



The Ranger's Corner
 Ian Reid
 Sisters District Ranger

Fall 2020

In a year known for its trials and tribulations, fire season 2020 was no exception. While the Sisters Ranger District escaped much of the devastation, the Warm Springs Reservation and many of Oregon's national and state forests, cities, towns, private timber managers, and residents were not so fortunate.

Just seven weeks ago a large fire raged in almost every major river drainage in western Oregon. Fueled by extremely low live-fuel moistures and a dry cold front that brought strong east winds, when wildfires started around Labor Day they grew at staggering rates. I visited my former hometown of Talent, Oregon several weeks ago and was overcome by emotion at the sight of homes, businesses, and entire neighborhoods, there and in adjacent Phoenix, leveled by the Alameda fire. That same day the Lionhead and Beachie Creek fires ravaged the North Santiam Canyon to the west of Sisters.

Likely many of us have a friend, loved one, or treasured place that was forever changed by the firestorm of 2020.

Across Oregon and Washington, over 1.1 million acres of national forest burned in August and September 2020. Inside that

area were 444 miles of trail, 1,305 miles of road, 91 recreation sites, over 100 bridges and 169 buildings. Almost 100 Forest Service employees across the region were impacted by being evacuated or losing their residence, in addition to 240 government-owned facilities affected. Through a new initiative called Operation Care and Recovery, the Forest Service is working to expedite recovery of burned areas and help our affected employees and communities.

Locally, the Sisters Ranger District had two wildfires this year classified as extended attack: Green Ridge and Lionshead. Green Ridge was contained around 4,300 acres, the majority on private timberland. Several incident management teams (IMTs) excelled in keeping the fire away from developed areas such as Camp Sherman. With the oversight of multiple IMTs, the Lionshead Fire was contained at just over 200,000 acres, however, only several hundred acres burned on the Sisters Ranger District, in previous burn scars in the Mount Jefferson Wilderness. We appreciate the efforts of all our partners and cooperators this season to protect life, property, and resources.

Summer wildfires are a solemn reminder of the need for active management to reduce ladder fuels and tree density. As 2020 starts to wind down, we will double down on our planning efforts tied to the Green Ridge Landscape Restoration project, a 25,000-acre project to reduce fuels and moderate future wildfire behavior between Sisters and Camp Sherman. We saw firsthand this summer the need to have defensible areas along Green Ridge, given its past

fire history and continuous fuels.

To help us with the Green Ridge Restoration Project and many others, we recently hired Andrew Myhra as the permanent fuels specialist/assistant fire management officer on the district, replacing Larae Guillory who accepted a promotion in Prineville. Andrew helped us here this summer on many of the large wildfires and will be a wonderful addition to the Sisters Ranger District permanent workforce.

Although we were able to accomplish a tremendous amount of field work this summer — including firefighting — due to COVID-19 the front office of the ranger station is still closed to the general public. We are still available by phone at 541-549-7700 during weekday business hours. Or you can email us at mailroom_r6_central_oregon@usda.gov and we will reply as soon as possible. We apologize for any inconvenience and have extended our free-permit season for forest products such as mushrooms and firewood through the end of November.

Finally, we recently kicked off our architecture and engineering contract with local firm Steele Associates Architects to design the new Sisters Ranger Station, warehouse, and the remainder of the administrative site along Pine Street as we reinvest land sale funds into an energy-efficient and accessible ranger station. We know there is a lot of public interest in this parcel and look forward to working with this firm who understands the community values and also having the City of Sisters involved in the planning and design review team.

Stay safe and be well.

PLANNER: Woodford encourages residents to get involved

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matter," he said.

He is already aware that the citizens of Sisters value the small details.

He is versed in topics like transfer taxes, inconspicuous infill, deed restrictions, and urban-growth boundary expansion. Woodford uses the Great Neighborhood Principles when assessing a new master-plan application. Those principles include consideration of mix of units; bike and pedestrian paths; parks, streetscape, alley loading (garage access off alleys); and front porches to encourage a sense of community.

Woodford strongly encourages the residents of Sisters to get involved in the upcoming Comprehensive Plan update.

"We are at a critical



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Community Development Director Scott Woodford.

junction in our community. This is your opportunity to help shape the future development of Sisters," he urged. "If you are concerned about the future, now is the time to get involved."

Information on how to participate can be found on the website www.Sisters2040.com.

Woodford wants the community to know that once COVID restrictions at City Hall are lifted, his "door is always open and I'm always here to answer questions."

He can be reached at swoodford@ci.sisters.or.us.

Portraits
 OF SISTERS



PHOTO AND STORY BY *Cody Rheault*

Work from global and local artists alike converge at the Bedouin boutique. *Harmony Thomas*, a Sisters native, took over ownership back in 2018. A former Bedouin employee in her teen years, Harmony found a knack for the global market — providing an opportunity for artists to share their craftsmanship in her store with an emphasis on sustainability. Involved deeply within the community she says her "heart is invested in Sisters."



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