

Viewing the Eclipse in the Backcountry

Whether you choose to watch the eclipse from an iconic National Park or a lesser known (and just as beautiful) public land, these tips will help you have a safe and memorable experience while respecting your public lands:

- It is NEVER safe to look at the sun during the eclipse. Except during the very short period of totality, do not look directly at the sun without approved solar-viewing devices.
- Get your maps. Some public lands are remote areas along unmaintained roads and are often intermingled with private land, so know where you're going. Contact your local Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or Forest Service offices for camping and jurisdiction maps. Before you head out, make sure you are familiar with the area you are going to and ensure you have appropriate gear, equipment, and supplies.
- Use designated spots for camping. While most campgrounds are already booked, there are some locations that offer first come, first serve campsites. Remember: whether in a developed campground or at a dispersed site, you can usually camp in an area for up to 14 days. Learn more about camping guidelines.
- Don't forget your eclipse glasses. You'll be able to buy eclipse glasses at some public land visitor centers, but to ensure you have them for viewing, it's best to purchase them before leaving home. Learn more about pro-

tecting your eyes during a solar eclipse.

- Please use designated routes and trails. Going off road disturbs wildlife and habitat and in dry conditions can spark a fire.
- Bring plenty of water. It can get hot during the summer, and water can be limited. Always carry at least one gallon of water for every person in your group.
- Pack the sunscreen. Even though this event is about the sun's rays being blocked out, you'll probably spend some time waiting in the sun. Protect yourself.
- Remember to pack it in, pack it out. Remove all trash (including your viewing glasses and any food scraps like apple cores).
- Know the fire risks and respect fire restrictions. August is peak wildfire season for public lands, and a small spark can rapidly become a large fire. Be sure to properly put out campfires, and in many areas, vehicles are required to have a shovel and fire extinguisher or a gallon of water.
- Be patient and don't expect all services to be available. Many small towns within the path of the eclipse expect their infrastructure and community services to be stretched to the limit during the event. Be early and patient and expect traffic on rural roads.
- Don't expect cell-phone reception as it is already spotty in rural areas and may be overtaxed by the high number of users.

Information provided by Columbia County Emergency Management and the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District.

Drive Safely During the Eclipse

ODOT expects many Oregon highways to be very crowded in the days around the August 21 total solar eclipse. Many crashes are the result of distracted driving and traveling too fast for conditions. So we're encouraging you to Drive Safely: Keep your hands on the wheel, your mind on the task, and your eyes on the road - not on the sky. It also means you must plan your travel well in advance.

Because of the expected large crowds, please treat the 3-hour eclipse as a 3-DAY event: Arrive early, stay put and leave late.

- Showing up Monday morning is too late: You could be in a long traffic jam; you could still be on the highway when the eclipse occurs.
- Trying to leave immediately after the eclipse is too early: That could put you into another long traffic jam - perhaps one of cosmic proportions.
- Can you travel with others? Carpool! Visit www.drivelessconnect.com/2017-eclipse/ for more information.

• Move over before you pass a vehicle on the side of the road that is displaying warning lights, if you can. If you cannot safely move over, or you're on a two-lane road, you must slow down to at least five mph under the speed limit before you pass by.

• The shoulder is for emergency stopping, not parking - and not eclipse viewing. Blocking the shoulder could keep emergency vehicles from reaching victims.

In the days leading up to the eclipse, ODOT will have crews posted along critical travel routes to keep motorists safe, and will be providing travel updates via www.Tripcheck.com and 511 so you can be prepared with the most current travel information available. TripCheck's speed map has been enhanced: you can now see how fast (or slow) traffic is moving on all city, county and state roads in Oregon.

Plan to have a good time in Oregon viewing the eclipse. Plan ahead, so you will.

TripCheck Launches Speed Map

Data shows how traffic is flowing around the state – just in time for the eclipse

In an update to Oregon's traffic and road conditions website, TripCheck, motorists can now see how fast (or slow) traffic is moving on nearly all roads across Oregon. Previously, this feature was only available in the Portland metro area and was called the Portland Speed Map.

Now, a new statewide layer of data is using near real-time traffic congestion information to reflect movement on roadways throughout Oregon. ODOT has partnered with Esri/ HERE to provide the traffic data.

When you visit TripCheck.com, simply zoom in to see the traffic flow on the various roads. Traffic is displayed as a percentage of free-flow speeds (frequently the speed limit or more practically, how fast cars tend to travel when unencumbered by other vehicles). The

streets are color-coded as follows:

- Green (fast): 85 - 100% of free-flow speeds
- Yellow (moderate): 65 - 85%
- Orange (slow): 45 - 65%
- Red (stop and go): 0 - 45%

When you are on the website, to see what the colors mean, click on the Live Traffic drop down menu on the left. There, you'll also see another significant enhancement to TripCheck: the interactive map legend. The map layer controls are now integrated with the legend, simplifying the layout and providing a cleaner mobile experience. You can click on layers such as Waze Traffic to add or remove information.

TripCheck will receive another update later this year with a freshened interface for searching text reports. This update will allow users to create custom queries to search for incidents, weather, cameras and more based on their criteria.

Bridge Street Bits

By Karen Miller

Thanks Tobie Finzel for stepping in writing this column when circumstances find me away from the computer.

TAKE NOTE: Even though "Bargains on Bridge Street Thrift Store" is now closed on Mondays, due to staffing, the meal certificates will continue to be issued through the senior office in the same building as the store on the first and second Monday of each month. Please enter by way of the side patio door, between 10 am and noon.

THE VERNONIA THRIFT STORE is in need of volunteers. If this seems like something you might be interested in, your help would be very appreciated. Background check is required, at NO cost to you. Come in and see store manager Pam.

FOR DIAL-A-RIDE SERVICES and info call CC Rider Dispatch at (503) 366-0159. This is the number on their website: www.columbiacountyrider.com

I KNOW some of you are taking advantage of senior meals at a reduced rate: Check out

Mariolino's, Black Iron Grill, and Blue House.

REMEMBER to stop by or call our local library for information on book deliveries for those who cannot get out or have no transportation. It's a great service!

FIVE AREA LUNCH is at Clatskanie Center this month, the LAST Monday of August, on the 28th. Some months from now the Vernonia Senior Center will be back once again hosting one of the 5-Area Lunches! (Rainier, Clatskanie, St. Helens, Scappoose, Vernonia) Exciting days are on the horizon!

MANY OF US had a most wonderful day at the Columbia County Fair. The band that played on the stage that day played 50s and 60s music and Pat Ray and I loved it, although I couldn't get anyone to get up and do the twist with me. At some point a couple of senior ladies popped up but not one senior gent... takes some of us gals to break the ice, huh?

A BIG SHOUT OUT TO TINA BREWINGTON who so capably represented Vernonia in July at the Columbia County Fair as Vernonia Princess in the My Fair Lady contest. Tina

filled the position that was originally going to be represented by her mother Penny Dean, for whom the Senior Board and community wishes to express our sincere condolences on her passing.

FOOTCARE SERVICES are available at the Health Center. This is one of the more popular services we offered at our senior center building in the past, done so efficiently by Marilyn Albro. Call Joyce Jossi, RN at her number to schedule an appointment and leave a message. (503) 753-7745.

SENIOR SIGN OFF: Service is nothing but love in work clothes. THANK YOU to our volunteer Board Members who meet once a month to make decisions and discuss ways to propel our future Senior Center on to becoming a reality. Stay tuned and travel along with us on this journey. All member voices welcomed at our monthly meetings: Next up: SEPTEMBER 8 10:00 am at the American Legion Hall.

Call me with any questions and concerns: (503) 429-0273.

See ya' around town...