

Oregon allows youth overnight camps to resume this summer

By **JAMIE GOLDBERG**
The Oregonian/OregonLive

SALEM — Oregon will allow youth overnight camps to resume this summer with significant restrictions to protect against the spread of COVID-19.

The state allowed day camps to move forward last summer during the heart of the pandemic, but banned overnight camps for school-aged children.

But the Oregon Health Authority released new guidance last month to allow both day and overnight camp operators to move forward with programming this summer.

All youth programs, including day and overnight camps, must put together communicable disease management plans, implement enhanced cleaning standards, screen for symptoms and require anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms to stay home, split participants into stable groups of no more than 30 and require that both staff and most youth participants wear masks. The state will not require

children to wear masks if they can't wear them due to medical conditions or disabilities or they are unable to remove the masks on their own.

Overnight camp operators must all ensure that there is at least 30 inches between beds and that campers sleeper head-to-toe. Camps must limit use of cabins and tents to a single cohort of no more than 30.

Overnight camp operators are also encouraged, but not required to restrict campers and staff from leaving and returning to camp during sessions.

Daily coronavirus cases and the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 in Oregon had been rising steadily since March, but declined slightly over the past week.

More than 36% of Oregonians over 16 have been fully vaccinated, while nearly 16% have received one vaccine dose and still need to receive a second dose.

The vaccines are only authorized for people age 16 and older.

SHAKESPEARE

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Turner said he is delighted to have the opportunity to direct works in the open-air site.

"I love outdoor theater," he said.

Turner explained he enjoys tackling the difficulties it imposes, such as bad weather and intrusive sounds, including dogs barking.

"The additional challenges make it fun," he said.

The outside setting could make addressing one challenge somewhat easier — meeting the social distancing demands during the COVID-19 pandemic. Audiences will have to adhere to social distancing rules during the outdoor productions.

Turner previously was with the La Grande Shakespeare Company, which the Elgin Opera House absorbed in 2019. The La Grande Shakespeare Company, whose actors performed throughout the Grande Ronde Valley, officially no longer exists, yet its presence remains strong. Many of its actors now are a part of the Elgin Opera House and will be partic-

ipating in its Shakespeare productions.

Turner said the La Grande Shakespeare Company never had a home and was forced to perform anywhere it could, which included Riverside Park and in the back of a bookstore. Today, though, the former company will have many opportunities to give productions at the Elgin Opera House inside and out.

"It is nice to know that our audience knows where it can find us," Turner said.

He acknowledged it is ironic that although the La Grande Shakespeare Company officially no longer exists, it is in a sense stronger than ever because it has a home.

Performers in the Shakespearean productions include Cody Wyld Flower, who was a member of the La Grande Shakespeare Company. He said one of the reasons he enjoys performing the Bard's works is remembering lines is easier. Turner agreed, noting Shakespeare's words are easier to recall because he sometimes wrote them in verse.

"They are poems," Turner said.

CASES

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which equals 252 cases per 100,000 residents. Both are slight declines over the previous period.

The rate of positive cases remains at 6.4% — state officials say anything above 5% has the potential to lead to a rebound of cases.

Several counties had case rates that would in the past have pushed them into the extreme risk category. For large counties, an infection rate of more than 200 per 100,000 people would place them in the most restrictive of the state's four risk level tiers.

But Brown introduced a new metric last month that keeps counties from the harshest limits, including a ban on indoor dining.

Counties will not be put in the extreme risk level regardless of their own COVID-19 numbers if the state overall has under 300 hospitalizations for COVID-19. After that threshold is crossed, an increase of 15% has to be met to hit the extreme risk level.

As of May 10, the Oregon Health Authority reported 324 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the state, a slight reduction over

the last period.

Under the rules, those numbers mean no counties will be put in extreme risk level when the new limits are announced May 11 and go into effect May 14.

The new numbers show Central Oregon has among the highest levels of infection and rates. Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties are well above the 200 infections per 100,000 mark. But because of the statewide metric requirement, they will almost certainly stay in the high risk limit level, the second more restrictive of the state's four tiers.

Deschutes County reported 1,069 COVID-19 cases over the past two weeks, with the cases per 10,000 rising to 542.6. Also up is the positive test rate, which at 9% is seen by health officials as a figure that could lead to future exponential growth of cases.

Crook County reported 546 cases per 100,000, a slight increase. But its test positivity rate fell to 8.6% from 9%. While still high, the rate is trending in the right direction.

Jefferson County also saw its rate per 100,000 rise to 315.3 cases per 100,000, but its positive test rate fell to 8.5% from 8.9%.

Historic Columbia River Highway reopens

By **JAMIE HALE**
The Oregonian/OregonLive

SALEM — A section of the Historic Columbia River Highway that has been closed since January has reopened to the public, the Oregon Department of Transportation announced Thursday, April 29, granting access to one of the most scenic drives in the region as well as several waterfalls that have been off-limits all spring.

The six-mile closure between Bridal Veil and Ainsworth State Park was caused by landslides triggered by heavy winter rainstorms, exacerbated by damage done to the landscape by the Eagle Creek fire in 2017, officials in the

Columbia Gorge said.

The closure blocked access to the Wahkeena and Horsetail Falls trailheads on either side of Multnomah Falls, as well as the Oneonta Trailhead that had been closed since December due to another landslide. All three of those trailheads are now back open, ODOT said Thursday.

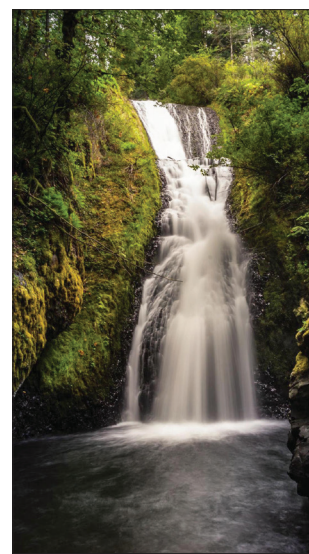
Additionally, the Oneonta Trail is now open to the Horsetail Falls Trail junction, and the Gorge 400 Trail is open between the Oneonta Trail and Multnomah Falls, officials said.

The Eagle Creek Trail, which closed due to landslides in January only two

weeks after its long-anticipated reopening, remains closed to the public.

Landslides are not unusual in the Columbia Gorge, but this winter they seemed to be a bigger problem than normal. Officials said the particularly wet winter and damage from the Eagle Creek fire are to blame, as water has run down the barren slopes unabated.

At one spot about a mile west of Multnomah Falls, ODOT said crews saw more than 30 debris flows, a type of fast-moving landslide, which brought large rocks, trees, mud and other debris across the road and onto adjacent railroad tracks.



Makenzie Whittle/The Bulletin, File
Bridal Veil Falls pours into a pool below. The falls can be accessed by a short trail from a designated parking area above.



Actor Caiti Burke (right) takes on the role of Elena Popov, a widow who inherited her husband's debt in Anton Chekhov's vaudeville "The Bear: A Joke in One Act, or The Boor" during a rehearsal Sunday, May 9, 2021, of the Elgin Opera House production. Actors Cody Wyld Flower (left) and Victoria Ingram (not pictured) join Burke for performances of the Russian playwright's works.

CHEKHOV

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restrictions curtailed his opportunities. He said audiences are an essential part of any stage show.

"Plays are written on the assumption that people are there," Flower said.

Burke said performing without an audience can be a deflating experience because it is hard to tell if one's lines are having the effect they should.

"There is no energy," she said. "You are not sure if you are landing or not."

The Chekhov evenings begin Friday, May 14, and will continue May 15, 21, 22, 28 and 29. Performances start at 7:30 p.m. For information on purchasing tickets, call 541-663-6324 or visit the Elgin Opera House's website at elginoperahouse.com.



Actor Cody Wyld Flower (center) as Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov raises his fist against Victoria Ingram as Luka during a rehearsal in Elgin on Sunday, May 9, 2021, of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov's "The Bear: A Joke in One Act, or The Boor."

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