

# Local & State

## Wallowa Lake State Park returns to something closer to normal operation

By Bill Bradshaw

Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — Things are getting back to a bit more normal this year, now that state parks are beginning to reopen — including Wallowa Lake State Park, which began taking reservations April 15 for the group campsites that open May 1.

According to a press release from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, some state parks were to begin taking reservations April 15. A complete list of which ones are opening is available at the OPRD website at [www.oregon.gov/oprd/Pages/index.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/Pages/index.aspx).

Mac Freeborn, manager at Wallowa Lake State Park, said Wednesday, April 14, that a few campers already were at the park. But they were the ones who could do without park-provided water, which won't be turned on until May 1.

"My park has been taking reservations for a while now," he said. "The ones opening May 1 are group campsites."

The park's website bills it as being "ideally positioned as a base camp for both wilderness treks and water sports fun."

He said those camping now are ones who take advantage of the park's opening throughout the off-season.

"We had a recent request for more reservations ... and we're accepting walk-ins," he said.

Last year, the park was forced to be closed until June 5 by the closures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The group facilities are reopening after being closed for more than a year due to revenue shortfalls and reduced staffing associated with COVID-19.

"Summer is quickly ap-



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa Lake State Park began taking reservations April 15 for the group campsites that open May 1, which is when the park turns on the water.

*"Summer is quickly approaching, and we want to give visitors plenty of time to plan their group events."*

— Jason Resch, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

proaching, and we want to give visitors plenty of time to plan their group events," said Jason Resch, communications manager for the OPRD. "Although we can't open all group areas in all parks and the lower group limits isn't what we are used to, we ask for your patience as we move forward."

But now it's returning to closer to normal.

"As normal as it can be," he said. "We're back on track for bringing back seasonals in hiring. ... Normal is a subjective term, but we're going to be back for full operation this summer."

He said the docks won't go back into the water until around May 1.

"We start really ramping up things in early May," Freeborn said.

But campsite reservations are almost fully booked already.

"If people are not finding anything online, it's because we're already booked. It's been fast and furious with reservations," Freeborn said.

He said that's probably a combination of people missing last year's camping season and an eagerness to recreate outdoors where they're not cooped up in a hotel or the like.

He said that if recreationists find they can't rent day-use areas, they can look into getting a special-use permit. Day-use areas consist of two reservable picnic sites and one reservable covered shelter named Ice Creek. Boat reservations and information are available at [www.wallowalake.com](http://www.wallowalake.com).

He said the park — and all Oregon parks — are still closely adhering to COVID-19 guidelines set by the federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the Oregon Health Authority. Those, he said, can be subject to change.

Available at the park are:

- 121 hookup sites (including two ADA sites).
- 88 nonhookup sites.
- Two hard-sided rustic yurts.
- Three group tent areas.
- A hiker-biker area.

Site-specific alerts and information can be found by clicking on the site name then scrolling to the bottom of the Reserve America website page.

Freeborn said those interested in a reservation can still try to get one by calling 541-432-4185, ext. 26. Reservations must be made one day ahead of arrival and can be made up to six months in advance.

"We booked out pretty fast," he said.

## Rising population means Oregon will get 6th seat in the U.S. House

By Sara Cline

Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND — Steady population growth, driven by newcomers streaming in from other states, is giving Oregon greater national political clout.

U.S. Census Bureau figures released Monday show the state's population expanded over the past decade enough to give it an additional congressional district for the first time in 40 years.

Expanding its U.S. House seats from five to six won't necessarily be a win for Democrats, who control the state politically and hold all but one of the current seats.

"The real quandary for Democrats is that Oregon is much more of a competitive state than you would think," said Priscilla Southwell, a political science professor at the University of Oregon.

In last year's presidential election, she said 42% of Oregon voters cast their ballot for a Republican House candidate. Democrats are concentrated in Portland, its suburbs and Eugene, home to the University of Oregon. Rural and eastern Oregon is heavily Republican.

"I think (Democrats) are going to come under a lot of pressure, probably from Republicans more than anyone else, to recognize that there are a lot of Republicans in the state of Oregon (who

have been underrepresented in the U.S. House," Southwell said.

The 2nd Congressional District is the lone district held by a Republican and is the largest in Oregon, covering roughly two-thirds of the state. The historically conservative region has not had a Democratic House representative in four decades.

Some local officials say they are worried that the addition of a congressional seat and the redistricting that follows the once-a-decade census could lead to more competitive districts that hurt Republican chances of representing the region.

George Murdock, the commissioner of Umatilla County in the northeastern part of the state, said his "greatest concern is that our district could be gerrymandered in order to further diminish representation for a portion of Oregon that reflects ideology, values and interests much different than the remainder of Oregon."

Political gerrymandering, the drawing of legislative and congressional districts in a way that helps the majority party maintain its hold on power, may be more difficult for Democrats after a deal they struck with minority Republicans.

Democrats agreed to give up their advantage in redrawing the state's political boundaries for the next 10 years

in exchange for a commitment from Republicans to stop blocking bills in the Legislature with delay tactics.

With the agreement, Democrats and Republicans each will have three members on the state's redistricting committee. A party-line vote will be insufficient to pass new maps, which essentially grants Republicans veto power to block any map of legislative or congressional districts from passing.

Should lawmakers fail to reach an agreement on U.S. boundaries, the matter would be settled by a panel of five judges, one from each of the state's current congressional districts. If the lawmakers are unable to complete the state legislative maps by their deadline the task would fall on the Secretary of State.

As with other states, redistricting in Oregon will be affected by the delay in community-level census data, which will not be distributed to states until August or later.

July 1 is the state's deadline to draw new districts.

That prompted state legislative leaders to file a petition with the state Supreme Court asking for an extension to the statutory July 1 deadline. After the court agreed, the Legislature now has until Sept. 27 to complete the redistricting process.

## Kindergarten registration set

Registration for in-coming kindergarten students will be held in small groups this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. Reservations for a specific time are required. Face coverings are also required.

Registration includes an opportunity to meet the kindergarten teachers, an informational session for parents, and a classroom visit for the child. Please bring your child's birth certificate, immunization record, and information about custody issues.

Available dates and times:

- Friday, May 14: 7:30 a.m., 10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 18: 4 p.m.
- Thursday, May 20: 5 p.m.

All sessions are at the Baker Early Learning Center, 2725 Seventh St. in Baker City. To reserve a time, call 541-524-2310. For more information, email [angela.lattin@bakernsd.org](mailto:angela.lattin@bakernsd.org).

## VACCINATIONS

Continued from Page 1A

Bennett said the total of 62 inoculations actually underestimates, slightly, the benefits to Baker County, which is below average among Oregon counties for vaccination rate. Of the 35 other counties, 19 have a higher vaccination rate per 10,000 residents than Baker County, according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

That's because a few of the people who got their first dose Saturday don't even live in the county.

Or in Oregon, for that matter.

Bennett said a few non-Oregonians — one from Hawaii, one from Arizona and one from California — saw the sign advertising the clinic and pulled into the Fairgrounds.

Fortunately, Bennett said, county officials didn't have to discard any of the doses.

"We were really careful," he said.

Once a 10-dose vial is opened, all the doses have to be used within several hours.

During previous vaccination clinics at Baker High School, the Health Department scheduled appointments with people who signed up in advance. The county administered more than 700 doses at two separate clinics.

Bennett said he can't explain why so few people turned out Saturday.

He said both state and federal officials urged Baker County to schedule the drive-thru clinic on a Saturday, the idea being that having the event on a weekend would be more convenient for people who work on weekdays. Also, people didn't even have to get out of their car to get the vaccine.

Bennett said he doesn't expect the county will schedule another drive-thru clinic.

Instead, the county will continue to schedule appointments for people who sign up online at [www.bakercountycovid19.com](http://www.bakercountycovid19.com) or by calling 541-523-0015.

Everyone 18 and older is eligible, and Bennett said the county is working to schedule appointments for 16- and 17-year-olds, who are eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine, which also requires two doses.

Bennett reminded residents that pharmacies at Safeway, Albertsons, Bi-Mart and Rite Aid also are making vaccine appointments.

He said the Pfizer vaccine could potentially be approved for people as young as 12 within the next week or so, with parental approval, and if that happens the county will have Pfizer doses available for ages 12 to 18.

Bennett, who participated in a conference call with state officials on Friday, April 23, said the county's vaccination rate likely will help determine when it's no longer subject to risk levels and the associated restrictions that have harmed many local businesses over the past year.

Staten said the county remains ready to administer vaccines.

"I see vaccination as the key tool to move us out of this situation and stop the virus' spread," she said. "We're doing, and will continue to do, everything we can to make it easy for everyone to get a vaccine."

### COVID-19 vaccines in Baker County

As of Monday, April 27, a total of 5,521 Baker County residents — almost 33% of the county's population of 16,800 — have been either fully or partially vaccinated against COVID-19. Details include:

#### FULLY VACCINATED

4,401 — 26.2% of county's population

#### PARTIALLY VACCINATED

1,120 — 6.7% of county's population

#### WOMEN

2,980

#### MEN

2,536

## CITY COUNCIL

Continued from Page 1A

The base rate for water includes three units of water — one unit is about 750 gallons. The cost for additional units would rise from 95 cents to 97 cents.

For wastewater, the monthly residential rate would increase from \$28.52 to \$29.06.

The commercial monthly rate, which is based on water usage than a flat rate, would rise from \$2.66 per unit of water used, to \$2.71.

Fees for a variety of services at Mount Hope Cemetery would also increase by 1.9%.

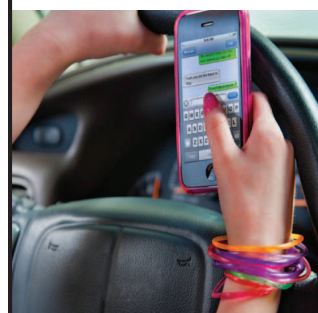
We're now offering home remodels through the winter months as we're fully licensed and bonded.

**541-519-5268**

**STONE ELITE**  
LANDSCAPING & IRRIGATION

[stone.elitesprinklerland@gmail.com](mailto:stone.elitesprinklerland@gmail.com) CCB#231936 LCB# 9809

**Don't text and drive... you won't have to come see us!**



**Joe Scott's Premier Auto Body, Inc.**

2390 Broadway, Baker City  
541-523-5223