

## RECREATION REPORT

### PARKS AGENCY ISSUES TIPS FOR CAMPFIRE SAFETY

Memorial Day is the traditional start to the camping season and although recent rains have reduced the fire danger, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) reminds campers to be careful with fire at all times.

“Regularly reviewing campfire safety practices, even if you’re a seasoned camper, is a good habit to get in to,” Chris Havel, OPRD associate director, stated in a press release. “It’s especially important if you’re camping with children or folks that are learning about responsible outdoor recreation.”

Follow these tips for a safe and enjoyable campfire:

- Know before you go: Research conditions for the area surrounding your campground. Fire restrictions may be in place at the park, county or state level.

- Maintain campfire flames at knee height, or roughly 2 feet high. This helps prevent ash or embers from becoming airborne, especially during the dry summer months. If you see wind stirring up embers from your fire, play it safe and extinguish it.

- Build campfires only in the existing fire ring in your campsite. Fire ring locations are carefully picked and park rangers clear vegetation around rings to create a safe buffer zone.

- Always keep plenty of water nearby to extinguish your campfire. To put out your fire, drown the flames with water and stir the embers to make sure everything is wet. The stirring step is important: Ash and wood debris often maintain heat and embers unless they are drowned out.

- Make sure all adults and children at your campsite are familiar with campfire safety.

### BIKE FOR THE HEALTH OF IT EVENT JUNE 8 AT PHILLIPS LAKE

The Trailhead in Baker City has scheduled a Bike for the Health of It event Saturday, June 8, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the day-use area at Union Creek Campground at Phillips Lake, about 17 miles southwest of Baker City via Highway 7.

This free mountain bike event for kids and families will include guided rides, a kids skills park, basic bike-tuning clinics and terminology, as well as a barbecue to benefit Baker Loves Bikes. There will be a limited number of bikes and helmets available for use.

## HUNTING WILD MUSHROOMS



Lisa Britton / For WesCom News Service

Morel mushrooms are among the most sought-after fungi in Northeastern Oregon forests.

# Morel of the story

■ Students in Nicole Sullivan’s advanced biology class at Baker High School forage the forest for edible fungi

By Lisa Britton  
For WesCom News Service

**S**UMPTER — The students scramble uphill in twos and threes, oblivious to the rain as they keep their eyes focused on the forest floor.

Their goal? The elusive morel mushroom highly coveted for local cuisine.

After nearly two hours of hiking, rain dripping from her hair, Bailee Griggs bent down near a fallen tree. Cupping her find in her hand, she held out a mushroom to science teacher Nicole Sullivan.

“Yep, that’s a morel!” Sullivan said, then did her best Sasquatch whoop that echoed across the stream to signal the find to the group scattered in the forest.

Students from Sullivan’s advanced biology classes headed into the woods May 16 on a field trip to finish up their unit on fungus, which covered how mushrooms grow, a spore print lab and information on identifying

local mushrooms.

“It’s a fun unit,” she said.

The students explored the forest just outside of Sumpter. Their main objective was to find morels, but Sullivan asked them to also document different types of trees and other fungi.

Back at school, the students picked three photos to classify for a slide show. Sullivan also challenged them to create a meme from their adventure.

“Those are my favorite,” she said.

The unit finished up Tuesday with a mushroom cooking contest. Sullivan brought store-bought mushrooms and students contributed ingredients from home.

Creating a dish was worth 25 points — with a caveat.

“Twenty five points for making something with mushrooms that doesn’t make me vomit,” she said, grinning at her class.

The science hall smelled like a restaurant throughout



Lisa Britton / For WesCom News Service

Nicole Sullivan, a science teacher at Baker High School, inspects a fungus with her advanced biology students during a mushroom-hunting trip near Sumpter.

the afternoon as her students got to work. When finished, a dish of each creation was given to Sullivan and Robert Barrington, who teaches science next door, for a taste test.

In fifth period, the winning plate was mushrooms stuffed with brie and sprinkled with Italian breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. It was created by the team of Cosma Bolis, Lexie Harrell, and Hailey Zikmund. Second place was a tie between a family recipe of battered mushrooms with bacon and eggs (team of Natalia Turner, McKenzie Hall, Corah Downing and Rebekah

*“I’d like to make a five-course meal out of what you all made today.”*

— Nicole Sullivan, Baker High School biology teacher, praising her students’ culinary creations featuring mushrooms

Davis), and mushrooms sauteed with Parmesan cheese (team of Jacob Jackson, Kate Villalobos and Oliver Quezada).

Her sixth-period class showed up with fresh meat to create full meals. First place featured elk steak with sauteed mushrooms and potatoes made by Makayla Mills, Kylie Siddoway, Sydney Keller, and Salena Bott. Second place was a burger topped with

mushrooms, Swiss cheese and barbecue sauce, along with a chocolate chip cookie. The burger team was Hollie Mays, Avril Zickgraf, Mason Van Arsdall, Mahonri Rushton and Gabe Gambleton.

Although not all the mushroom dishes could be the winner, Sullivan and her students were impressed by the results.

“It is so good. I’m very proud of myself,” Taylor Nudd, grinning, said of the pasta with mushroom cream sauce she made with Chelsea Davis, Hayden Paulsen, and Payton Jones.

As cleanup began, Sullivan praised all of her chef scientists.

“I’d like to make a five-course meal out of what you all made today,” she said.



Lisa Britton / For WesCom News Service

Makayla Mills and her team placed first with their dish of elk steak with mushrooms and potatoes.



Lisa Britton / For WesCom News Service

Teacher Nicole Sullivan collected a variety of fungi for her students to study under microscopes back at school.

# Hold the meat: Better options for Idaho bear-baiting

In case you want to run across the border and do a little bear hunting, here are a few tips on how to bait (baiting bears is illegal in Oregon).

Twenty-five years ago, no matter



**BASE CAMP**  
TOM CLAYCOMB

how deep the snow, you’d have found me snowshoeing in 5 miles and dragging a sled full of bear bait. Maybe I’ve slowed down, or maybe I’ve just gotten smarter but now I wait until I don’t have to haul it so far. Or maybe I just

don’t take as many kids bear hunting as I used to do, so I don’t have to worry about getting as many bears as in years gone by.

It’s still smart to get your bait out early but truth be known, if you’re having to snowshoe it in 5 miles, then the bears have hardly (if at all) come out of hibernation in your spot anyway. Plus,

the first few weeks their stomachs are queasy after fasting for 4 to 5 months.

I used to carry in meat but after a long winter of not eating, meat is not the best choice. But no doubt, I’ve hauled literally tens of thousands of pounds of meat up for bears to dine on.