all of these are in harmonious alignment, they provide the body with stability, strength, injury resilience and balance.

This system is worth understanding better. It is fundamental to day-to-day mobility, and athletic prowess. If balance and stability or injury prevention is a concern, look at how the biomechanic machine is aligned or misaligned to gain insight on improvements.

The body is a compensatory phenomenon. If you have a sore knee, the muscles up and down the chain stiffen up to provide a sort of splinting around the injury. A person can live on the brink of catastrophic injury with these compensations for a long time. A muscle held in a long or shortened position will become adapted to it, and the reciprocal muscles will

lose tone to adapt to this new alignment.

A forward lean creates tight back muscles, short hip flexors, and rounded shoulders. Balance is compromised and the core muscles can't hold the midsection tight. When the body is held in a sitting position the diaphragm is squished and breathing is suboptimal. A weak foot leads to collapsing knee stability, painful squats, weak hips, and eventually back pain will ensue.

This is where a nuanced look at your posture, muscular tensions, and strength can be helpful. Tight muscles are often tight because of a weakness in other areas. Is the neck tight because of weakness in a shoulder range of motion? Will the core hold up to a step twist and catch of the bodyweight? Make these considerations and critically think about the system as a whole.

Once mobility, core function, and the system are better aligned, you will find the balance and stability you feel like you've been lacking. Think head over shoulders; chest open and shoulders rolled back; ribcage upright; flat lumbar spine with hips under your center; knees pointed forward; active foot with arches supporting.

This will be a starting point for all movements. Practice. If you need more help, coaches are a great asset. There are plenty of physical therapists, exercise specialists, chiropractors, and massage therapists around who know their stuff. Above all, think more about how your body is moving and what small changes can add up to a much better being.

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**TROUT CREEK:** Area is used for study, conservation

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rapid growth in Sisters have prompted school personnel to step up efforts to educate residents about the need to protect the area.

Last week, a driver accessed the TCCA via Highway 242 and traveled all the way across the property before becoming stuck and temporarily abandoning the car. Motorcyclists have been sighted in the area off and on all summer, and large and unleashed dogs have been reported chasing deer and their fawns.

The new Hayden Homes

**“ We simply want people to be aware it is a conservation area and treat it accordingly. – Superintendent Curt Scholl**

development directly east of the property has added dozens of residences within easy walking distance to the TCCA, which has resulted in more human activity in the area. A packed gravel path built by Sisters Trail Alliance, which connects Tollgate to the schools, runs along the entire east side of the TCCA and is well used. Additionally, the popular disc golf course west of the high school skirts the edge of the TCCA.

Superintendent Curt Scholl and facilities manager Ryan Stock, along with Givot, all recognize the need to educate area residents and to take further action to protect the area. Plans are in the works to add signage at different access points to the property and to block



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sisters High School students conduct fieldwork in the Trout Creek Conservation Area – the school's outdoor laboratory.

off places where vehicles have been entering the property, which is mostly on the southwest side near the irrigation pond.

“We simply want people to be aware it is a conservation area and treat it accordingly, said Scholl.

Givot said, “This unique forest has become a long-term ecological research study area for our students, who have been visiting this area to learn about our local ecosystem. Students learn to identify native plants and animals, conduct scientific field studies, and develop a sense of stewardship in the process.”

Givot's biology classes have been collecting data in the conservation area since 2006 which includes plant and animal counts. In 2006 thinning operations helped reduce the threat of wildfires, which was very important

for the residents of Tollgate, and enhanced the health of remaining trees and plants, according to Givot.

The TCCA is home to two “sensitive species” including Peck's penstemon and the white-headed woodpecker, as well as a corridor for deer, coyotes, and other mammals.

Some reminders for those entering the TCCA include:

- Stay on established trails.
- Leash dogs.
- Report any signs of motorized vehicle use.
- No horses are allowed in the area.
- Any activities that include soil disruption are strongly discouraged, including biking off-trail.

• Obviously, smoking is highly discouraged in the area due to the threat of fire.

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