

FERGI

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“We’ll just haul people further up the hill,” said co-organizer Charlie Kissenger. “We’ll find a way make it happen.”

Costumes and crazy styles are part of the fun so feel free to accessorize, thrift shop, dig out that vintage snowsuit or step into a tutu to top your ski tights.

The races begin at 3 p.m. with kid’s ski and snowboard races first, followed by adult races, ski/snowboard golf and then the grand finale, the lawn chair race. In the last race, participants race their homemade lawn chair contraptions of innovative designs down the slope as fast as they can.

A potluck will start at 5 p.m. and, beginning at 6 or 7 p.m., music will be provided by Matt Harshman and Friends. Alcoholic beverages are allowed, but you must bring your own.

Fergi Fest is free. Visit <http://www.skifergi.com> for a map to Fergi and other information or Ferguson Ridge Ski Area on Facebook for sharing and photos.

WOLVES

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Radio collar data indicated that wolf OR-41 from the pack was within 300 yards of the depredation site on the previous day. The pack currently has three members. Hansen said that he noted at least two different sizes of wolf tracks at the scene and suspected all three members of the pack participated. On Nov. 23 of last year the pack injured a calf about 25 miles southeast of the Flora depredation.

The incident is the second confirmed wolf depredation for the state in 2017 and the first for Wallowa County.

Lower Joseph Creek Project a go

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

In about a year, travelers along Highway 3 may hear an unexpected sound — the roar of chain saws — as wood is harvested from federal land about 20 miles north of Enterprise.

The U.S. Forest Service has put the final stamp of approval on the Lower Joseph Creek Project, a land and forest improvement program designed to enhance forest resiliency in the northern part of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The project will treat more than 100,000 acres of land through thinning, logging, prescribed burning and other treatments.

Wallowa-Whitman Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya signed the final Record of Decision on the project on March 17.

The project was initiated by Wallowa County’s Natural Resources Advisory Committee back in 2007-08. The advisory committee is composed of various county interests, including representatives of environmental, tribal, business, industry and other county concerns.

“NRAC had decided that to move these projects in the county forward, we needed to complete a watershed analysis of the area,” said Wallowa County commissioner Susan Roberts.

After about two years of analysis, the hard work of those involved literally went up in flames when the Eagle Cap Ranger District headquarters in Enterprise burned to the ground in July of 2010. Roberts said that although it didn’t force the project back to its beginnings, it was a huge step backward.

The project regrouped and the USFS released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement in late 2014 along with three alternatives to restore the area. Alternative 2, the USFS preferred alternative, included removal of about 10.4 million cubic feet of timber in the treatment as well as providing as many as 55 jobs over a 10-



Swamp Creek, a tributary of Joseph Creek, flows through Wallowa County and will be subject to the Lower Joseph Creek Restoration Project.

U.S. Forest Service.

“This isn’t just good for us; this is good for the community”

David Schmidt

owner of Integrated Biomass in Wallowa, a company that manufactures secondary wood products mainly from restoration and thinning projects

year restoration period with about \$3 million labor income provided over the length of the project.

However, the final decision scaled the timber removal down to 5 million-7.5 million cubic feet of raw material available for wood processing. Part of the downward revision is a decrease in the amount of land subject to harvest and because no trees over 21 inches are subject to removal. However, jobs associated with the project are still projected at about 50 as road repair and the installation of six new culverts will help take up the slack.

Final Results

Roberts said that while she is pleased the project is going forward, the county wasn’t necessarily pleased with the amount of land receiving treatment, down to about 17,000 acres. The Record of Decision also forbid the cutting of trees more than 21 inches in diameter, some of which contain high-dollar lumber. Lastly, the roads affected by the project were not to the county’s liking

“They (USFS) tell us that we gained road miles, but

only in areas less critical to the county. We lost them where it was more critical they remain,” Roberts said. She added that several of the roads lost were prime wildlife viewing areas.

Brian Kelly, reservation director of Hells Canyon Preservation Council, released the following statement regarding the decision.

“Joseph Canyon is a magnificent place. Its forests, grasslands and creeks are essential habitat for steelhead, elk, and a wide variety of wildlife. The Joseph Canyon wild lands connect the important habitats of Hells Canyon with the Blue Mountains and the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, the Forest Service’s decision for the Joseph Creek project appears to allow logging in remote forests located in wilderness-quality, un-roaded, canyon lands.” Kelly added that HCPC worked hard through the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Collaborative to find solutions and is disappointed with the results. He added that HCPC will continue to review the final decision and continue to advocate for the wild lands and waters of Joseph Canyon.

The HCPC statements about the USFS allowing logging in “remote forests located in wilderness-quality, un-roaded, canyon lands” are misguided. The project will not allow any commercial logging in either the Inventoried Roadless Areas nor in Potential Wilderness Areas. Commercial logging will primarily take place in Management Area 1 of the project.

Nils Christoffersen, executive director of Wallowa Resources, participated with his organization from the beginning as a part of NRAC and the forest collaborative.

He noted that the project is the outcome of nearly 8 years of collaborative effort, starting with Wallowa County’s Community Planning Process to the Wallowa Whitman Forest Collaborative. He said that the project ultimately addresses the priority forest and riparian concerns impairing the proper function and condition of the watershed. Christoffersen also offered that forest ecosystems and social values regarding the forests are complex, and that the collaborative process involves trade-offs, but because of the project’s complexity, many stakeholders could not reconcile some project details to their satisfaction.

“Despite that fact, collaborative processes are critical to finding solutions to these

complex issues, to improving our understanding, and forging stronger partnerships to sustain the health of our forests and our communities,” he said.

Christoffersen also remarked on the forest treatment plan as a whole, observing that the mechanical treatment activity is based on the best available science and silvicultural plans to advance forest restoration.

“The legacy of past management has fundamentally altered these landscapes. The project seeks to address these legacies - including overstocked stands, loss of habitat diversity - in particular old forest structure, and fire risk, among others,” he said.

Christoffersen summed up his feelings about the project’s success with these words: “This was a strong and long collaborative effort invested in good data collection, scientific analysis and a strong process to identify the important conditions and needs of that landscape and has advanced a good plan to do that.”

David Schmidt is owner of Integrated Biomass in Wallowa, a company that manufactures secondary wood products mainly from restoration and thinning projects similar to LJCP. Schmidt said that he is pleased with the decision.

“What this does is create more certainty for our supply for our products and helps justify out investment here. We need to pick up the pace of forest restoration. “This isn’t just good for us; this is good for the community,” he said.

Wallowa Whitman Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya said that although it was likely that actual logging wouldn’t start until 2019, the state could lend a hand by moving the dates up by as much as a year through the Federal Forest Restoration Program.

“We’ve been partnering with the state on other timber sales. We’ve been talking with them about Lower Joseph, and they may be able to assist us here, and there may be some dollars available to help with that. They have a few pre-sale crews that help with that by laying out boundaries and marking trees and those kind of things,” he said.

Although this is the final ROD, no law prevents any objectors from filing lawsuits. At this point, none of the parties involved has declared an intention to do so.

Student of the Week



Casey Kiser has earned a 3.64 GPA here at EHS. Casey has taken classes throughout his high school career to make him a well-rounded student. He has studied Creative Writing and British Literature along with Advanced Placement Literature and Composition. He is currently enrolled in Physics. He has studied Psychology as well as the Family and Consumer Sciences. Music is a place where he has really excelled and his contribution and support of our school has been truly appreciated. Thank you Casey for your contributions in making EHS a better place.

Casey Kiser
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The Student of the Week is chosen for academic achievement and community involvement. Students are selected by the administrators of their respective schools.

Introducing new Nurse Practitioner Jennifer Barden



Jennifer brings 17 years of nursing experience covering the areas of emergency, trauma, oncology, telemedicine, pediatrics and public health. Now, as a nurse practitioner, Jennifer can diagnose illnesses, prescribe medications, take care of your annual physical exams, and help you stay well.

**Now accepting new patients
Schedule your appointment today!
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Introducing Resident Dr. Aimee Rowe, MD



Dr. Rowe graduated from University of California, Davis medical school after receiving a Master of Science in Public Health from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Dr. Rowe is here on the Family Medicine Rural Rotation program through Cascades East. She will be in residency at Mountain View Medical Group through April 7.

To schedule your appointment with Dr. Rowe, call Mountain View Medical Group 541.426.7900

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TICKET **GUN RAFFLE!**
Drawing on Sunday

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

This week’s athlete of the week is Enterprise High School graduate David Ribich, now a track star at Western Oregon University. In the last few weeks Ribich has kept piling up awards with his running excellence.

Of late, Ribich was voted Male Athlete of the Year by coaches of the Greater Northwest Athletic Conference after an indoor season that saw him break GNAC conference records in the mile and win the mile and 3000 meters in the championships. He also placed third in the mile at the NCAA Division II Indoor Championships. Ribich also ran the anchor leg on the Wolves’ national champion distance medley relay, setting a Division II all-time record with Ribich diving over the finish line for the win.



David Ribich

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