

SAFE from page 1A

they find themselves in and to provide them with a basic skill set to combat physical violence directed against them.

The event is being offered by a new local group, SAFE (Smart, Alert, Fearless and Equipped), and will be held on Monday, June 10, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Blue Warehouse, 80 Harbor St. at the Port of Siuslaw.

There is no cost for attendees.

The evening will include presentations from the

Florence Police Department and personal trainer Roby Hodge, who will provide basic safety tips in a workshop entitled "Practical Self-defense for Seniors."

There will also be information provided regarding the steps needed to obtain a permit to legally carry a concealed weapon.

Florence resident Jacquie Beveridge is helping to coordinate the upcoming workshop, which was designed to address the high level of fear expressed by woman from all walks of

life in the area.

"This event is a grassroots effort to furnish information for residents, especially women, to be situationally aware and remain safe," Beveridge said. "We're thankful to the Florence Police Department, Roby Hodge and Siuslaw Rod and Gun Club for their participation and support. We hope this two-hour event will help attendees be SAFE to enjoy our beautiful natural areas."

The concern created in the woman's community after the attack at Carter

Lake was the impetus for the SAFE workshop. Nearly 70 people have already signed up, and the positive response to the free safety workshops was welcome to organizers. People can RSVP to SafeWomenFlorence@gmail.com.

The SAFE event is being offered without cost since the space provided for the workshop is being donated by Geraldine Lucio, Florence City Councilor and Old Town business owner.

"Geraldine is making the Blue Warehouse available, and we hope to receive

small donations to cover the use of the space," Beveridge said.

She added that people may have to bring their own chair.

"Attendees are encouraged to bring in a cane or walking stick to learn about using them as a weapon and greatly improve the chances of protecting yourself and not becoming the next victim," Beveridge said.

Additionally, participants are asked to bring a snack to share during the event. Florence Master Recyclers will be providing free use

of their durable, reusable dishware. Drinking water will be provided.

The investigation into the Carter Lake assault resulted in the arrest of 63-year-old Reedsport resident Edward Spalione, who was arrested at his home after detectives found evidence linking him to the rape. Spalione is also a person of interest in a previous sexual assault reported at Carter Lake in August 2018.

For more information on the June 10 SAFE workshop, contact Beveridge at 541-997-8311.

DUNES from page 1A

Most of the sand in the dunes came from the Umpqua river, and was created by strong winds that blew the sand up and down the coast. Historically, this is how the dunes have existed, continually shifting in size and space. A healthy dunes landscape changes from one week to the next.

But as homesteaders entered the region, the constant movement of the dunes became a problem as

"sand covered settlers' land, roads and even lakes," the report said.

A Forest Service silviculturist touring the dunes in 1910 stated that "the public is looking to the government to do what it can to prevent the destruction of private property by unregulated drifting of sand. ... The drifting of the sand could certainly be stopped ... by planting grass and forming a barrier dune."

Because of this, the Forest Service, along with private

businesses, began stabilizing the dunes by planting European beachgrass. Willows, Scotch broom and gorse were also planted to create a favorable seed bed for tree growth.

"Now the problem is it's all being taken over by vegetation," Mueller said.

While much has been written about the non-natives overtaking

native species, as well as

Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative, which works

"I think as we come through this, we'll have a greater appreciation for nature in its place, in this location. And everybody loves this place. When we get closer, people will look at it and realize what's good about it, and how much better it is in its natural setting and ecological processes."

— Mick Mueller, Project Leader of the Siuslaw National Forest

species such as the western snowy plover, one of the greatest problems presented by the grasses is economic.

"Access from recreation infrastructure (campgrounds, staging areas, etc.) to open sand, through travel corridors and across open sand has been negatively affected by the rapid colonization and further succession of other vegetative species," the report stated.

Portions of the Oregon dunes that were once used by off-road vehicles and bikes have become so overcrowded by invasive species that they have become unusable. This has forced the Forest Service to close down portions of the recreational areas, which has led to the perception that the service is actively attempting to curtail riders.

"That's not the case," Mueller said. "The closures are happening because the vegetation is impinging on the open sand areas."

If action is not taken, the invasive species could overtake even more areas, lessening the opportunities for recreation and hurting the economy of Florence, Dunes City, Reedsport and other communities within the ODNRA.

While there have been many attempts to rid the dunes of non-native species by groups such as the

with the Forest Service, the projects have been rather small in scale. The new ODRP will expand the scope significantly, which will in turn expand resources.

"We've focused on site-specific kinds of things, and now we're looking at getting an ecological processes involved, and you can only do that by getting large swaths of vegetation treatments in there again," Mueller said. "What this really does is it opens so much area to be able to work in, to be able to not just take little pin holes out of it, but to take larger areas (of non-natives) out of it."

The ODRP, which is expected to last anywhere from 10 to 15 years, will start off with eradicating invasive species incrementally.

"This is a very involved and complex process," Mueller said. "You can't go over any one acre just once and get rid of these noxious weeds. They're very difficult to get rid of, and often times it takes several treatments to get rid of them. Every year we'll be doing new acreage of initial treatments."

The first treatments will be large scale: removing unwanted vegetation either manually or by heavy equipment such as bulldozers. The vegetation will be buried so they can be

decomposed and, in some rare cases, the vegetation will be pile burned or removed from the site.

"And then when the new beachgrass tries to come back the next season, we'll hit it with an herbicide, or maybe burning, so it gets hit twice," Mueller said. "So it gets knocked back and knocked back until it disappears. You have to hit it when it's vulnerable at different stages like that, to really affect it and knock it back. It's difficult to do it the same way every time, or come back once every few years. You're really not going to be successful."

Mueller does not see the project overtaking the dunes all at once, saying, "It's not going to be like, 'Wow, look at all the work going on in the dunes the first year. It's going to go by priority.'"

One of the first priorities will be the recreation areas that are being imposed on. Not only will this open up more areas to riders, the riders themselves will also help to keep the invasive vegetation at bay.

"If we can push non-native vegetation back, opening up the width of the trails, opening up the wider areas, by continually riding over them, the riders should keep that vegetation down," Mueller said. "That will be helpful in the first few years."

The work that Mueller envisions on the dunes will take a large group of volunteers and associations to be successful.

"This is on a grand scale. We'll always need folks to help," he said. "All the groups have been really great about getting people together. And it's going to be more high profile now, where people will kind of recognize why this is important. We want people to say, 'That's a great idea, we see progress, we see how you're treating those weeds and getting ahead of the curve. How can we help?' I've seen that happen in other places."

It will also help groups like Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative lobby for money, either through grants or federal appropriations.

"I think as we come through this, we'll have a greater appreciation for nature in its place, in this location," Mueller said. "And everybody loves this place. When we get closer, people will look at it and realize what's good about it, and how much better it is in its natural setting and ecological processes."

The public comment period of the ODRP will continue through June 9, though Mueller stated that the Siuslaw National Forest will listen to and consider comments outside the period. The project plan itself is expected to be finalized by October or November.

To read the report, visit www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=52946. A physical copy of the document can be obtained by contacting the CCRD/ODNRA office at 541-563-8400.

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