

The Nugget

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Burning to protect and restore forest

By Jim Cornelius
Editor In Chief

Sisters residents get jittery when they see a big plume of smoke on the horizon. Two decades of wildfires that have seriously disrupted life in Sisters Country will do that.

But the smoke that billowed up to the south of town last week bodes well for Sisters, fuels specialists and fire managers say. The smoke came from a multi-day prescribed fire in the Sisters Area Fuels Reduction (SAFR) project area, approximately three miles southwest of Sisters along the 1505 Road.

“It looked to me like a beautiful, textbook burn,” Rod Bonacker told *The Nugget*.

Bonacker has years of fire-fighting for the U.S. Forest Service under his belt — and first-hand experience with the way in which prescribed fire helps firefighters battle wildfire. In 2012, Bonacker was part of the team that was trying to get ahead of the Pole Creek Fire, building fire breaks at night. The fire was



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Fire managers touched off a series of prescribed fires southwest of Sisters last week. The project treated about 600 acres, part of a buffer protecting Sisters from wildfire.

a real threat to Sisters.

Last summer, he recounted the fight to members of a field trip out to the SAFR project area.

“Strategically, we needed to stop the fire spreading east

and southeast,” he told them.

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

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Local golf pro celebrates at the Masters

By Bill Bartlett
Correspondent

Even nongolfers know the importance and prestige of the “Masters” held the first week every April at the legendary Augusta (Georgia) National Golf Club. Augusta is to golf as Wrigley Field or Fenway Park is to baseball, as Churchill Downs is to horse racing, as the Daytona Speedway is to auto racing. Even in non-COVID years, admission to the Masters, one of the four ‘major’ world golf tournaments, is one the most sought-after tickets in all of sports.

Attendance at the pandemic-restricted 2021 event where players competed for an \$11.5 million purse was

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Sisters Ranger District unveils HQ plans

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Initial plans for the proposed new Sisters Ranger District headquarters were outlined at last week’s virtual open house. (Video of entire meeting available on Deschutes National Forest Facebook page.)

The current office was built in the 1950s and has a number of safety and accessibility issues. According to Sisters District Ranger Ian Reid, “The new station is necessary to keep us here (in Sisters).”

By dividing the 80-acre parcel of Forest Service property into three pieces and selling them separately,

while retaining the southeastern part of Parcel 2 for the new headquarters, money will be available to construct the new buildings. It was necessary to get special authority from the U.S. Forest Service to divide and sell the property.

Parcel 3, on the north side of Barclay, will be the site of 14 light industrial buildings. The center portion, Parcel 2, between West Barclay, North Pine, and Highway 20, has been sold for a multi-use development. Parcel 1, located south of Highway 20, is currently for sale with negotiations for purchase underway.

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Rodeo canceled for second year

In the face of rising COVID-19 cases in Deschutes County, and restrictions limiting capacity enforced by local and state government agencies, the Sisters Rodeo Association (SRA) Board of Directors announced a unanimous decision on Tuesday, April 13, to cancel the 2021 Sisters Rodeo.

This is the second year in a row that the coronavirus pandemic has forced cancellation of the event.

The Association reported that they have worked diligently with State and County officials for the past several weeks and looked at the situation from all angles, including feedback from community businesses, fellow rodeo associations, stock contractors, and sponsors. Sisters



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Sisters Rodeo Association President Curt Kallberg delivered the news that the Rodeo cannot go forward this year.

Rodeo Association thanked the Deschutes County commissioners for their effort in support of Sisters Rodeo during this process. The Board of County Commissioners had requested that Oregon

Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) issue a provisional permit to Sisters Rodeo, a key step if the event was to move forward. OLCC reportedly would not issue such

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