

Magone Trail project ranks well for grant

Idlewild Sno-Park also seeking grant funding

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Two outdoor recreation projects in the Grant County area received high rankings from an Oregon Parks and Recreation Department advisory committee for this year's Recreational Trails Program grant funding.

The Malheur National Forest Blue Mountain Ranger District's \$218,804 request for construction of the Magone Trail Network ranked sixth out of 14 entries in the nonmotorized trails division.

The Eastern Oregon Trail Alliance deserves the credit for the trail project, said Jared Bowman, the forest's north zone recreation manager. The Forest Service applied for the grant on behalf of the alliance because the group had not existed for three years, which was a grant requirement.

The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$361,679. Plans call for a 28-mile trail, of which 5 miles will be rehabilitated trail and improvements to the Nipple Butte Trail, Bowman said.

The remaining 23 miles includes road-to-trail conversions that the alliance and Forest Service will undertake with assistance from the North Fork John Day Watershed Council's youth crew and new trail built by professional mountain bike trail contractors. The grant funding will be used to pay for the lat-



Youth crews from the North Fork John Day Watershed Council work on the Magone Trail in August of 2017.



A youth crew member helps improve the Magone Trail in August. Grant funding could further improve trails in the area.

ter work, Bowman said.

Volunteers from the alliance built several hundred feet of trail in 2017. The alliance, Forest Service and youth crew created a few hundred feet in 2018, Bowman said.

Progress was slow. At that rate, the 28-mile long trail

could take 56 years to complete, which was unacceptable, Bowman said. The grant would enable the project to be completed in two years, he said.

The goal is to augment recreation opportunities in the Magone Lake area.

Contributed photos

County domestic violence shelter closer to fruition

Shelter needs have doubled in recent years

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County is one step closer to having new offices and a shelter for its domestic violence program.

The Grant County Court approved submitting a \$980,000 Community Development Block Grant application on behalf of the Heart of Grant County for construction of the Meredith House following a public hearing during its Nov. 7 meeting.

Commissioner Jim Hamsher noted how sad it is that such a facility was needed, but that is the reality. Grant County Judge Scott Myers agreed.

Sally Bartlett, the county's economic development coordinator, said the state had approved a pre-application for the grant. With a Dec. 31 application deadline, Bartlett said the grant might be awarded in the spring. If successful, the project could be put out to bid, and construction could start next summer, she said.

Heart of Grant County was established in 2008. The nonprofit provides domestic violence and sexual assault protection services for county residents and provides a 24-hour hotline, temporary safe housing, emergency transportation and support groups.

The nonprofit has relocated its offices several times and needs a better location, Bartlett said. Shelter demand has doubled in recent years, with shelter space maxed out several times. The current facility also lacks needed security and safety provisions, she said.

In fiscal year 2017-2018, Bartlett said, Heart of Grant County was contacted by 131 people in crisis, received 236 hotline calls, provided 310

shelter nights at their small apartment, provided 19 motel rooms, handled 17 new clients and 134 ongoing clients, provided safety planning for 212 clients and accompanied 92 clients for medical reasons.

According to 2016 numbers from the Grant County District Attorney's Office, victim assistance staff handled 108 victims of domestic abuse, including 73 cases of domestic and family violence, 12 child abuse cases, 11 child sexual abuse cases, five stalking cases, three violation of protective orders and two adult sexual assault cases.

Bartlett said Heart of Grant County started its site search on county-owned land, but nothing suitable was available. The nonprofit then found land and purchased it. The site was not chosen on a whim, she noted.

The new facility is estimated to cost \$1.5 million, but the total could be reduced through in-kind services provided by locals, Bartlett said. The estimated total cost includes architecture and engineering but not furniture and equipment, she said.

The hope is to provide three bedrooms, two bathrooms and offices for the nonprofit, Bartlett said. The facility would accommodate women, men and children. Acceptance of clients from outside the county would be determined on a case-by-case basis, Executive Director Shelly Whale-Murphy said.

The state, which will administer the federal grant, would own the building for five years and lease it to the Heart of Grant County at a nominal amount, Bartlett said. Ownership would be transferred to Heart of Grant County after that.

Heart of Grant County is seeking donations to complete the \$15,000 required match for the grant. For more information, call 541-575-4335.

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Comments sought on Silvies grazing allotment analysis

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Emigrant Creek Ranger District of the Malheur National Forest is soliciting scoping comments regarding an environmental analysis to re-authorize grazing on three grazing allotments through the South Silvies Complex Grazing Allotments Environmental Analysis. The planning area is located in Grant and Harney counties, 18 miles north of Burns, according to a press release. This area encompasses about 54,506 acres within the Silvies River Watershed, including the Big Sagehen, Silvies and Bridge Creek grazing allotments.

The document can be accessed on the Forest Service website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=52366>, or by contacting Marion Mahaffey at 541-575-3302 or marionmahaffey@fs.fed.us.

The 30-day scoping period for the South Silvies Complex Grazing Allotments Environmental Analysis began Nov. 14. Only those submitting specific written comments during a designated opportunity to comment will have standing to object to the project. Comments must be postmarked or received within 30 days from the date of publication of the scoping notice, Dec. 14.

For more information, contact Mahaffey.

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