

BLOOMIN' BLUES



Photo by Bruce Barnes

Narrow-leaf collomia, *Collomia linearis*Seldom-seen collomia
a cluster of small flowersBy BRUCE BARNES
For the East Oregonian

Common Name: Narrow-leaf collomia
Scientific Name: *Collomia linearis*

After several articles on large, showy plants, I don't want to leave out the little ones often not noticed. This plant is seldom seen and is often only a single plant by itself, though it may be fairly common. The plant is rather small and its flowers don't stand out, so it is likely simply passed by. It is known to grow in scattered locations from British Columbia to California, and eastward to Quebec, Wisconsin, and Nebraska to New Mexico.

The name *Collomia* comes from the Greek "kola" for glue, referring to the slimy coating on the seeds when moistened. *Linearis* refers to the slender or linear shape of the lower leaves. There are several species of *Collomia* in the western U.S., which a genus in the Polemoniaceae or Phlox family.

The plant is usually 6 to 16 inches tall, and the stem is

seldom branching. The leaves are mostly 1 to 3 inches long, linear to narrowly triangular, with the uppermost leaves broader than those lower on the stem. The flowers are pink to bluish or white, tube-shaped with five petals spreading outward at the opening. Most of the flowers are in a tight cluster at the top of the stem, and often with a few small clusters at the bases of the upper leaves.

This collomia can be confused with *Phlox gracilis*, graceful phlox, which has tiny pink flowers in smaller clusters, is seldom over 4 inches high, often branches, and is abundant nearly everywhere in the Blues.

Northwest Indian tribes used a similar collomia species for medicinal uses. However, the only apparent use for the narrow-leaf collomia was by an eastern tribe that used the plant as a poultice for wounds and bruises.

Where to find: *Collomia linearis* is most likely to be spotted when walking in open wooded grassy areas in the Blues.



Photo contributed by U.S. Forest Service.

Area damaged by the Rail Fire near Unity.

Tree removal underway from
Rail Fire, Eagle Fire areas

East Oregonian

Visitors to the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest can expect to see crews hard at work removing burned trees from two wildfire areas in the Whitman Ranger District.

The Eagle Complex, which was sparked by lightning in 2015, spread over 12,763 acres about 20 miles northwest of Richland in Baker County, while the Rail Fire swept over 41,716 acres near Unity last summer. Crews are now working to remove damaged trees that may pose a risk to hikers and campers near forest roads and trails.

"Removing dangerous trees near roads and trails is part of our commitment

to public safety," said Jeff Tomac, district ranger. "We appreciate everyone's patience while our crews are working to make post-fire areas safer for public use."

Burned areas will remain open, though visitors may experience some delays and traffic, which will be heaviest during weekdays.

In addition to safety, salvage logging will provide an economic outlet for useful timber from the damaged areas.

Revenue from salvage also helps to pay for planting new trees.

For more information, visit the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/wallowa-whitman.

Oregon park fees could change soon

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Visitors could soon see different fees at state parks and campgrounds under a bill passed 27-to-1 by the Senate Wednesday.

The legislation allows the state parks director to adjust fees, within a range approved by the parks commission and the Legislature, up to four times a year.

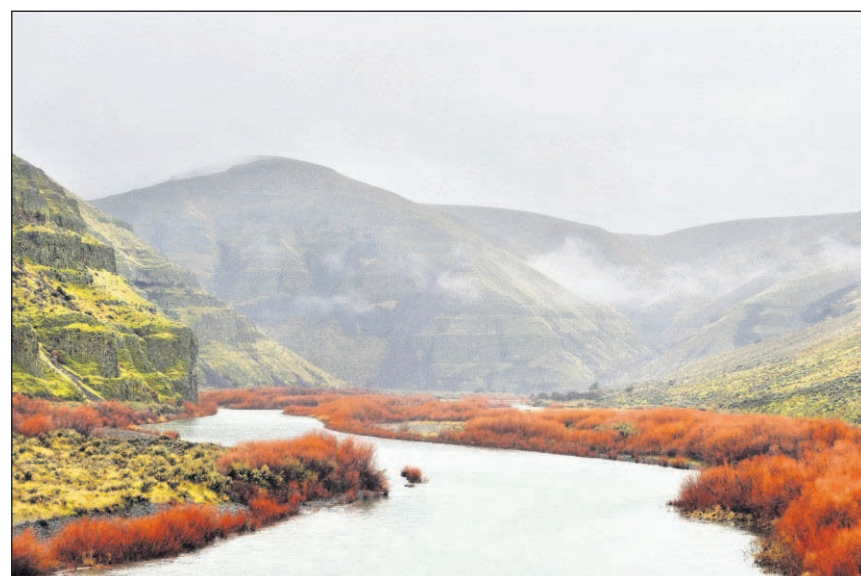
The parks department's plan is to hike fees at more popular parks and campgrounds and to reduce fees at parks significantly below capacity.

"We're nearly 100 years old, and we are really looking to the future to try to figure out how we can do things a little bit differently," said Lisa Sumption, Oregon State Parks director during a hearing May 11.

Since 1952, the department has set identical rates at parks.

The change could generate up to \$800,000 in the next two years, according to the Legislative Fiscal Office. State parks officials said they want to use the proceeds to beef up maintenance and repairs at parks facilities.

Rep. David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford, testified last month the tactic could help stimulate tourism in parts of his district on the Southern Oregon Coast.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The John Day River winds through the Cottonwood Canyon State Park outside of Condon. The park was once a cattle ranch before being sold and the land was donated to the state.

"We know that for just a little bit more in some of our places that are very special and loved, that we might be able to drive more folks (to other parks)," Sumption said. "For example, on the South Coast, we could get folks to go from a larger campground that's full and maybe use price and other amenities to drive folks to Humbug Mountain, which is at 17 percent

capacity."

The goal is to find "a way to disperse people and create greater access and opportunity through price as one tool," she said.

The House of Representatives passed the legislation unanimously May 30.

The bill needs only a signature from Gov. Kate Brown to become law.

Wonder and awe of total solar
eclipse will be something to behold

By TESS NOVOTNY

The (Eugene) Register Guard

As the moon passes between the sun and Earth, the sun's gleaming corona — its surrounding aura of plasma — can be seen from Earth.

Don't miss this sight during the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21, Dr. Randall Milstein, astronomer-in-residence at Oregon NASA Space Grant Consortium, told an audience of eclipse enthusiasts recently during a lecture in the atrium at *The Register-Guard*.

Milstein's lecture offered more details on the total solar eclipse that has galvanized world interest and that will bring throngs of eclipse viewers to Oregon this summer.

More than 110 people attended Milstein's free lecture. He is a faculty member at Oregon State University's Department of Physics, its University Honors College, and the College of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences. He told his attentive audience about the history, science and safety around the eclipse, then took questions from the audience until about 8 p.m.

A total solar eclipse occurs as the moon passes between the Earth and the sun, fully blocking the sun and casting a shadow of complete darkness across the area it faces. "That's the million dollar thing, is to see the corona; that is possibly one of the most beautiful sights," he said.

On Aug. 21, states along a "path of totality" that stretches about 62 miles wide and extends from Oregon to South Carolina, will be darkened by the cosmic phenomenon that is among the universe's most beautiful celestial events.

Milstein began his lecture by recalling some of the cultural history of viewing solar eclipses.

"Throughout history, they've talked about it in all kinds of Greek, Asian, Indian and Middle Eastern texts," he said after the lecture. "There are big events and they've been part of us as long as we've looked at the sky, which is probably ever since there were people walking on this

planet."

Milstein also said that eclipse watchers need to keep eye safety in mind when viewing a total solar eclipse.

He encouraged viewing the eclipse through solar eclipse glasses — which were distributed to audience members after the talk — or to use another safe viewing device, such as a shadow box, a solar telescope or a pair of shade 14 welder's glasses.

"The possibility of people hurting their eyes is huge," he said. "You just cannot look at the sun — not even quick glances. That's enough to damage your eyes."

It's safe to view the eclipse without glasses only when the sun is completely obscured — and that won't last for long.

Eugene will not be on the path of totality, but in Corvallis, Salem, Redmond and Madras, the eclipse will reach total darkness around 10:15 a.m., and that will last for about a minute and 30 seconds.

Milstein told the crowd about an interactive map on NASA's website that tells the time when the partial eclipse begins, the maximum eclipse occurs, and partial eclipse ends for every coordinate along its path. The map also gives the obscuration percentage and latitude of the eclipse at each viewing location. You can access the map and other information at eclipse2017.nasa.gov.

Though Eugene will be in 99 percent darkness, Milstein highly recommended that viewers travel to somewhere where they can see the total eclipse. He likened missing out on viewing the total eclipse to staring at a photo of an ice cream cone while someone else was devouring a sundae.

Milstein said he has seen a few partial solar eclipses, but never a total one.

"The sun, without a doubt, is probably the most beautiful thing that's in our sky," Milstein said. "And then to see it in its state of truest beauty is pretty amazing. So it's a pretty exciting thing to me."

Milstein also discussed the

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— Dr. Randall Milstein,

Astronomer in residence at Oregon NASA Space Grant Consortium

Eclipse Ballooning Project, which will launch during the eclipse. About 25 participating teams in locations from across the path of the eclipse will launch cameras attached to high-altitude balloons to document the event.

They will send live video and images to NASA's website for people to view. Images and videos of a total eclipse have been captured only once, in Australia, so scientists and the public alike are eager to see it. Milstein said that eclipse viewers didn't need to worry much about protecting their pets' eyes because animals rarely look at the sun anyway, but suggested keeping pets inside, to be safe.

Carol Petty, who attended Milstein's lecture, recalled afterward that she saw the last total solar eclipse that came near Eugene on Feb. 26, 1979, during a camping trip to Marysville, Wash. It was such a profound experience that Petty plans to view the Aug. 21 eclipse in Corvallis, with a friend.

"I saw why in biblical times in they didn't understand what a solar eclipse was; that they thought the world would end," she said. "It was such a spiritual, amazing experience."

— *The (Eugene) Register Guard*, via Associated Press

BRIEFLY

Committees OK Wisc.
woodchuck season

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Legislature's outdoors committees have approved a bill that would create a woodchuck season.

The Republican bill would remove woodchucks from the Wisconsin's protected species list and establish a hunting and trapping season that would run from July through December with no bag limits.

The Assembly's Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage Committee amended the measure Wednesday to establish a year-round open season on the animals on an 11-2 vote and passed the bill 9-4.

The Senate's Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry Committee met on the bill on Wednesday as well. That panel signed off on the amendment 5-0 and passed the bill 4-1.

Committee approval clears the way for votes in the full Senate and Assembly.

Rescuers save fallen
climber in Grand
Canyon National Park

PAGE, Ariz. (AP) — Authorities say they rescued a solo climber in

Grand Canyon National Park after he fell about 200 feet while looking for future climbing locations.

Coconino Sheriff's Office officials say in a statement a 33-year-old man fell in the park while climbing Tuesday and suffered severe injuries.

They say that incident is just one of multiple search and rescue operations over the last few days. Another rescue crew saved a 15-year-old girl Wednesday after she crashed her bike over the edge of the Mogollon Rim and fell about 25 feet before landing on a ledge. She was treated and sent to Payson Hospital for a laceration to her head and other possible injuries.

Officials also rescued a lost woman hiking alone outside of Sedona that day along with a man who was hiking with his wife near Flagstaff.

Endangered sea turtle
hatchlings released into
Gulf of Mexico

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP) — It was still dark outside and the parking lot was filling up.

The Corpus Christi Caller-Times reports more than a half-hour before the sun rose, Padre Island National Seashore was full of spectators waiting to catch a glimpse of the

endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings.

The Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery, plus dedicated volunteers, on Wednesday released 78 turtle hatchlings into the Gulf of Mexico. It has been a record-breaking year for Kemp's ridley nests statewide with 307 found so far. Nesting season continues until mid-July.

"We think it's a record-breaking year because the turtles can take a number of years off between nesting seasons," said Donna J. Shaver, chief of the Division of Sea Turtle Science and Recovery. "That number has increased from nesting every two years on average to every 3.5 years now. We think that a lot of the turtles that took time off nesting came in this year."

With a mild-to-warm South Texas winter, Shaver believes the turtles "fattened up" to get the energetic reserves necessary to make eggs and to migrate.

The Kemp's ridley species is the smallest sea turtle and has been endangered since 1970. The national seashore turtle program started in 1978 with Shaver at its helm.

The program's first success occurred 21 years ago when four Kemp's ridley nests were confirmed on Padre Island.

Have a great outdoors
story?

We'd love to hear it!

Call outdoors page editor

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