

UNIQUE FUNDRAISER WILL HAPPEN SEPTEMBER 21 AT CHURCHILL SCHOOL

Great Salt Lick has new site

By Lisa Britton

For the Baker City Herald

Whit Deschner really wants salt licks.

And not just any old salt licks, but ones sculpted into artistic forms for the 13th-annual Great Salt Lick contest and auction.

This year's event will be held at Churchill School, a location change from previous years to accommodate the crowd.

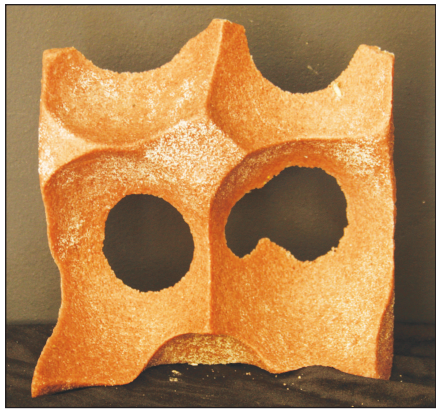
"It just gets bigger," Deschner said of the event.

The Great Salt Lick contest is Saturday, Sept. 21. Viewing and judging begins at 5:30 p.m. Food will be prepared by women from Recovery Village, and beverages will be available from Barley Brown's and Copper Belt Winery.

The live auction to sell all the licks starts at 7 p.m. with auctioneer Mib Dailey.

The official deadline to submit an entry is Saturday, Sept. 14. However, Deschner said the unofficial deadline is the day of the event.

But he'd like entries early to be logged into the contest and be available for viewing next week from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. in Churchill's art gallery. Blocks from past events will also be on display.



Submitted photo

Artistic salt licks will be auctioned Sept. 21 in Baker City to raise money for Parkinson's disease research.

All proceeds raised from the auction go to the Parkinson's Center at Oregon Health and Science University. Since it began, this event has raised nearly \$140,000 for Parkinson's research.

Deschner, 65, was diagnosed with Parkinson's 20 years ago.

Deschner has secured \$1,000 in prize money from local sponsors. Here are the categories and corresponding prize money:

- General: first, \$150; second, \$100; third, \$75; fourth, \$50
- Best General Poem with Block: first, \$100; \$75 second
- Best "Expose Yourself to Salt Lick"

poem (this year's theme): first, \$100; second, \$75

• Best Forgery: first, \$100; second, \$75

• People's Choice: \$100

All entries need the name of the person submitting and the name of the block, as well as the name and species of animal that licked the block, name of ranch, and category.

Entry forms are available at whitdeschner.com.

Salt blocks can be submitted at Richland Feed and Seed or Oregon Trail Livestock Supply in exchange for a new block.

Entries can also be taken to Churchill, but those will not receive a replacement.

So far, the block submitted from farthest away is one created in Scotland.

The Great Salt Lick contest has appeared on NPR, OPB's Oregon Art Beat, and the front page of the Oregonian. It's been featured in a Ripley's Believe it or Not book called "Odd is Art" and National Geographic Kids "Weird But True."

Most recently, a story appeared in the Smithsonian Magazine's web page.

For more information about the contest, contact Deschner at 541-519-2736.

Baker's School District's Outdoor School moves to Anthony Lakes

For the third time in the past three years, the Baker Outdoor School this fall will be moving to a new location.

The program, which operated as a day camp experience from 1992 to 2017, was moved to a three-night residential camp last year at Camp Elkanah, west of La Grande. The most recent daycamp rendition before that was staged at the Elkhorn Wildlife Area northwest of Haines.

This year's program, scheduled for next week, will take place in the Anthony Lakes area, Dorothy Mason, longtime Outdoor School coordinator, stated in a press release.

Mason is phasing out of her role and Luke Burton is learning the ropes this year under her guidance. Burton joined the staff of South Baker Intermediate School on March 4 as a child development specialist. The school serves students in Grades 4-6.

Burton was hired May 1 on an extra-duty contract to work May through October as

the District's Outdoor School program facilitator. Burton will earn \$5,000 in that role.

The Outdoor School program has historically been a rite of passage for Baker School District sixth-graders.

And because of this year's larger-than-usual group of about 180 students, including those attending Haines and Keating elementary schools, some schedule juggling was required to accommodate them.

Students will attend camp for two nights in groups of 90 each and rotate back to school for the remainder of the week to attend additional sessions, Mason said.

Group One will be staying Monday and Tuesday night, and Group 2 will be staying Wednesday and Thursday nights.

Anthony Lakes Lodge will provide the place to stay, meals and logistical support.

"This has been a big effort to make the transition and we look forward to watching how it works out," Mason said.

WATER

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"The EPA's release of the final rule, which abolishes the Obama-era rule, is welcome news across rural Oregon," said Walden, a Republican who represents all of Oregon east of the Cascades.

Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett, who also owns a cattle ranch near Unity, said the 2015 rule was a "phenomenal overreach" of the government's authority to regulate water use.

"It wasn't practical," Bennett said.

He said ranchers already

have a strong incentive to protect water.

"Clean water is valuable for what we're doing," he said.

Walden said uncertainty with how broadly the 2015 rule could be applied contributed to his constituents' concerns.

"They worried that the intermittent stream or irrigation ditch would be subject to burdensome new federal regulation," Walden said.

The 2015 rule, published in the Federal Register in June of that year, makes it clear that intermittent streams tributary to navigable streams are defined as "Waters of the

United States" and subject to Clean Water Act regulation.

The rule reads, in part, "All tributary streams, including perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams, are chemically, physically, and biologically connected to downstream rivers..."

As for ditches, the 2015 federal rule states that certain ditches are not subject to federal regulation under the Clean Water Act.

"The agencies add exclusions for waters and features previously identified as generally exempt (e.g., exclusion for certain ditches that are not located in or drain wetlands),"

the rule reads. "The agencies for the first time also establish by rule that certain ditches are excluded from jurisdiction, including ditches with ephemeral flow that are not a relocated tributary or excavated in a tributary, and ditches with intermittent flow that are not a relocated tributary, or excavated in a tributary, or drain wetlands."

Curtis Martin, a North Powder rancher who's also chairman of the water resources committee of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said that although he's pleased the 2015 rule is repealed, he

doesn't see that as a final act.

Martin said he hopes the government will come up with a clearer definition of how far its enforcement authority extends.

The debate over the definition of Waters of the United States also extended to the division of government power.

In January 2016 Congress passed a resolution to overturn the 2015 rule based on lawmakers' belief that the rule constituted overreach by appointed officials rather than elected ones.

President Barack Obama vetoed the resolution.

In doing so Obama said: "Too many of our waters have been left vulnerable. Pollution from upstream sources ends up in the rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and coastal waters near which most Americans live and on which they depend for their drinking water, recreation, and economic development."

On Feb. 28, 2017, the month after he was sworn in, President Donald Trump issued an executive order calling for the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers to review and potentially repeal the 2015 rule.

MEMORIES

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Johnson recalled how his phone was ringing off the hook with calls from friends and family members concerned for his safety as a member of the military.

"It was a rough day on the job," he remembers.

After completing his military service, Johnson trained to be a paramedic and firefighter.

While working as a reserve firefighter with a Central Oregon department, he participated in an observance of 9/11 with a ceremony that included reading the names of the firefighters and law enforcement officers who died on Sept. 11, 2001. A bell was rung in honor of each of them.

He says he has made it a point to take a moment every year on Sept. 11 to pause and reflect on that day and those who sacrificed their lives in service to others.

Johnson joined the Baker City Fire Department two years ago this December. He was promoted to lieutenant in May.

Because of staffing limitations, he knew an elaborate ceremony wouldn't be possible in Baker City, but he wanted to do something more memorable this year, he said.

"I wanted to make it a little shorter, but to have a professional observance as much as possible," he said.

As it has a tendency to do, time passed quickly by and Johnson didn't realize until Sunday night that Patriot Day (the designation given to Sept. 11) was just three days away. He worked until 2 a.m. putting together Wednesday's program and delivered it to Chief John Clark on Monday. Johnson said Clark approved the plan and then distributed the outline for the memorial service throughout the community.

Clark explained how different elements of Wednesday's

ceremony reflected what was happening on the ground the day of the 2001 attacks.

"Dispatch had a big tie-in that day and today," Clark said Wednesday after the ceremony.

Dispatch airwaves were enlisted to ensure that Wednesday morning's ceremony began at 8:45 sharp (the actual attack began a minute later in the Eastern time zone 18 years ago, but Johnson said he adjusted the schedule to the Pacific Time Zone to accommodate Wednesday's audience).

He expressed his appreciation to the law enforcement officers who came to join the ceremony and especially the efforts of Baker County Undersheriff Jef Van Arsdall and the dispatch crew who helped pull it all together.

"Without the undersheriff and the dispatch coordination it wouldn't have been the same," Johnson said.

Corrina Jacobs, lead dispatcher at the Baker County Dispatch Center, spoke over the radio airwaves at the fire station to pay tribute to those who died in the Sept. 11, 2001, attack.

Reading from a script, she provided this record of the sacrifices made on that day:

"On this day 18 years ago, September 11, 2001, on American soil, hijackers initiated the deadliest terrorist attack in human history. 2,977 people lost their lives. Of those, 343 firefighters and 72 law enforcement officers gave their lives in the line of duty.

"The evacuation signal you are about to hear marks the time of the first airplane striking the North Tower of the World Trade Center, at 8:46 Eastern Standard Time."

The silence of the solemn ceremony then was interrupted by the blast of the airhorn evacuation signal followed by three rings of the fire bell three times, a tradition that recognizes those who have gone home for the last time.

Jacobs ended her role in the ceremony with this statement:

"This is the last alarm for the 343 firefighters and 72 law enforcement officers of 9/11/2001. Last alarm."

After a brief pause, she continued:

"The last alarm for the 343 and 72 has now ended. They have gone home. May we never forget their sacrifice. Dispatch clear at 8:47."

About a dozen firefighters and law enforcement officers from city, county and state agencies stood in formation and saluted as the fire station's flag was lowered to half-staff by firefighters Cameron Kiyokawa and Andrew Snodgrass, who also served as bell ringers.

Members of the Baker Elks Drum and Bugle Corps played "Amazing Grace" as the flag was lowered. Buglers were Gary Timm, who also is the Baker County deputy director of emergency management, on soprano bugle, and Steve Olsen and Dave Hinton, playing bass-baritone bugles.

Johnson called for a moment of silence and then brought an end to the officers' hand salute as the ceremony came to a close.

In talking afterward about the ceremony, Johnson extended his gratitude to those in the audience who took time to be there on such short notice on a cool and windy Wednesday morning.

"I would like to say thank you to all the community members who showed up to pay their respects," he said. "That's why we're here, is for them."

The "may we never forget" phrase is the message Johnson hopes people took away from the service.

"It's very important to me that we don't forget — and don't let time pass by — something that changed our country forever, without notice," he said.

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