

## Rural Report

### Pet RSV

or "atypical canine infectious respiratory disease"

**SALEM -** Since last summer, the Oregon Department of Agriculture has taken more than 200 reports of what is being called an 'atypical canine infectious respiratory disease.' The disease is caused by pneumonia- and bronchitis-like symptoms, leading to illness and, in severe cases, can cause death.

"Nobody really knows where it's coming from. Nobody knows the etiology of it, in other words, what's causing it, and nobody knows what kind of dogs are getting it," said Dr. Teri Sue Wright.

While it is unknown from where the origin of this virus, it's clear that certain activities may increase the likelihood of your pet might come to be in contact with another dog who may be carrying the pathogen.

"Shared spaces and breathing on each other and salivating on each other and coughing at each other's faces."

According to Dr. Wright, finding a way to balance limiting your dog's exposure to the virus and keeping them active is important.

What Dr. Wright says you should not do is completely restrict your pet's activity. "I love dogs that are outside and coming together and playing and running and breathing. Fresh air and lots of play and healthy fun is great for dogs."

Talk to your vet about ways to ensure you lower your pet's risk. Make sure that your dog's not going to get sick. Talk about their diet and talk about other compounding factors. Are they sick in other ways? Do they have dental disease? Are they overweight? Or are they susceptible to it as far as a breed?"

As information continues to come in about this virus, state-level research into the origin and treatment options will come closer to reality. In the meantime, you may want to get creative about how you keep your pet active and healthy.

## Feds support Native American burn practices in Oregon

A project incorporating traditional Native American management practices for oak habitat restoration in Oregon has been awarded \$9.23 million. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service awarded the money, which will go to the Oregon Agricultural Trust and its partners.

Traditional Native management practices include setting fire to the landscape in order to rejuvenate certain plants, eradicate pests, and reduce slash and debris, commonly known as "cultural burns."

Ka-Voka Jackson is a program manager for the EcoStudies Institute, one of the partners. She's done controlled fire operations based on how Indigenous people did theirs for ages, blending ancient practice with modern methods.

"Use of cultural fire, traditional fire, on the landscape, which usually entails people who are trained or have the wildfire qualifications," explained Jackson. "That usually entails fire trucks or water resources, the use of drip torches, other hand tools."

The project also seeks to permanently protect designated oak savannas and woodlands, and give Native Americans access to them for cultural use and environmental stewardship.

Jackson — who is of Hualapi, Wabanaki, and Oglala Lakota heritage — told KLCC that she's excited for the funding and looks forward to working with regional tribes going forward.

## Douglas County receives grant for Whistlers Bend County Park rehabilitation project

ROSEBURG, Ore. November 2023, — Douglas County Commissioners announced an award of \$490,000 grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) through its Local Government Grant Program for the Phase I rehabilitation of Whistler's Bend County Park, located 15 miles east of Roseburg at 2828 Whistlers Park Road.

"We have invested a considerable amount of money in the parks on the coast, primarily because they're so busy and provide a return that helps support the entire parks system, which continues to provide matching dollars for state and federal grant funding for improvement projects like this one," stated Commissioner Chris Boice. "Parks Director Mark Wall has done an outstanding job successfully applying for grant dollars allowing us to continue investing in our parks. The amount of work our Parks Department gets done, with such a small team of people, is amazing."

The grant funds will be matched by Douglas County and utilized to begin a two-phase renovation. Phase I of the rehabilitation project will cost \$980,000. Phase I includes improvements to the day use area and portions of the upper campground; replacement of single vault restrooms with ADA accessible restrooms; installation of a pavilion for public use and special events next to the Whistler's Bend Disc Golf Course parking lot; resurfacing of the lower parking lot and access roads to improve river access; and paving of the upper campground access road and group sites.

The engineering and design work for Phase I is being provided by the local engineering firm, IE Engineering, Inc. The pavilion and restrooms planned for the park will be purchased from and installed by locally owned public utility building manufacturer, Romtec, Inc.

Request for Proposals are expected to go out for bid in January 2024 with work to begin in

Story by Milo Van Elder

the spring, pending contractor availability. The construction timeline for Phase I improvements is estimated to be about three months.

Phase II will focus on paving the upper campground, adding more full hookup sites to the upper campground, and replacing three single vault toilets in the lower campground with ADA accessible ones. Phase II improvements will also enhance the Whistler's Bend Disc Golf Course with the addition of a small pavilion and a new restroom in the middle of the course, and also furnishing the course with additional benches and garbage receptacles throughout. Phase II will be dependent upon receiving additional grant funding the Parks Department is currently pursuing.

Since its dedication to the County in 1957, Whistler's Bend County Park is one of the most popular day use and overnight parks in Douglas County. Located on an oxbow peninsula on the North Umpqua River, the park boasts direct river access, a boat ramp, 13 full-hookup campsites, 42 non-hookup campsites, restroom, and shower facilities, 5 rustic yurts (3 of which are on the riverfront), playground, and picnic sites. Whistler's Bend County Park also boasts a nationally-ranked, highly-rated 27-hole disc golf course.

"Our current Board of Commissioners have been very judicious with their decisions to continue to invest in the Parks Department over the past several years," remarked Parks Director Mark Wall. "The ongoing partnership with OPRD has been the key to executing the Board's vision for Douglas County Parks and we have some very exciting projects coming to our inland parks over the next couple of years."

For more information about Douglas County Parks or to visit Whistler's Bend County Park, visit: [douglascountyor.gov/802/Parks](http://douglascountyor.gov/802/Parks).

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## Veterans Corner

The Filipinos who fought for the U.S. in WWII never saw their promised benefits and a new bill seeks to remedy that. The U.S. recruited tens of thousands of Filipino servicemen to fight with it us during World War II and then broke that promise of benefits and citizenship after the war ended.

A group of bipartisan lawmakers announced in October, that they are introducing a bill that would help fulfill the U.S. promise to Filipino veterans who fought alongside American troops during World War II.

The Filipino Veterans Fairness Act aims to grant benefits to the remaining veterans and the families of the hundreds of thousands of Filipino servicemen. Filipino's who were recruited by the U.S. in the early 1940s, in part by promising full access to veterans' benefits and citizenship. The promise, however, was rescinded by Congress in 1946 and has only partially fulfilled in recent decades.

"During World War II, over 250,000 Filipino troops bravely fought under U.S. command, saving countless lives during their service. It's

## Filipino Veterans Fairness Act to restore US Promises of WWII

unacceptable that these veterans were stripped of the benefits they were entitled to," Rep. Kevin Mullin, D-Calif., who sponsored the bill, said in a press release. "I cannot imagine the pain Filipino veterans and their families felt and the irreparable harm caused by this unjustified disparate treatment."

The bill, co-sponsored by Rep. Ed Case, D-Hawaii and Rep. James Moynan, the Republican delegate from Guam, would offer a need-based death pension to the remaining survivors. It would also expand the kinds of military documentation accepted for benefits' eligibility.

Kevin Nadal, president of the Filipino American National Historical Society, said that the Filipino veterans' fight to secure their benefits has dragged on for decades. In the meantime, the number of Filipino WWII veterans has dwindled to less than 2,000, making the restoration of their benefits all the more urgent.

The Philippine island archipelago was a U.S. colony until 1934, when the U.S. promised

to grant it independence within the next 10 years. But before doing so the Pentagon recruited both Filipino Americans and Filipino nationals to fight under U.S. command due to a substantial part of the war being fought in the Philippines, which Japan had invaded. It's estimated that up to 1 million Filipinos died in the war.

The U.S. changed its tune with the conclusion of the war. Congress passed the Rescission Act in 1946, stripping many Filipino veterans and their families of benefits due to budget concerns and prompting the ongoing efforts to restore them.

In 1990 President George H.W. Bush enacted a law granting citizenship to Filipino nationals who fought in the war. Later, in 2009, Barack Obama signed a law granting a lump sum of \$15,000 to surviving Filipino veterans who are American citizens and \$9,000 to noncitizens. But claiming these benefits has been nearly impossible and many have been denied access to them, Nadal said, due to the lack of proper documentation.

"Some people, there just were not any proper records that they served in the military. And part of that is because of the war itself and the destruction of many buildings and places that would have had those records," Nadal said. He went on to say that while legislation looking to ease access to the promised benefits to Filipino veterans has previously been proposed, getting to pass the bill has been an uphill battle. Lawmakers in the past have been hesitant to green-light the idea of funding for Filipino nationals, arguing that the Filipino government should provide benefits to veterans.

"Racial biases may or will influence people's perceptions of whether or not they deserve those benefits or those rights," Nadal said.

"Many lawmakers just never viewed [Filipinos] as being equals to the Americans," he continued. "They never viewed them as being citizens. They never viewed them as taking the same amount of risk and sacrifice as U.S. born soldiers".