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New permit system limits some hiking Restrictions imposed on 3 popular wilderness areas

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Hiking and camping in three of Oregon's most popular wilderness areas will be restricted starting in 2020, an attempt by outdoor officials to limit damage from growing crowds of visitors.

The U.S. Forest Service announced a decision Thursday to install a permit system limiting the number of people in the Mount Jefferson, Three Sisters and Mount Washington Wilderness areas.

A sharp increase in crowds during the past decade — and environmental damage that's followed — prompted the agency to enact sweeping changes to the way people access 450,000 acres of Oregon's most iconic backcountry.

"The goal is to maintain the quality of our wilder-

ness areas and the experience they offer," said John Allen, supervisor of Deschutes National Forest. "It's about keeping the amount of people to a level where they're not degrading these special places."

The newly-regulated areas sit between Salem and Bend on the Cascade Crest, a region of dramatic volcanoes, wildflower meadows and alpine lakes.

Anyone camping overnight in the three wilderness areas will need a permit from a limited pool, under the new system.

Day-users also will need a special permit for 30 of the most popular trails, including routes to Green Lakes Basin, Marion Lake, South Sister and Jefferson Park.

The decision marks a fundamental change to the unencumbered way most Oregonians currently hike,

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Hikers head into the shadow of South Sister, Oregon's third-tallest mountain.

ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Oregon Garden: Not so calm but plenty bright



Christmas in the Garden features one million lights. The event is open from Nov. 23 through Dec. 31 at The Oregon Garden in Silverton. THE OREGON GARDEN

Thousands ready to descend on winter wonderland

Abby Luschei
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

As the dishes from Thanksgiving are put away, and people turn in for the night, it's as if a switch is turned on overnight, transforming The Oregon Garden into a winter wonderland.

And this year, it's brighter than ever before.

Christmas in the Garden, one of the Mid-Valley's most extravagant holiday events, will light up the Rediscovery Forest for the sixth year starting Friday, Nov. 23 running through Dec. 31.

Organizers have been planning this Christmas in the Garden since the last one started, and the light-hanging started in August.

Christmas in the Garden started in 2012, featuring 150,000 lights. There were about 12,000 visitors, said Brittney Hatteberg, director of marketing and communications for Moonstone Hotel Properties.

More than 54,000 people visited Christmas in the Garden in 2017, Hatteberg said, making it their most popular year so far.

This year, organizers decided to kick the lights up a notch, adding more than 250,000 lights from last year, for a total of 1 million lights spread throughout 10-acres.

If you go

What: The 6th Annual Christmas in the Garden is a month-long event featuring 1 million lights and other holiday attractions.

When: Opens 5 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23, through Dec. 31; closed most Mondays and Tuesdays; visit www.christmasinthegarden.com for a full schedule and times

Location: The Oregon Garden Resort, 895 W Main St., Silverton

Cost: \$5-15 single admission depending on the night, free for children ages 10 and younger; \$30-45 Fun Pass (admission, skating, tubing) for ages 11 and older, \$20-25 for ages 10 and younger; \$60 ice skating season pass for ages 11 and older, \$45 for ages 10 and younger; \$30 Christmas Market Season Pass

Yes, you read that right — 1 million. Beloved seasonal attractions include an ice rink, snowless tubing, artisan market, Biergarten and visits from Santa.

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Oregon firefighters recover Camp Fire victims

Virginia Barreda
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Woodburn firefighter Jon Koenig was supposed to leave for New Mexico this month to celebrate his 20th wedding anniversary.

Instead, Koenig and 21 fellow Marion County firefighters sifted through ash and rubble where Paradise, California once stood, recovering bodies and trying to save what few buildings remained.

"We had plans," said his wife, Lynne Koenig, but "it was a no-brainer ... they needed him more than I did."

Woodburn Fire District was one of five agencies in the Marion County Taskforce — one of 15 Oregon strike teams — that deployed to California to battle the 150,000-acre Camp Fire near Chico. Most started returning this past week.

After igniting Nov. 8 in the Sierra Nevada foothills, the blaze exploded into a roaring inferno, whipped by wind gusts down Camp Fire Road in Butte County and into Paradise, a town of 27,000.

At its peak, the fire swallowed the equivalent of 60 football fields per minute.

By Friday, the Camp Fire had claimed at least 84 lives with more than 500 people unaccounted for.

It's taken nearly 400 fire trucks, 17 helicopters and more than 4,700 firefighters over 12 days to contain about 70 percent of the fire.

Capt. Mike Rusher and his team from Polk County Fire District 1 spent their first few days searching for bodies across two square miles of Paradise and 500 properties.

"When something burns really hot, you get white ash," Rusher said. "The whole town was pretty much

See **FIREFIGHTERS**, Page 2A



Firefighter Joe Jaccobucci helps put out a spot fire near Butte Valley, Calif., Nov. 12.

SCOTT CLAUSE/USA TODAY NETWORK

11 tree-lighting events in and near Salem

Abby Luschei
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Get into the holiday spirit with one, or more, of these community tree lighting ceremonies:

Salem's 23rd Annual Holiday Tree Lighting: Includes a tree lighting, live reindeer, hot chocolate, cookies, the Grant Community School's Grizzly Youth Choir and Santa Clause, 6 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30, River-

front Park, 200 Water St. NE, Salem. Free.

Western Oregon University: This 51st annual event includes a tree lighting, cookie bake-off, crafts, holiday photos, a visit from Santa and a variety of student groups, local businesses and organizations, 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30, 345 Monmouth Avenue N, Monmouth. Free. 503-838-8261.

Woodburn: Includes a tree lighting, caroling, holi-

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