

Time to share the beach with nesting snowy plover

Beachgoers and residents along the Oregon coast are urged to help recovery efforts of the threatened western snowy plover by respecting nesting areas and beach restrictions during nesting season now through Sept. 15. Beachgoers will see signs and ropes that identify sensitive plover nesting areas and list restrictions, including dogs (even on a leash), vehicles, kites, drones, camping and fires.

"We're making great strides in reversing the downward slide of this species," said Cindy Burns, Siuslaw National Forest wildlife biologist. "But it takes all of us, so we urge people to do their part to understand nesting season rules and to share the beach this spring and summer."

These small birds nest on open sand along Oregon's beaches. Nests, and especially chicks, are well-camouflaged. During nesting season, human disturbances can flush adult plovers away from their nests as they attempt to defend their young from the perceived predator. Left alone too long, eggs or chicks can die from exposure, predators or people.

Recreation restrictions occur in designated plover management areas, small stretches of beach along

the entire coastline where plovers are nesting or could potentially nest. These areas comprise about 40 miles of Oregon's 362 miles of shoreline. Detailed maps can be found on the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department website (<http://bit.ly/wsplover>) and on the Siuslaw National Forest website (www.fs.usda.gov/detail/siuslaw/alerts-notices/?cid=fse-prd518707#mgmtarea).

On these plover beaches, the dry sand and dunes are closed to all access — except along official trails and on the wet sand — to protect eggs and chicks. Visitors may see roped off areas within these plover management areas, which serve to protect the most sensitive habitat; however, all dry sand on both sides of the rope is closed. Wet sand areas on plover beaches remain open to foot and equestrian traffic. All other recreation is off limits, include walking your dog (even on a leash), driving a vehicle, riding a bicycle, camping, fires, and flying kites or drones.

"Visitors will have access to hundreds of miles of beaches without these seasonal restrictions," said Laurel Hillmann, Ocean Shores Specialist for Oregon State Parks. "By planning your trip, you can



COURTESY OF ODFW

These small shorebirds nest on open sand along Oregon's beaches now through Sept. 15

enjoy the coast and help keep these special birds safe."

Visitors to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area can review www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/siuslaw/recreation/recarea/?recid=42465&actid=93 to identify unrestricted recreation areas and information on riding motor vehicles on the sand.

Several land managers oversee beach activity for plover protection, including the U. S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Ser-

vice listed western snowy plovers as a threatened species in 1993. Habitat loss from invasive plants — as well as human disturbances, including litter and discarded food scraps that attract predators — have contributed to the birds' decline. The Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative (www.saveoregondunes.org/) is working with land managers to develop and implement a restoration strategy as well as raise public awareness about the need to restore the dunes ecosystem for snowy plover, rare plants and animals, and the unique recreation opportunities offered here.

PeaceHealth CNO earns national recognition

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend Chief Nursing Officer Heather Wall, RN, has been named a national recipient of the Catholic Health Association's Tomorrow's Leaders award.

The national award honors dedicated, high-performing individuals who have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing the mission of Catholic healthcare. Wall will be presented with the award in June at the annual CHA Awards Banquet in Dallas, Texas.

Wall, a lifelong Lane County resident, has worked for PeaceHealth for 14 years. Inspired by a desire to care for others in their time of need, she began her career as a neurology nurse at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center, University District. She then graduated to a variety of leadership roles including stepping into her current CNO position in 2018.

"Heather is the kind of chief nursing officer that leaders and caregivers not only want to work with, but aspire to be

like," said Mary Kingston, Oregon network chief executive. "She is an expert in her field, and a passionate leader who is tireless in her pursuit of excellence. She is also a highly respectful, collaborative, approachable and humble leader who inspires those around her."

Wall has been instrumental in launching several successful initiatives, including those that ensure PeaceHealth provides the highest level of patient safety and quality of care, empower bedside caregivers and support staff to make decisions and drive positive change, and support the physical, mental and spiritual health of our nurses.

Wall's dedication extends out into the community, as she has also been actively involved with nonprofit organizations that serve those in need, including the United Way, FOOD for Lane County and Lane Blood Bank.

For more information about the CHA, visit www.chausa.org.

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Homeowners warned of fraud claiming imminent property seizure

Lane County residents may be targeted in a tax scam that has made its way across the country in recent months.

Letters claiming to be a "Notice of Warrant and State of Oregon Tax Lien Action" have been reported by some Eugene residents. The notice claims that property seizure is imminent and provides a non-local number for resolution.

"It's sick, but these con artists rely on creating enough panic that their victims will overlook all of the red flags," said Lane County Assessor Mike Cowles. "Who wouldn't panic at the thought of losing their home? The best thing people can do is take a breath and carefully review the letter or email for signs of fraud before making any kind of payment."

Property seizure does not occur with a legitimate State of Oregon income tax lien. For liens related to unpaid property taxes, real

property seizure only occurs after five years and many notices to the property owner. Claims of imminent property seizure with no prior notification are typically false.

Property owners can check the status of any legally recorded liens by visiting Lane County Deeds and Records at 125 E. Eighth Ave. in Eugene.

Other indicators that this letter is a scam:

- A full agency name is not clearly provided.
- No agency address is provided on the envelope or in the letter.
- The logo is a generic seal that does not properly identify any agency.
- Lane County does not have an "Office of Lien Filings."
- There is no "Bureau of Tax Enforcement" located in Eugene.

Suspected scams should be reported to your local law enforcement agency or the Oregon Department of Justice by calling

1-877-877-9392 or visiting www.oregonconsumer.gov.

"These documents are fake," said Ellen Klem, Director of Consumer Outreach and Education for the Oregon Department of Justice. "Crooks impersonating the government cost people their time and money. The Oregon Department of Justice urges people to stay vigilant against schemes and scams and avoid becoming a victim."

SCAM SAFETY TIPS:

- Don't panic: Con artists will use aggressive tactics to rush you into making immediate payment to avoid legal action or prosecution. When you panic, you may not be able to spot the signs of fraud as easily. If you have any doubt about the legitimacy of a notice, pause and look for signs of potential fraud. Use terms or names in the notice to conduct online research to see if a similar scam has been reported by others. You can also ask a friend or someone you trust for help researching the notice.
- Spot imposters: Con artists often pose as a government entity. If you are targeted by a con artist

through the mail, phone or email, do not provide personal information or money until you are sure you are speaking to a legitimate representative. Try contacting the agency directly through telephone numbers listed on the agency's official website rather than using phone numbers provided by the con artists.

- Look carefully at the letter or email: Fraudulent notices are usually vague, so they apply to as many victims as possible. Examine the notice for identifying information that can be verified. Look for blatant factual errors and other inconsistencies, such as a fake return address or fake logo. If the notice is unexpected and states "This Is Your Final Notice," take a moment and verify its legitimacy. Agencies will send multiple letters to taxpayers if there is a legitimate liability owed.
- Avoid strange payment systems: Legitimate government agencies will not ask you to pay a debt with reloadable debit cards, gift cards or money wiring services.

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