



The Ranger's Corner

Ian Reid
Sisters District Ranger

Fall 2021

"It is on some, but not all, of these misty autumn daybreaks that one may hear the chorus of the quail. The silence is suddenly broken by a dozen contralto voices, no longer able to restrain their praise of the day to come".

— Aldo Leopold, "A Sand County Almanac"

September has ended and autumn is here. I reckon that Leopold — the esteemed ecologist, conservationist, and Forest Service employee — favored fall among all the seasons. I can relate. The elk are bugling, salmon running, aspen turning golden, and the air is crisp with the smell of wood smoke. It's a wonderful time to get out to explore and enjoy your public lands.

National Public Lands Day typically occurs in September; this year a Presidential proclamation declared September as

National Wilderness Month. In partnership with the Willamette National Forest, we recently completed the first year of implementing the Central Cascades Wilderness Strategies project, a.k.a. wilderness permit system. It was successful from many aspects including high percentage of permit compliance, protection of wilderness character, and an increased sense of solitude among wilderness visitors. We will work on some tweaks this winter including potentially increasing our trailhead quotas for 2023 due to a high proportion of permit no-shows this season.

If you would like to hear more about the wilderness permit system and other current district happenings, please consider attending an outside get-together at Eurosports on October 14 at 6:30 p.m. Food, drinks, and firepits will be available. Also, if you are interested in volunteering on a public lands and Sisters Country cleanup on October 22, please contact Sisters

Parks & Recreation District to sign up.

Fall means prescribed burning on the Sisters Ranger District. After pausing that program in 2020, we plan on accomplishing several strategic burn blocks this fall near Indian Ford Campground, the Metolius Basin, and south of Sisters to continue our hazardous fuels reduction near communities. Check out the interactive map at www.centraloregonfire.org for specific locations and other information. Or call or drop by the Sisters Ranger Station where our employees are still currently serving the public through a walk-up window.

Speaking of hazardous fuels reduction, we recently signed an agreement with Oregon Department of Forestry for commercial and noncommercial vegetation removal in the Flymon project area near the Three Rivers subdivision. And very shortly we will be releasing a draft environmental assessment for nearly 25,000 acres of vegetation management in the Green

Ridge area between Sisters and Camp Sherman. That project proposes some road closure and decommissioning so we would appreciate your review and comment. Also, in the Green Ridge area, we recently signed a decision and awarded a timber sale contract to remove roadside danger trees created by the 2020 Green Ridge Fire.

Locally, the 2021 wildfire season was a solid win, and our firefighters did an excellent job with their safe and aggressive initial attack. The Grandview, Monty, and Bean Creek Fires were the only large fires close to Sisters this past season and they could have grown much larger given our weather and fuels conditions. We also thank our hosted incident-management teams, partners, cooperating agencies, local contractors, and vendors for their help and service this season.

We have had some permanent staffing changes at the Ranger District since spring. Longtime fire employee Vince Grace was promoted

to operations battalion chief, while Tanner Eccles accepted a position as fire operations specialist. Longtime fire employee Lee Pyke accepted a promotion to engine captain. John Bitzberger was hired as assistant engine captain and Kiel Wood as one of our fuels technicians. Longtime wildlife seasonal Nadja Schmidt has moved on to a permanent job in research, and Roads Manager Don Walker has taken a new post in data resources management. Finally, we say goodbye to, and condolences to the family of, longtime volunteer Don Jimerson. Both Don and Dr. Stephen Ponder, who died in 2020, made the Sisters Ranger District a better place with their selfless volunteerism.

Whether you create only memories and take only pictures from your public lands this fall or bring home something more tangible — like a stringer of trout, load of firewood, or brace of quail — we wish you safe and fruitful adventures.

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