



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

TUCKER-ED OUT

Swimmers pause on the Hood River bank just below Tucker Bridge, where property owner Bob White is trying to get word out that access is not allowed. "This is private property and we are liable if something happens," said White, who has had issues with illegal access all 30 years he has owned the adjacent Apple Valley Store. "No Trespassing" signs are either vandalized or ignored, and litter and impact of pets are continual problems, he said, besides the issue of people illegally parking in the Apple Valley lot, or worse, in shaded areas on the private road to the east. "I am about at my wit's end about this," White said, noting that the county's Tucker Park is located less than a mile away, with plenty of parking and river access.

Dripping, soaking, or just plain going dry

What are large users of water around the county doing to reduce? We called public agencies, and some private, Wednesday and Thursday to find out:

Idlewilde Cemetery — "We've cut back about 30 percent," sexton Bob Huskey said. "We are as brown as we've ever been."

Huskey is moving to a morning and evening schedule, traveling back from his home in Parkdale for the evening irrigation. Huskey has also changed the overall schedule for the 16 separate "blocks" that make up the older section of the cemetery. Instead of a continual rotation from one block to the next, the watering of the 16 sections is now spread over a six-day period.

He said lawns are kept green out of consideration for the families with loved ones buried there, but that gradually people could come around to accepting a brown cemetery. Asked about letting the grass go dormant, Huskey said that it could be done if he was directed to do so by the cemetery board. "We know that it's dry for

everyone and we are willing to do our part," he said.

Hood River Golf Course — "We've cut down about half our water," said owner Brian Brandt. "I'm sure we're reduced our water use more than anyone in the county. Basically we're watering half of the golf course and using half the water we had been."

As a result, "the whole place is like a rock."

"It's gonna be a brown golf course. It is what it is," he said.

However, he said the greens, comprised of bentgrass, need more water and will suffer if they don't get water at least every other day. Under the FID rotation schedule, the course will go 3.5 days without water.

Indian Creek Golf Course — The course has reduced water by 25 percent "and we are working on cutting by about half," according to superintendent Tyson Jacobs. "We're not watering our roughs or out-of-play places, and everywhere we've cut back."

Asked about non-watering of the fairways, he said, "It's a matter of keeping things alive." The greens will die without regular watering, he said. Soaker hoses are used on the greens and tee areas and other places. Jacobs said he has stepped up water conservation measure he has used at Indian Creek for 18 years.

Parks and Recreation — "We are going to stop watering our lawns, as recommended, for fish and farms," said Lori Stirn, Hood River Parks District director.

Parks and Rec will stop irrigating parks that are established, but a few trees at Barrett Park and Devon Court will continue to get water.

The district's "decorative areas," such as the pool's lawn, won't get any more sprinkler treatment.

However, Stirn said Parks and Rec will continue to keep a few trees on "drip regulation." Most of those are young Moon Glow junipers planted at Devon Court, near the Indian Creek Trailhead.

"We want to keep those plants alive," said Stirn.

Port of Hood River — "Is it that important to keep grass green? No. But we want to keep trees alive — grass will come back," said Michael McElwee, Port of Hood River Executive Director. "We'll be stopping most of our landscape — our lawn — irrigation, this week."

The Port plans to "keep watering the Event Site because it gets such intense use in the summer."

He said the marina area "we keep green for its multiple uses and community benefit" and the same goes for the grass areas around the airport runway. "That's important to keep (irrigated)," he said.

McElwee indicated that the watering schedule will focus mainly on mornings and evenings in order to avoid evaporation in the afternoon.

Most port properties use city water for irrigation, but there are riverfront portions that tap into the Columbia River. Most notably is the Marine Park, where the Port continues to irrigate the trees.

PYROS

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working order," he said.

"There's a crew that gets together that does all the physical stuff, getting ready for the show, as well as the people involved with raising the funds and getting the licenses — there's a whole set of things we all have to go through," he said.

Fireworks are delivered a week before the show and stored in a magazine on one member's property. When club members move the fireworks to the Spit, the Port must close the area because "once explosives are onsite, no one can be there unless they're a licensed pyro," he explained, "or they have to be supervised by licensed pyros, and they have to be over 18 and be a U.S. citizen, and not have any felony records — they're pretty strict, there's a lot of paperwork to fill out for anybody that's onsite."

Wife Sarah is not a member of the club, but helps with the display, too. She and Dave put together and mail the flyers that are sent to about 600 regular donors every year, and she wires the show and helps Russ Paddock — Eyeopeners pyrotechnic-in-charge — "by double checking all the entries he's made of the firing order of all the different sizes of shells," Kalousdian said. (Shells come in sizes ranging from two to six inches in diameter — the bigger the diameter, the higher it goes.)

On the day of the Fourth, you can find both Kalousdians walking the Marina, seeking donations for next year's show. That's because the fireworks display is literally a year in the making.

"Work on the Fourth actually starts on the Fourth of July for the next year," Kalousdian said. Lions practice their firework shooting skills year-round, most notably at Hood River Valley High football games, headed by Lions Paul Zastro and Paddock. Then, in the spring, they go to "pyro school" — a must to get licensed by the state fire marshal — and order the fire-

works from the distributor.

"We can go to a demo in April, where they show the different fireworks, and we can say, 'oh, yeah, we really like that one, the one with the hearts or the one with the flag,' and they'll put that show together for us," he said. "Then Russ Paddock takes that inventory and sets up the firing order of the show, so we can have an opener and a mid-show and a finale, and we know what kind of fireworks we want in each of those sections."

There are about 15 Lions involved with the fireworks, and just as many non-Lions, who are certified and/or help with the display. "Most of those people show up on the 30th to check all the wiring, and then on the third, we build racks and put mortars in place. The fireworks come on the Fourth of July. People work those three days, and then on the fifth, we show up in the morning and clean up the site."

The shows generally last 25 to 30 minutes, with about 900 rounds fired, and costs about \$15,000.

"Donations are what makes it happen," Kalousdian said. "If we were hiring Western Fireworks to put a show on, it would be about \$50,000 for them to supply everything, but because the Lions do it — that's our community service — we put on a \$50,000 show for the community, and the community chips in and pays for it, and we do all the rest of it," he said.

"The Lions are all about community service, and this is the biggest community service thing we do every year," he said. "If it wasn't for the public making donations, the show wouldn't happen."

The Kalousdian's moved to Hood River in 1991 from Lake Tahoe to open Discover Bicycles. Soon after, Dave began looking into service organizations to join.

"Eyeopeners Lions was what I joined because I was starting a business up, and I could go to the meeting at 6:30 in the morning and couldn't get away at noon, (when) the Hood River Lions met ... that's why I joined the Eyeopeners," he said. "The fireworks was just a bonus."

DROUGHT

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For more information, please contact the Hood River USDA office.

Barb Ayers, county emergency services manager, said that all residents, businesses, visitors and landowners are reminded of the extremely hazardous fire season conditions in Hood River County, due to high temperatures, low humidity, consistently high Gorge winds, lack of rainfall and snowmelt. Oregon Department of Forestry recently restricted all forestry lands to level 3 (extreme fire danger) regulations, which limits the use and safety requirements for mowing, weed whacking, campfires, harvesting, off road vehicles and other activities.

FID rotation schedule is essentially a 3.5 day on, 3.5 day off rotation of the Upper and Middle FID Districts that are affected by "extremely limited Kingsley Reservoir flows," according to a letter to from FID. In the letter, FID customers are allowed to use irrigation water only during "on days" and must cease irrigating during all other times.

However, Indian Creek Golf Course owner Brian Brandt said the FID board did not ask any of the users at the meeting to give their opinion.

"It's a bad deal for me. It's going to affect my operations," he said. "An every other day schedule would be good for me and for a lot of people."

Areas of his golf course might not rebound if let go dormant, because of the clay content in the soil. "It will just go bare and we'll have to re-seed," he said.

Here is the geographical breakdown of the FID rotation schedule:

Group one — On days Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and ending Wednesday at noon.

All of Binns Hill Drive, all of York Hill Drive, all of Rordan Hill Drive, all of Frazier Drive, upper Tyler Drive, Westwood Drive, Phelps Creek Drive. All of Kingsley Road, Country Club Road to Barrett Drive, West Wind, all of Sunset Road, Sky line Drive, Reed Road.

Group two — On days Wednesday starting at noon. Thursday, Friday, ending Saturday at midnight.

Country Club Road from Barrett North, Barrett Road to Markham Road, Cannon Drive, Rockford Road, lower Tyler Drive, West Belmont, Firwood Drive, all of Kenwood Drive, all of Markham Road, all of Portland Drive, Carter Road, Doug Fir Drive, Hayes Drive, Royal Anne Drive, Hayworth Road, Riverdale Road, Peters Drive, Kahoe Drive.

District irrigation water lines will remain charged, so turning your irrigation water off is voluntary. FID crews will be enforcing this rotation schedule daily. Patrons that fail to comply with the rotation schedule risk further sanction, up to and including having their irrigation water shut off. Farmers Irrigation District is asking that all district water users voluntarily stop watering lawns and any non-essential landscapes for the duration of the summer. FID orchardists and farmers are asking for support in dramatic, voluntary cut-backs in the watering of lawns so that our extremely limited supplies can be focused on critical farms and crops. River flows are the lowest they've been in over 30 years and we need everyone's help to get through this unprecedented drought.



SPRINKLER waters a lawn Wednesday night, next to a pear orchard. Leaving enough water for growing fruit, given the low water levels in reservoirs, is the key quandary facing Farmers Irrigation District as it places users on a rotation schedule.

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