

Appeal Tribune

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Permit system tweaked

Season dates changed, day use availability altered

Zach Urness
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

It wasn't the smoothest first season for a sweeping new permit system

meant to limit crowding in three of Oregon's most popular wilderness areas, so the U.S. Forest Service is making some changes for the summer of 2022, the agency announced Tuesday.

The agency required anyone day-hiking popular trails and camping anywhere across the Three Sisters, Mount Jefferson and Mount Washington wilderness to get a permit in advance in 2020.

The system was marred by confu-

sion, technical glitches and hikers not using large numbers of the permits they purchased, which resulted in fewer people being able to hike and camp, officials said.

"We always knew we weren't going to get it exactly right straight out of the gate," Forest Service spokeswoman Jean Nelson-Dean said. "The changes we've made should help increase accessibility, make the reservations less

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The permit season for three of Oregon's most popular wilderness areas will be from June 15 to Oct. 15, instead of the Friday before Memorial Day to the last Friday in September. ZACH URNESS/STATESMAN JOURNAL



Kayla Burdine-Rea, executive director of Sheltering Silverton, at the doorway to the basement offices of the nonprofit — which it shares with the Silverton Area Community Aid offices. GEOFF PARKS/SPECIAL FOR THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

Sheltering Silverton offers ongoing services to homeless

Geoff Parks
Special to Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

"Where did you sleep on the night of Jan. 24?" For most people, that question would be met with a ready answer, "Home, of course, in my bed." But for an unknown number of the homeless population, answers include a tent, a friend's house, a shelter — or in the open in a park.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) count is a nationwide count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. Communities' totals help determine how much state and federal funding they may receive for programs that serve the unsheltered.

For most agencies charged with conducting the survey, the effort means squads of their volunteers disperse throughout their communities from a central location, seeking out homeless individuals and their families.

For some coordinating agencies, it also means bringing those individuals and families into their buildings to offer hot food and personal items such as socks and shoes, a place to warm up, and the opportunity to familiarize themselves with social and other services the agencies provide.

Sheltering Silverton has a necessarily different approach.

The nonprofit was the central hub for conducting this year's PIT count in the Silverton-Mt. Angel area. As the bulk of the group's work for the homeless is in case management, events like the PIT survey are a crucial part of their goal of getting the homeless connected with services and into housing.

"We need to be able to get a full picture of how many people are sleeping unsheltered, captured in one fell swoop on one day in January," Kayla Burdine-Rea, executive director of Sheltering Silverton, said. "All of the agencies ask the homeless they encounter, 'Where did you sleep on the night of Jan. 24?' and if it's anywhere other than a permanent residence of theirs, then they are counted."

Sheltering Silverton reserved the upper gymnasium in the Silverton Community Center — where their basement offices and resource center are located — for what Burdine-Rea called the PIT Count Fair on Jan. 26.

"Our plan with the PIT Count Fair was that window of 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., where we had access to the gym that we don't usually have and reserved it to host our PIT count stations," she said.

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Have graduation rates improved?

Claire Withycombe
Salem Statesman Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown gave her final "State of the State" address Feb. 3.

During her speech, she listed what she believes are key accomplishments of her seven-year tenure leading the state through a pandemic, historic wildfires and a contentious political atmosphere.

"Collaboration, a deep love for Oregon and our collective determination to continue making our state a better place for everyone have led to our successes every step of the way," Brown said.

The Statesman Journal is examining some of the governor's statements for accuracy and to provide context.

What Gov. Brown said

"We increased the graduation rates for Oregon kids by 8%."

What we found

Asked for supporting information, a spokesman for Brown, Charles Boyle, provided a news release from the state Department of Education saying the statewide graduation rate was 72% in 2014 and 80.6% in 2021.

Brown first took office as governor in February 2015.

Technically, the graduation rate increased by 8.6 percentage points since Brown became governor. When calculating the percent change in the rate from 2014 to 2021, that's actually an increase of 11.9%.

But the rates for last school year fell for the first time since the state began calculating them in 2008, dropping about two percentage points.

Our analysis

Oregon's graduation rate has been a topic of concern among Oregon policymakers and a regular talking point on the campaign trail for years.

Between the 2010-11 and 2018-19 school years, Oregon consistently trailed behind the national graduation rate, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, although the rate improved from year to year during that time period.

In 2019, state lawmakers passed the Student Success Act to funnel more money into schools.

Republicans have bemoaned recent state measures to suspend a requirement that students show proficiency in certain "essential skills," like critical thinking and clear writing, to graduate — the implication being the suspension makes it easier for Oregon students to graduate now.

Under that requirement, Oregon students had to take standardized tests or submit work samples to show proficiency in those skills.

The state Board of Education suspended the requirement in 2020 and 2021 as part of its COVID-19 response.

"The pandemic disrupted our state assessment system entirely in 2020 and substantially in 2021, which would have deprived most students of their primary opportunity to meet this rule's require-

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Performers sought for 'Senior Follies'

Alia Beard Rau
Salem Statesman Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Adults age 50 and older are invited to show off their talents at "Senior Follies."

Applications are due by March 15. To request an application, call Candace Pressnall or Dodie Brockamp at 503-873-3093. Auditions and rehearsals will be scheduled after that.

"We are very excited about this fun community event that will show the talented side of seniors, who are still very active and vibrant," Pressnall, the show's director, said in a news release.

She said interested seniors should check out YouTube "follies" to get ideas.

Shows will be held at 7 p.m. June 24 and 25, and 2 p.m. June 26 at Silverton High School auditorium, 1456 Pine St. Tickets will be \$10, with proceeds benefiting the Silverton Senior Center.



Silverton High School graduate Wyatt Wolf laughs with friends during the ceremony on Thursday, June 10, 2021 at McGinnis Field in Silverton. ABIGAIL DOLLINS / STATESMAN JOURNAL

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