



**Ned Hickson**

# Now that I've tackled my freezer, I'm ready for Mt. Everest

You may find it hard to believe, but I've come close to losing my life 23 times in avalanches. Each incident was absolutely terrifying. Each incident had me wondering if I'd be found in time.

And each incident occurred while standing in front of the refrigerator when the freezer door fell open.

The last time was less than a week ago, while I was looking for my water bottle. One minute, I was poised in the soft glow of the refrigerator light, satisfying my thirst; the next minute I was buried beneath chicken drumsticks,

hamburger patties, fruit-flavored Popsicles and a frozen tofurkey left over from a health-food kick back in the late 1990s.

The reason for these recurring disasters is simple.

Even though before shopping I measure the cubic inches available in our freezer, and factor in the rate of ice build-up in relation to our rate of consumption, it's impossible to pass up a sale on things like pre-breaded, microwavable okra sticks.

As a result, I return from the grocery store and try to defy the laws of physics by stuffing what amounts to an entire side of beef into a freezer roughly the size of my wife's clutch purse.

So, after recently purchas-

ing a full-sized, stand-up freezer, I immediately began measuring and calculating the dimensions of our new storage capacity. Needless to say, my conclusion was that we needed more stuff.

However, before embarking into the frozen food section of the grocery store, it was necessary to embark into the frozen tundra of our existing freezer — a job that required a blow torch, an ice pick, and more than one call to the Centers for Disease Control.

Though avalanches had emptied out most of our freezer's contents over time, in its farthest reaches were a number of unlabeled Ziploc bags that had been lying dormant since the unit's first ice age.

These items were no longer

recognizable as animal, vegetable or mineral.

(For our friends who will be joining us for dinner this weekend, disregard that last paragraph.)

In the end, the sum total of our tiny freezer required only one shelf in the new unit, leaving a cavernous void of unoccupied space. I felt obligated to fill this void with pork, chicken, jalapeño poppers, shoe-string potatoes, a cow, assorted sea creatures, all members of the dairy family, 16 different kinds of bread, two kinds of waffles, one Ziploc bag of unknown origin, and an entire case of pre-breaded, microwavable okra sticks.

As I stood admiring my handiwork I suddenly realized

there was a problem: our smaller freezer was now empty.

So I went back to the store.

For my neighbors who heard that terrible rumbling sound this morning, don't worry; I'm all right.

And by the way, you can now make it 24 avalanches.

*Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com.*

## RAC approves funding for Lane County projects

CORVALLIS — Refurbishing a campground, eradicating noxious weeds on private and public lands and removing illegal dumpsites were among 29 projects approved for funding recently by the Siuslaw National Forest's Resource Advisory Committee (RAC).

The RAC is responsible for distributing funds authorized by the federal Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

More than 37 proposals, requesting an accumulative \$1.2 million, vied for \$621,561 allotted to the Siuslaw National Forest under Title II of the act.

While Title II proposed projects don't need to occur on National Forest System lands to be eligible for funding, they must demonstrate a direct benefit to national forest resources.

A proposal by the Lincoln County Soil and Water Conservation District to eradicate noxious weeds on private and public lands received the largest distribution of \$66,550.

It was followed by Lane County Park's request for \$58,838 to rehabilitate and reopen the Archie Knowles Campground, a Forest Service campground near the community of Mapleton that the county will soon operate under a special-use permit.

The smallest approved projects will help the Forest Service identify and remove illegal dumpsites in Douglas and Lincoln Counties, both valued at \$2,000 each.

"Funding through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act benefits national forests and communities," said Siuslaw National Forest Supervisor Jerry Ingersoll. "Projects promote collaboration between public and private parties, provide jobs to local economies and improve natural resources beyond what the agency could do on its own."

The RAC comprises a cross-section of national forest stakeholders from tribal and government agencies, nonprofit organizations, industry, recreation and

environmental groups. The Siuslaw National Forest is recruiting new RAC members for the 2016 fiscal year.

Eligibility and responsibilities can be found under the "Highlights" section on the agency's homepage at [www.fs.usda.gov/siuslaw](http://www.fs.usda.gov/siuslaw).

The following projects were approved for funding by the RAC in Lane County (amounts do not include 7 percent overhead approved by the RAC to

be retained by the Forest Service to support RAC coordination and project logistics):

- Archie Knowles Park rehabilitation \$58,838
- Big Creek Floodplain restoration \$16,445
- ODNRA North Riding Area Restoration \$16,445
- County road maintenance \$16,445
- Siuslaw Riparian Restoration \$16,445
- Northwest Youth Corps Employment \$16,445

• Siuslaw Trail Volunteers \$3,650

The Siuslaw National Forest manages more than 630,000 acres of temperate rainforests along the Oregon Coast Range, from Tillamook to the end of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area in Coos Bay.

Additional information is available online at [www.fs.usda.gov/siuslaw](http://www.fs.usda.gov/siuslaw) or [www.twitter.com/SiuslawNF](http://www.twitter.com/SiuslawNF).

### DAV seeks volunteer drivers

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is in desperate need of volunteer drivers who are willing to drive vets in the DAV van on day trips to Portland. Vets need to make the trip for medical appointments.

The drive is about four

hours to Portland, plus four hours waiting for vets, plus four hours for the return trip, and a total of about 330 miles.

Anyone interested in contributing time as a DAV van driver should call Jim Swant at 541-997-3695 or Tom Zahara at 541-997-1123.



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