

# Tiller Ranger District facilities to undergo feasibility study

Starting this spring, Forest Service employees and contractors will be conducting a feasibility study to help determine the future of the Tiller Ranger Station.

The Umpqua National Forest has concluded that maintaining the current Tiller Ranger Station in the long term is not practical and will begin reviewing options for relocation.

Located in the communi-

ty of Tiller, Oregon, the Tiller Ranger Station is a U.S. Forest Service compound consisting of 27 buildings, many of which were built in the 1930s and 1940s, on the Umpqua National Forest.

In recent years, the Forest Service has faced growing challenges with maintaining the facilities at the Tiller Ranger Station. Many of these buildings and associated infrastructure, require

repairs estimated at up to \$11 million to maintain safe working and living conditions.

Funding for this level of deferred maintenance is not available. Across the Umpqua National Forest — and the nation — the Forest Service faces growing and costly deferred maintenance needs for legacy facilities and infrastructure.

This feasibility study will

consider deferred maintenance needs, currently available and needed services, wildfire response capacity, seasonal housing, employee recruitment and retention, and other important issues.

The study will also evaluate several alternative locations, all within an hour's drive from the current Tiller facilities.

"This feasibility study

will help us evaluate options for how we can best meet current and future needs for the Tiller Ranger District, the Umpqua National Forest, and the communities we serve," said Alice Carlton, Forest Supervisor.

The feasibility study contractor will engage employees, community members, and stakeholders to collect feedback on what is most important to them when

considering a new location for the Tiller Ranger Station. The Umpqua National Forest will share additional information about this process and opportunities to engage in the coming weeks.

For more information, contact Tiller District Ranger, Gabe Wishart at gabriel.j.wishart@usda.gov or 541-825-3107.

## Funds from A6

could try to get some more information — I decided to share that on Facebook."

The strategy seemed to have struck a chord as nearly 100 comments quickly sprang up on the thread. Commenters were highly critical of the city's move and speculated on a range of ways in the which the money had been mis-

used, including that the money had been directed toward the businesses of councilors and their friends.

Many commenters, too, were unclear on the nature of the program, confused as to whether the program was used for loans or grants while one commenter even asked why Cottage Grove was sending tax-

payer money to the City of Springfield.

Commenters on the thread also posted images of their attempts to contact Community LendingWorks and get the names of businesses who received loans and grants.

The nonprofit replied to at least two commenters stating that it could not release the names of businesses as it was a "privacy issue," fueling speculation among social media users that the nonprofit was hiding information.

In response, the Cottage Grove City Manager issued a public statement clarifying that Community LendingWorks, though a nonprofit, is also a Community Development Financial In-

stitution (CDFI).

A formal CDFI certification is awarded through the U.S. Department of the Treasury. CDFIs typically have a local focus on communities underserved by the traditional banking sector, but the certification can be applied for by banks and credit unions as well.

"Just like any other credit union or bank, they protect the confidential information associated with their clients," stated Meyers in the letter. "Just as anyone with a loan with a credit union doesn't want their loan amount, payment information or financial history given out freely, the customers of a CDFI are protected the same way. You as a member

of a credit union cannot demand that the credit union tell you who is borrowing money that is deposited with them."

Meyers has separately noted that even the city does not know who has received funds through the nonprofit.

For more information about Community LendingWorks, visit communitylendingworks.org.

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