

BLUES

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As the fly bounced against the log and floated back into the glide, a fish larger than any I had caught in this stream since 2013 swiftly rose and engulfed the meal, then quickly reminded me what it was like to fight a strong fish on a tenkara fly rod. The fish was over 14 inches, thick and deep, quick and fast, and would have been into the drag had I been using a reel. Somehow, I thwarted its attempts to blast downstream through the riffles and break me off. As the fish slid into the shallows, I admired its beauty and efforts and released it with the hope that it would grow another year.

Each subsequent bend in the stream set up a similar pool and glide, but none offered up another big fish. Hours quickly passed in the soothing rush of waters, and I decided it was time to hit the trail.

Transitioning to the mountaintop, I approached the headwaters of the stream, pulled to the shoulder of the Forest Service road and climbed on the bike. Years had passed since my last ride and I was in search of new trails, but more importantly, I sought meadows painted against a backdrop of the snowcapped peaks of the Eagle Caps.

A short distance ahead was a blocked and forgotten two-track where I hooked left and climbed up to a small meadow glowing golden with biscuitroot and yellow fawn lily. Around the bend, another lily appeared on the edge of a wetland, the Bonneville shooting star, which is a lovely fuchsia with a yellow petal base and black cone. The



A beautiful view while sizing up the trout habitat ahead.

Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

petals turn up, making the flower appear comet-like and identifying its namesake. Violet showy penstemon, pink spring beauty, common yarrow and more took advantage of the open trail edges. It was slow going as I stopped to photograph the various specimens.

Veering onto another route, I came upon grand vistas dressed in sulfur lupine and accented by crimson Indian paintbrush, and wetland seeps speckled with buttercups and the peculiar ballhead waterleaf. A final pull back up to the truck led through a field of grass widow — a delicate pink flower hung from the side of a slender grass-like

blade leaf. The perfect end to an incredible day in the Blues.

There is no shortage of biking, trout, and wildflower opportunities in the Blue Mountains. More info on biking and trails that may coincide with mountain stream and lake fishing is available from the U.S. Forest Service North Fork John Day Ranger District website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/umatilla/recreation/bicycling/recarea/?re-cid=56453&actid=24>.

■ Brad Trumbo is a fish and wildlife biologist and outdoor writer in Waitsburg, Washington. For tips and tales of outdoor pursuits and conservation, visit www.bradtrumbo.com.

OUTDOOR BRIEFS



Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office
Smoke from the Willowcreek fire in northern Malheur County on June 28, 2022. The Bureau of Land Management on July 22 increased fire restrictions in Malheur County due to rising fire danger.

Tighter fire restrictions in Malheur County

VALE — The Bureau of Land Management tightened fire restrictions on BLM and Bureau of Reclamation land in Malheur County starting Friday, July 22.

The restrictions are intended to reduce the chances of wildfire starts on public lands in Malheur County, including the Owhee Dam area, which is managed by the Bureau of Reclamation, according to a press release from the BLM's Vale District.

Campfires, whether of wood or charcoal, are prohibited. Stoves or heaters that burn liquified or bottled gas, and that have an on/off switch, are allowed.

Smoking is prohibited outside a vehicle, camp trailer, or building, except

within areas free of vegetation for at least 6 feet in diameter, or on a boat.

Motorized vehicles must stay on established, maintained roadways. All motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and side-by-sides must also be equipped with an approved and functional spark arrestor.

Prohibitions against the use of fireworks, tracer and incendiary ammunition, and exploding or metal targets on public lands have been in place across the Oregon/Washington BLM region since May 27.

Visitors are encouraged to carry a fire extinguisher and/or a shovel and extra water.

To avoid confusion, the new restrictions are consistent with those enacted by other local agencies such as Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department, rural

fire districts, and private lands in the county under the jurisdiction of the Malheur County Sheriff's Office.

"Grasses and other vegetation are drying out across Malheur County," said Tracy Skerjanec, Vale BLM fire management officer. "These restrictions are necessary to keep the public and firefighters safe from accidental fires."

All wildfire starts on public or private land should be reported immediately by calling 911. For more information about current fire restrictions within Vale District BLM-protected lands, go to www.blm.gov/office/vale-district-office or call 541-473-3144.

Trail reopens near Olive Lake

PENDLETON — The Beeman Junkins Trail, on the Umatilla National Forest west of Olive Lake, has reopened.

The trail, No. 3015, had been closed this summer due to an unsafe bridge over Desolation Creek.

Forest Service employees repaired the bridge this week, allowing the trail to reopen.

The trail starts at the Welch Creek campground and trailhead along Forest Road 10

For more information about trail conditions on the North Fork John Day Ranger District, call 541-427- 3231.

For a list of trails on the Umatilla National Forest go to www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla or download the Pacific Northwest Forests app onto a mobile device.

CRICKETS

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Mormon cricket facts

- They are not actually a cricket but are a katydid.
- They can't fly but do walk and can climb things.

- They can cover about 1 mile per day.
- From what I can tell they live in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Utah.
- I see them moving in the spring on into summer.
- Their numbers are cyclical. There may be a lot this year and then next year you don't see many.
- It is said that they can get 3 inches long.



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SATURDAY, JULY 23, 2022
CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- Gush out
- Machine for weaving
- Hebrew letter
- Woody's son
- Coastal raptor
- 401(k) cousin
- Most easygoing
- Bilko's rank
- Email subj. word
- Neck scarf
- Thin porridge
- Be pouty
- British noble
- Wiretap
- Hawkeye state
- Put 2 and 2 together
- Feel poorly
- Library abbr.
- 35 — ex machina
- Pig's digs
- Hair treatment
- Garden tool
- Looks after

- "Oh, shut up!" (2 wds.)
- Popular cruise stop
- Feel remorse
- N.Y. airport (2 wds.)
- TV spots
- Middle Easterner
- Lazily
- Speck
- Agree (with) word
- Ra's symbol

DOWN

- Well-known uncle
- Before, in combos
- House wing
- Ate hungrily
- Lascivious
- Mineral deposit
- Switch positions
- Kind of detector

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	A	I	L	S	T	E	M	S	R	A
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I	R	I	S	R	U	B	E	T	N	A
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M	E	D	E	A	S	Y	C	O	P	Y

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