

IRS, Oregon extend tax filing deadline to May 17

Kelly Tyko USA TODAY

The Internal Revenue Service is pushing back the tax filing deadline by a month. Income taxes and payments will now be due May 17 instead of April 15, the agency and Treasury Department announced Wednesday.

Oregon announced it would join the IRS in extending the deadline for individual taxpayers to May 17 with no penalties or interest. No forms are required to qualify for the extension.

The IRS said it will provide “formal guidance in the coming days.” Taxpayers who file an extension would still have an Oct. 15 deadline.

“This continues to be a tough time for many people, and the IRS wants to continue to do everything possible to help taxpayers navigate the unusual circumstances related to the pandemic, while also working on important tax administration responsibilities,” IRS Commis-

sioner Chuck Rettig said in a statement. “Even with the new deadline, we urge taxpayers to consider filing as soon as possible, especially those who are owed refunds.”

Rettig said filing electronically with direct deposit is the quickest way to get refunds. Taxpayers who didn’t receive the first or second stimulus payments may be eligible to claim the Recovery Rebate Credit.

The delay comes as the IRS is dealing with a massive backlog that has left it unable to fully process roughly 24 million tax filings from individuals and businesses since the 2019 tax year.

Tax season was delayed from the start as the IRS began to accept and process tax returns on Feb. 12, which was a two-week delay from previous years.

And nearly 7 million tax filers who await their tax refunds face significant delays this tax season as the IRS rushes to send out stimulus checks to millions

of struggling Americans who have faced economic hardship in the coronavirus pandemic. The agency is grappling with staffing and outdated IT systems at a time when it’s also implementing sweeping tax code changes from the COVID-19 relief packages.

The latest \$1.9 trillion stimulus package creates a new tax break for tens of millions of workers who received unemployment benefits last year after businesses were forced to close and lay them off during the coronavirus pandemic.

As part of the American Rescue Plan, many taxpayers wouldn’t be required to pay taxes on up to \$10,200 in unemployment benefits received last year.

IRS officials said more guidance will be available soon, for example, about what taxpayers need to do if they’ve already filed a federal income tax return but had jobless benefits in 2020. The IRS said taxpayers should not file amended

returns just yet.

“Never before has the law changed so substantially in the middle of tax filing season,” Patrick Thomas, director of Notre Dame Law School’s Tax Clinic, said in a statement.

Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, also said he supported the change.

“This filing season has been particularly challenging for low-income taxpayers and small tax preparers as they navigate the pandemic, and I support extending the filing deadline for individuals to May 17,” Wyden said in a statement. “With Democrats enacting tax forgiveness for jobless benefits, which tens of millions of Americans received in 2020, one additional month to file is especially important for workers and their families.”

Contributing: Jessica Menton and Nicholas Wu, USA TODAY; Susan Tompor, Detroit Free Press; Associated Press



The northern route through the winter trails at Ray Benson Sno-Park features wooden Blowout Shelter, forest burned by the 2003 B&B Complex Fire and views of Three-Fingered Jack and Mount Washington.

Benson

Continued from Page 1B

to name the sno-park in his honor and the Mt. Jefferson Snowmobile Club has continued help manage the site, helping expand the parking lot in 1990 and building the warming hut in the middle of the parking lot.

Slowly, different user groups came together

Snowmobile groups were the driving force behind sno-parks, but other groups, including Nordic skiers, did lobby for their creation and shared the parking facilities.

The two groups — motorized versus non-motorized — sometimes came into conflict when they used the same trails.

Gradually, groups like the Oregon

Nordic Club created separate cross country and later snowshoe trails. Today, Ray Benson Sno-Park has multiple routes for motorized and non-motorized recreation — including three backcountry huts anyone can use.

“These separate trails minimize friction between different users even while the shelters are used by everyone,” said James Todd, president of the Mid-Wilamette Valley chapter of the Oregon Nordic Club. “That’s one of the reasons skiers and snowmobilers have been able to develop good working relationships at Santiam Pass.”

Indeed, the popularity of Ray Benson today is something that would make the real Ray Benson proud, said his son.

“He would be very happy with how

this all worked out,” Gene Benson said.

But, he said that namesake of the sno-park isn’t well-known by many who visit.

“There have been times when we’re sitting around at night (in the warming shelter) and we’ll hear people talk about who Ray Benson actually was,” Gene Benson said with a laugh. “You wouldn’t believe some of the stories that we hear about it. I always laugh and then walk over and say, ‘You want to hear the real story?’”

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Continued from Page 1B

‘Re-bait’ delayed

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has issued a reminder that because of a 2021 rule change, bait-fishing is prohibited until April 22 on the Santiam River system.

The permanent regulation change was approved to protect wild winter-run steelhead, which are listed as a threatened species.

Under the change, fishing with bait is only allowed from April 22 through Oct. 31 on the Santiam River mainstem, on the North Santiam River up to Minto Dam, and on the South Santiam up to Foster Dam.

The change is highlighted in yellow in the permanent regulations, which are online at <http://www.eregulations.com>

/oregon/fishing/willamette-zone/

During the bait ban, you can only fish with artificial flies and lures from Nov. 1 through April 21 in those areas when hatchery salmon and steelhead are few and far between.

According to Fish and Wildlife, while winter steelhead numbers have improved since dropping to an all-time low in 2017, this year’s run is below the 10-year average with just 1,494 adults crossing the fish ladder at Willamette Falls as of March 14.

The peak of the runs of hatchery fish in the Santiam basin is typically in May and June.

Hatchery summer steelhead have the adipose fin removed, while wild steelhead have intact adipose fins.

Thought for the week: A good friend backs up your fishing yarns. A great friend improves on them — Henry

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