

The Nugget

News and Opinion
from Sisters, Oregon

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U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Sisters, OR
Permit No. 15

Vol. XLV No. 9

www.NuggetNews.com

Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Sisters youth want to save dark skies

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

What creates a greater sense of awe and wonder than standing outside and gazing up into the crystal-clear dark night sky over Sisters? Stars twinkling, constellations readily visible, satellites passing overhead. Sisters is on the precipice of losing that amazing night sky to growing light pollution.

In a presentation to the City Council on February 23, members of Sisters High School Astronomy Club presented data highlighting the increase in light pollution of Sisters' dark skies, and the importance of protecting those skies. Students making the presentation included sophomores Molly Greaney and Kaleb Woods, and junior Lizzie McCrystal, with work on the presentation also done by Paola Mendoza.

Other Astronomy Club students include: Zoey Lorusso, Dominic Martinez, Soyla Martinez, Emma Sahlberg, Annalycia Erdekian, Erik Ryan, Daisy Montecinos, Adriana Luna, and Zach Theis. Rima Givot is their faculty advisor.

One photograph taken last month showed the existence of a light or sky dome over

Sisters, something that up to this point in time the area has never had. As the population increases and more building takes place, the selection of appropriate outside lighting fixtures and bulbs takes on added significance.

One of the special attractions Sisters offers to residents and tourists alike is the ability to experience viewing of the dark night sky with all the stars and constellations that humans have used for navigation for centuries.

Local artist and 31-year resident of Sisters, Paul Bennett, presented an advertising slogan to the Council. He pointed out that Sisters is marketed as "the town of tiny lights." He expanded that to "the town of tiny lights and dark skies." A number of Bennett's paintings feature the local starlit sky.

Responsible lighting not only protects the dark skies, but it provides energy savings. Shielding lights and reducing glare helps improve safety. More light doesn't always result in a safer environment. What matters more is the way an area is lit. Lowering and shielding lights illuminates the area intended to be lit while preventing

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The Milky Way over Sisters. Dark night skies are one of the attractions of Sisters Country – but they are endangered by increase lighting demands.

PHOTOS BY KRIS KRISTOVICH

City to contract for water conservation expertise

By Bill Bartlett
Correspondent

The City of Sisters, in recognition of the worsening drought picture, is in the final stages of being able to hire outside consultants to prepare a water conservation plan. City Manager Cory Misley said: "We are trying to get ahead of the problem. Even though the City itself is in a fairly good water position, especially with bringing well number four online, we know the situation requires more preparation."

Misley expects a contract can be ready within a week or two. The scope of work is being drafted to meet the budget parameters.

Conditions in the western U.S. are now being described as "megadrought," and a report from UCLA describes the situation in startling terms, producing headlines like this from around the

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Sisters Country resident seeks reelection

By Bill Bartlett
Correspondent

The first thing Patti Adair wants you to know about her is that she's a country girl. She doesn't mean her preference in music. She's talking about her roots. That was a key takeaway when *The Nugget* chatted at length with her Saturday. Adair, 70, who claims Sisters as home, lives with her husband, Bob, on their horse ranch on Edmundson Road.

The native Oregonian currently holds Position 3 as a Deschutes County Commissioner to which she was first elected in 2018. The Republican is chair of the board, a rotating position.

Adair's family settled in Eastern Oregon near Ukiah in the 1850s. She grew up in Heppner "with the joys and struggles of rural life on a ranch." Much of her early years were spent in 4-H and rodeo royalty. She received her bachelor of arts degree in history from the University of Oregon. She earned a CPA after attending Central Washington University in Ellensburg.

Adair didn't imagine being an accountant when growing up but has found the discipline of making budgets and numbers add up an advantage in governance. She laughed when we pointed out

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Hunters support wildlife crossing

A coalition of hunters, anglers, Tribal representatives, and conservation groups released a priority list of wildlife crossing project needs across the state where wildlife-vehicle collisions create hazards for drivers and animals. One of the identified projects would include work on Highway 20 between Suttle Lake and Bend.

The report comes as the House Interim Committee on Environment and Natural Resources recently passed the Wildlife Crossings Investment Act (HB 4130-01) that will invest \$7 million toward creating wildlife crossings at wildlife-vehicle collision hotspots around the state. The legislation now awaits a vote in the Ways and Means Committee.



PHOTO BY JIM ANDERSON

Mule deer populations are under threat in Sisters Country, in part due to fatalities on the highways.

"Our mule deer herds have declined 30 to 40 percent over the last decade or less," said Ken McCall,

northwest director for the Oregon Hunters Association.

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