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# The Bulletin

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## Central Cascades

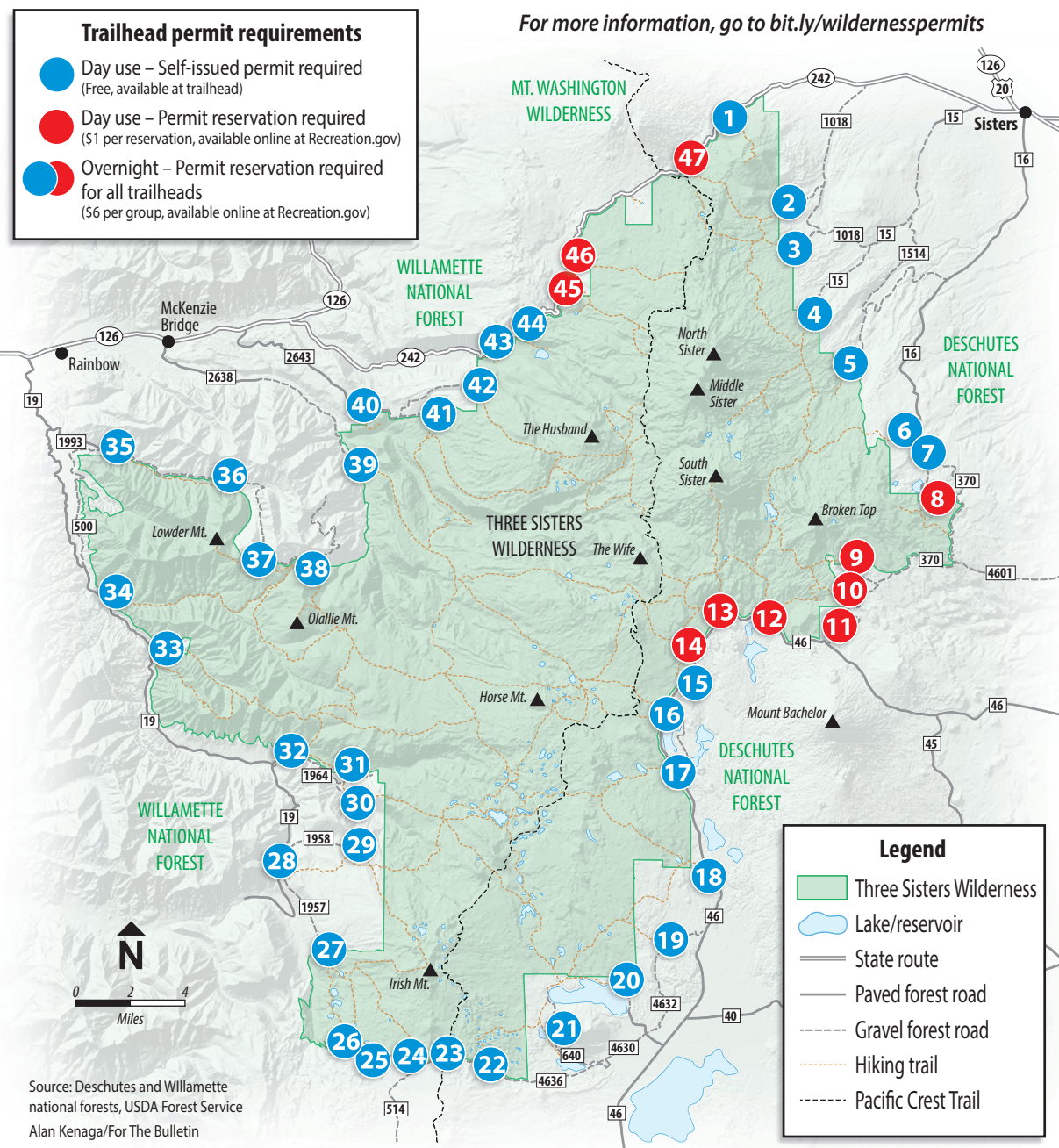
# Hiking community adjusts to new wilderness permits

*With a little planning, hikers have been able to get the permits they need for popular trails*

BY MICHAEL KOHN • The Bulletin

A limited entry permit system designed to curb congestion on Central Oregon's most popular hiking trails is off and running. There were some initial bottlenecks and some confusion over the system but experienced trail users are so far pleased with the experience. "It seems to be going pretty well," said Jake Wiley, an REI employee and frequent trail user. "There is still some confusion that we are seeing from customers about where permits are required."

Beginning May 28, the Deschutes and Willamette national forests implemented the Central Cascades Wilderness Permit System. The new system is intended to protect and preserve wilderness areas that have been impacted by heavy use. In the Three Sisters Wilderness, access to 10 popular trailheads now requires a permit to be reserved in advance and rolling quotas will limit availability on a daily basis. Reservations can be made online at [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) or by calling 877-444-2021.



Trailhead	Daily quota
1. Black Crater	-
2. Millican Crater	-
3. Scott Pass	-
4. Pole Creek	-
5. Chush Falls	-
6. Park Meadow	-
7. Three Creek Meadow	-
8. Tam McArthur Rim	80
9. Broken Top	40
10. Crater Ditch	16
11. Todd Lake	12
12. Green Lakes/Soda Creek	80
13. Devil's Lake/South Sister	100
14. Sisters Mirror	16
15. Quinn Meadow	-
16. Elk Lake	-
17. Six Lakes	-
18. Lucky Lake	-
19. Corral Swamp	-
20. Winopee Lake	-
21. Deer Lake	-
22. Many Lakes	-
23. Irish-Taylor	-
24. Jack Pine	-
25. Helen Lake	-
26. Taylor Burn	-
27. Skookum	-
28. Box Canyon	-
29. Crossing Way	-
30. Elk Creek	-
31. S. Fork McKenzie	-
32. Olallie South	-
33. Rebel	-
34. French Pete	-
35. E. Fork Lower	-
36. E. Fork Upper	-
37. Lowder Mountain	-
38. Pat Saddle	-
39. Horse Creek	-
40. Rainbow Falls	-
41. Separation Lake	-
42. Foley Ridge	-
43. Proxy Falls	-
44. Linton Lake	-
45. Obsidian	30
46. Scott	12
47. Lava Camp Lake	40

Wiley said he and other REI employees have helped customers who have questions on the permit system and trails, using information put out by the Forest Service as guidance. The number of hikers on Central Oregon trails has soared in recent years to the point where the environment along many paths has become degraded with trash and even human waste. The permitting system is designed to reduce the number of visitors using the trails. Snow still covers some trails and it's not yet the peak time for tourism so it's still a little early to compare the difference in crowd numbers, but it's not too soon to assess the ease of use for the new online reservation system, Wiley said. The system rollout has gone relatively smoothly, said Jean Nelson-Dean, a spokesperson for the Deschutes National Forest. The only issue was early confusion over how the overnight permits worked. Some hikers ac-



A sign reminds visitors to have their wilderness permit before heading out on the Green Lakes Trail on Wednesday.

identally reserved just one night when they wanted more. "We also had some issues with people reserving trails at times when roads

to those trailheads would not be open," said Nelson-Dean. "We worked with people to correct those issues and overall it seems like people are working

well with the reservation system." It has been a multiyear process to get to this point. The Deschutes National Forest started gathering data for the permit system in early 2017 and made a final decision in May of 2019. The program was intended to begin a year ago but was pushed back due to the pandemic. The day-use permitting system affects 19 out of 79 trailheads between May 28 and Sept. 24 in the Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington and Three Sisters wilderness areas. Some of the affected trailheads include Broken Top, Tam McArthur Rim and Todd Lake. During the same period, overnight-use permits will be required for all trails in the three wilderness areas. Hikers who already hold a Pacific Crest Trail long-distance permit are exempt. There are also exceptions for hunters with certain types of permits and volunteers with the Forest Service.

## Office of Public Defense Services to see revamp

BY GARRETT ANDREWS  
 The Bulletin

Ed Jones, new director of the state Office of Public Defense Services, says big changes are coming. As many familiar with Oregon's legal system attest, big changes at the office are needed.

"It's not like we didn't understand that we needed help — we did," Jones said of a recent legislative effort that adds staff to his office and imposes stricter guidance. "Thankfully, the Legislature bought into the idea that what we needed was better control over the spending and better accountability and they gave us the staff to start."

Last month, outgoing public defense services Director Lane Borg caused a stir when he confirmed in a web call with public defenders around the state that his office was out of money with three weeks remaining in the biennium.

That shortfall of about \$3.8 million was addressed several days later with the Legislature approving a one-time supplemental budget increase for the office. But the episode left many leaders in Salem insistent that the office begin to accurately forecast caseload costs to avoid similar problems in the future.

The office's 2021-23 budget is around 4.5% smaller than the 2019-21 budget and will include a "holdback" of \$100 million.

See **Defense** / A4

## Bend adopts budget for the next two years

BY BRENNIA VISSER  
 The Bulletin

The Bend City Council approved a new \$927.7 million budget for the next two years, which includes fee increases for things like utilities and system development charges.

On Wednesday, the council officially approved a 3% increase for water rates, a 2.5% increase for sewer rates and 7% increase for stormwater rates. The increases are generally to keep up with the cost of maintaining and improving this infrastructure, according to budget documents.

System development charges, which are fees developers pay to help pay for the infrastructure needed in the city, are increasing 5%. Planning fees are also going up 6% to handle the "increased complexity and nature of applications," according to budget documents.

See **Budget** / A7