

Starkey Experimental Forest and Range will postpone opening day

East Oregonian

BAKER CITY — The Starkey Experimental Forest and Range will remain closed to public entry until further notice to align with the Gov. Kate Brown’s executive order to “Stay Home, Save Lives” during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, according to a press release from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

The 25,000-acre Starkey Experimental Forest and Range is located 28 miles southwest of La Grande on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Formally designated for research in 1940, the area is jointly managed with the Forest Service’s Pacific Northwest Research Station and is the primary field location for collaborative studies of the effects of deer, elk and cattle on ecosystems.

“This year, our field staff is extremely limited, owing to stay-at-home orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are not able to safely accommodate the traditional May 1 opening day,” said Starkey Area Manager Hans Hayden.

“The governor’s orders



A shed antler hunter camp located outside Starkey Experimental Forest and Range’s Main Gate.

also do not allow large groups of the public to congregate, many of whom travel hundreds of miles to camp together at the Starkey entrance. The current pandemic and associated need to avoid large gatherings, maintain public safety, and maintain safety for those who serve the public are all key considerations in delaying our opening until further notice.”

Starkey is popular with the public for gathering of shed deer and elk antlers each spring, and a large concentration of 100 or more people traditionally camp in a small area at the main gate in anticipation of opening day.

Starkey’s temporary closure is part of a larger closure order that currently applies to developed recreation sites in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. A developed recreation site is a site which has been improved for recreation, including but not limited to campgrounds, trailhead facilities, picnic areas, rental cabins, Sno-Parks and boat ramps.

Additionally, these closures will reduce potential pressure on emergency services in rural communities. Those who become lost, injured, or otherwise in need of assistance while recreating in the forest may strain limited search, rescue and health care resources at a time when resources are limited.

‘Simple idea’ aims to bring people together

Nightly community wave serves as welfare check, reassuring reminder

By ANDREW CUTLER
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Bill Young hopes the simple idea of a wave can help bring the community closer together.

Young is a member of the Baha’i faith in Pendleton, the group behind the daily “Community Wave” that began last Thursday. The idea is simple. Young and other members of the Baha’i faith have been scattering throughout the community each night around 6 p.m. and waving to neighbors and asking how they are.

“I was reading about studies on how when people feel like they’re a part of the community, their immune systems improve,” Young said. “I’m a Baha’i, so we believe in building communities and the two seem to go together.”

Young said coping with measures designed to slow



Neighbors on Northwest Eighth Street in Pendleton gather at a distance in the street to talk and catch up with one another at 6 p.m. on April 16.

the pandemic is stressing for many in the community, especially following so closely on the destructive February floods.

“Visits to the elderly and disabled are harder to manage as travel is made more difficult,” he said. “A wave from a neighbor can be both reassuring and an important welfare check as we encounter the predicted spike of infections during the next several weeks, and our communities will be stronger

when the restrictions are lifted.”

Young said the concept remains fluid and he’s open to suggestions to make a more meaningful connection between people. One change, he said, might be to make some noise while waving.

“One of the things we’ve found in the community around the Baha’i Center is that there’s a lot of shut-ins in Pendleton,” he said. “People who can’t make it to the

door, and it might be good if they could hear that the neighbors are out there, that things are OK.”

The group is also working on spreading the word about the wave. In addition to social media, in areas of Pendleton, residents might start noticing sidewalk chalk art promoting the Community Wave in that area of town.

Young said overall feedback to the idea has been positive.

“They don’t have a reaction the first time I mention it and by the second or third time, I think people warm up to the idea,” he said. “It’s an idea where the logic of this is a time when all of us are in and it’s good to check on each other. We’ve been through the floods and so people are already feeling bruised.”

Ideally, Young said he’d like to see the idea spread to other Umatilla County communities.

“Hopefully, we’ll build this up over time,” he said. “We’re going to be reaching out to people in Hermiston as well.”

BRIEFLY

UEC releases 2019 financial, board election results

HERMISTON — After changing the format for its 2020 annual meeting in response to COVID-19 restrictions, Umatilla Electric Cooperative released its 2019 financial results and certified the election of three positions on its board of directors during its 83rd annual meeting on April 18.

Out of concern for the safety of the cooperative’s membership and employees, a decision was made early on to cancel the in-person portion of the yearly business meeting of the electric cooperative. Because of the unique circumstances, the brief meeting was held at the cooperative’s Hermiston headquarters without attendance of the general membership. UEC board directors, board director candidates, a small number of staff and the cooperative’s attorney were present, most by conference call.

During the meeting, the results of the board elections were certified, with Tom Pitzer (District 5), Steve Platt (District 6) and John Otis (District 7) all winning their respective races. Each will each serve a three-year term that begins immediately.

The meeting also included the annual report of finances

and accomplishments, which included the cooperative’s power sales rising nearly 20% from the previous year. The cooperative also saw its operating revenues rise to \$151.5 million, up from \$126.5 million the previous year.

Umatilla County adds one more COVID-19 case

UMATILLA COUNTY — One new case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Umatilla County on Tuesday, bringing the county’s case total to 28, according to a press release.

The newest individual to test positive had no contact with previously reported cases, and they are currently self-isolating at home. As in other press releases, no other demographic information, such as an age range, sex or place of residence within the county was provided.

The county is reporting that 13 residents who tested positive are currently considered “recovered,” meaning they have been free of symptoms, such as cough, fever and shortness of breath for 72 hours.

One individual is currently hospitalized, while the other 14 people are recovering at home. No deaths have been reported in the county.

— EO Media Group



To my dear husband Lloyd,
Thank you for an amazing year of marriage, I've loved every minute of it. I wish we could be together for our anniversary, hopefully next year. You make me wildly happy gorgeous, and I love being your wife, best friend and overthinking pain in the neck.
Couldn't resist a gratuitous public display of affection (it almost counts as shouting it from a rooftop or a table top, yeah?). Cheers to a lifetime with you. I did then, I do now, I always will,
--
Love you with all my heart,
Mrs Amy 'Aussie' Austin xoxox

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IS GOING TO
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Shooting survivor finds peace

PENDLETON — Kevin Anderson knows trauma.

With the U.S. Constitution guiding her, Holly Biers wants to be the people's voice as Umatilla County commissioner

Shooting survivor finds peace

The week in photos

Coronavirus forces event cancellations

UMATILLA COUNTY — Following Gov. Kate Brown's restriction on events with crowds larger than 25 people due to the COVID-19 outbreak, several events have been canceled in Umatilla County.

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