

# SPOKESMAN Opinion

## GUEST COLUMN

### Thornburgh Resort project reduces plan for water use

BY KAMERON DELASHMUTT

The Thornburghs began ranching and farming 400 acres in Terrebonne in the 1920s acquiring 1,500 acres on Cline Buttes in 1953, along with grazing rights on 30,000 acres of BLM Land for summer pasture.

In 2003, JELDWEN offered to buy the Thornburgh's Cline Buttes property to expand Eagle Crest. Instead, we began planning the Thornburgh Resort. The conceptual master plan was submitted in 2005 and approved by the Board of Commissioners in 2006. In 2018, Thornburgh received approval of the final master plan. Prior to construction, we began a significant reassessment of amenities and the resort's overall resource management resulting in numerous adjustments, including:

This month Thornburgh submitted a plan to Deschutes County planning committing to:

- Reduce water use by foregoing the building an approved golf course,
- Reduce water use by replacing some planned lakes, irrigated parks and green space in favor of natural landscaping,
- Employ resource-sensitive landscaping for all resort amenities and homes to better steward our environment

These commitments allow Thornburgh to reduce the resort's water needs from 2,129-acre-feet per year to no more than 1,460 acre-feet. This equals average consumption of about 787,000 gallons per day, or:

- a 35% reduction in consumption
- a 43% reduction in resort-amenity water usage
- less than two-tenths of 1% of water use of 775,000 acre-feet in the Deschutes Basin.

Thornburgh water use for all resort related facilities is 663 acre feet per year. For context this is about the same amount of water required to pasture 55 horses in Tumalo.

Thornburgh isn't creating new water uses or increasing water usage in the basin. Instead, it purchased certificated water rights already in use and stopped pumping the water allowed under those rights. That water is presently left in the aquifer and river reducing water usage in the basin and increasing flows in the river. This largely occurs during the critical summer period when flows are lowest and temperatures the highest.

This increased summertime flow, or excess mitigation will continue for decades, ultimately accumulating to roughly 24,000 acre-feet more stream flow than the resort withdraws, or roughly 17 years of the resort's full use. Not only is the resort reducing its water needs and increasing stream flow, over 2/3rds of the excess mitigation is cold groundwater Thornburgh is leaving in the aquifer ultimately to be discharged into the river. Once there, the cold groundwater cools stream temperatures improving fish habitat.

While the approved master plan contains 3 golf courses, construction of each course requires site plan approval. In its approved site plan for the initial golf course, planned by renowned minimalist architects Coore and Crenshaw, and built by Whitman Axland and Cutten, Thornburgh notes irrigated turf areas are held to the bare minimum. Majestic old growth trees are retained with native grasses to blend golf into the natural surroundings with as little impact as possible.

Thornburgh voluntarily reduced by 20% the amount of overnight lodging, reducing impacts to water, traffic, and wildlife. This reduction was approved by Deschutes County.

Thornburgh is also implementing a program of juniper thinning on about 4,000 acres of juniper forest on BLM lands. Juniper removal can restore water flows by up to 1-acre-foot per four to five acres managed. Thornburgh's efforts mirror other regional programs to restore water flows lost to Juniper expansion. Deschutes County is promoting Juniper thinning while Crook County is pursuing large-scale programs to reduce Juniper coverage to restore stream flows.

Central Oregon is a secret no more. As people come, they need lodging, facilities and housing, which strains the shortages existing today. While we cannot stop people from coming, we can provide for them responsibly.

While Thornburgh's original plans proposed density of only one-third what the code allowed, with 30% more open space than the minimum required, it also had elements that didn't steward resources efficiently.

Thornburgh has made dramatic changes since, to lower impacts on natural resources, with more planned. Thornburgh is defining responsible development.

As we continue to adjust, Thornburgh will become the most environmentally-conscious master planned community in the West, if not the United States.

■ Kameron Delashmutt is the owner and developer of the Thornburgh Resort at Cline Buttes.

## WRITE TO US

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**Guest columns:** Your submissions should be between 600 and 800 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere.

### How to submit:

- Email is preferred: news@redmondspokesman.com
- Or mail to: 361 SW Sixth Street, Redmond OR 97756



## GUEST COLUMN

### Redmond schools chose to be reactive, not proactive on guns

BY HEATHER MCNEIL

After the recent shooting in Bend speakers and politicians stated the necessity for "thoughts and actions." I am addressing an action that I believe is essential for sending a message about gun safety, especially on school grounds.

On August 24 the Redmond School District Board failed to adopt a policy about prohibiting guns from school grounds. Instead, they have decided to act reactively, rather than proactively.

The Oregon State Legislature passed Senate Bill 554 in 2021, which allows schools to adopt a policy (referred to as KGBB in schools) that prohibits guns on campus, including those belonging to individuals with a concealed carry permit. Umatilla, Portland, Klamath Falls, Eugene, Pendleton, Salem, and Bend La Pine are just a few of the 29 districts who decided KGBB was essential and have adopted the policy, as recommended by the Oregon State School Board. But not Redmond. I am sure that those other districts had legal advice, considered liability, and had policies in place prohibiting guns. However, they decided that KGBB was also essential and would send a strong and important message to visitors and parents. But not Redmond.

One Board member insisted that they

have sufficient policies already in place. How many parents and visitors have actually read all of the policies and are familiar with JFCJ, GBJ, KGB, and JFCM?

Another Board member said that a parent could enter school grounds unaware of the law and be held liable. That's why the policy recommends posting the information at school entrances, so no one has the excuse of ignorance. Personally, I'm more concerned about the fear and confusion that would result from a student or teacher seeing the gun than I am about upsetting the adult who carries it on campus.

Another Board member believed that the policy says to leave firearms lying out in plain view in your car. In fact, Senate Bill 554, which is the law that supports KGBB, requires that firearms be secured and states, "... (A) firearm is not secured if... the firearm is a handgun, is left unattended in a vehicle and is within view of persons outside the vehicle."

A board member insisted that KGBB had been discussed fully already, and she couldn't understand why there was so much concern being expressed in letters and testimony. However, that discussion was in executive session, which the public cannot attend, and readings were at work sessions when the public cannot comment.

These facts from everystat.org make it clear that action is necessary in the United

States to prevent gun violence:

- The rate of gun deaths has increased 33% from 2011 to 2020 in the United States.

- Firearms are the leading cause of death among children and teens in the United States.

- In 2022 there have already been at least 102 incidents of gunfire on school grounds.

I highly recommend that concerned citizens take a look at the following:

- An overview of gun violence in the United States, with many statistics and facts. [everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Gun-Violence-in-United-States.pdf](https://www.everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Gun-Violence-in-United-States.pdf)

- A new, extensively researched report from the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, and Everytown, entitled How to Stop Shootings and Gun Violence in School. [everytownresearch.org/report/how-to-stop-shootings-and-gun-violence-in-schools/](https://www.everytownresearch.org/report/how-to-stop-shootings-and-gun-violence-in-schools/)

Superintendent Cline stated that guns are not allowed on school grounds but that he was open to adopting KGBB if that was the board's decision. It failed on a vote of 3 to 2. Please contact the Redmond School Board if you have concerns.

■ Heather McNeil is a member of Central Oregon Moms Demand Action for Gun Safety and lives in Bend.

## GUEST COLUMN

### Parents should know district's gun policies

BY STEVEN AND JEAN CARLTON

The leading cause of death for children in the U.S. is gun violence.

Why is this terrible epidemic only worsening? The 2021-2022 school year had the highest number of incidents in preschools and K-12 schools since 2013.

What can any of us do to stop the violence in and around our schools? The answer must be we need to do everything in our power to stop intentional assaults, but also the increasingly common accidents. We've seen that shootings at schools can happen anywhere, nowhere is safe from accidents that arise when guns are allowed on campus, even by the most well-meaning adults.

In 2018, according to the Associated Press, more than 30 mishaps were publicly reported involving firearms brought onto school grounds. Guns in the possession of anyone other than a law enforcement officer have no place in our schools. The commitment should be simple: gun free schools. This policy and this commitment are critical steps in saving our children's lives.

Redmond school district parents and families need to know that the school board on August 24 specifically voted down the chance to implement a gun

safety policy defined by a recently passed law in Oregon and recommended by American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. The policy has been adopted by 29 other school districts in Oregon, including Bend-LaPine, with many others still considering.

The law was carefully crafted to close a loophole that could allow individuals with a concealed weapon permit to be exempt from gun bans on school properties and to enforce secure firearm storage laws. A critical aspect of the policy the board voted down also specifies that signs should be posted on every entrance door to educate the public about the "no guns" commitment and the potential of criminal liability.

The Redmond district does have policies in place intended to prevent guns on campus. I ask, how many of us are aware of these district policies buried among the thousand or so others? It is incredibly ironic that we are willing to post "no tobacco" signs on every entrance but not "no guns". Do we care enough to look carefully at policies written several years ago and update them to reflect the fact that the incidence of school gun violence is horrific and increasing?

I attended the meeting and heard these reasons for declining to adopt a new pol-

icy, among others. A board member cited his concern that he is afraid that since many of the people he knows carry a gun everyday, they would forget and bring it into the school and be prosecuted. It is just this situation that the law is designed to prevent and I would ask if we are committed to protecting our children, or careless adults?

Another board member very inaccurately described the law as allowing guns to be left in view in cars in the parking lot. More than one board member misstated the penalties specified by the law. Another member complained that she doesn't know why people are "all riled up" about this.

Well, many of us are riled up because children, at increasing rates, are being injured and killed in accidents and intentional attacks. The new law is consistent with researched methods to control violence. It provides an opportunity to take a close look at loopholes, make an effort to address them, and to educate everyone on school property about safely securing our guns. Clearly we all need to be better informed and willing to look at every aspect of making our schools safer.

Parents, please contact the Redmond School Board with your concerns. There are some simple and rational steps to reduce the chances of gun violence in your children's school, particularly while we wait for upgrades to security systems that we heard at the same board meeting are up to a year out.

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