HEPPNER Gazette Times 50¢

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County adopts parks plan for the future

If followed would see major upgrades at Off-Highway Vehicle Park

By David Sykes

A county parks master plan, which guides usage of the county parks through the year 2038, has been adopted by the county commissioners. And while the plan covers many possible future upgrades and changes for all three county parks, Off-Highway Vehicles park would see the most improvements including increased shopping and stores, to a possible motel.

ATV riders enjoy the Morrow County OHV park.

While there were goals for all parks, some of the most aggressive would be at the OHV park. In food services there are many possibilities including special event vendors, deli services, snack shack vendors and full-service restaurants. The park currently only has one restaurant, operating under a franchise agreement, servicing campers and day users. There could also be a convenience store and snack shacks located throughout the park, with a focus on providing limited food options appropriate to the season. Another option could be fast food and full-service food available in the compound area of the park servicing both camp users and travelers along highway 207, which passes by the park.

In addition, the plan looks at convenience stores, pro shops and gift shops that could be added. These retail stores could be included in a singular store or be offered in a variety of ways. Fueling stations could also be added to provide gas and propane.

Also in the plan were suggestions for a large event arena that could host large groups of people to attend events such as concerts. A motocross track is also mentioned where racing and other events could be held with an area for spectators.

Perhaps the largest addition to the park could be the addition of more lodging such as cabins, lodges, motels (of four to 24 units) or hotels and resorts which could serve visitors and the travelers with overnight accommodations and amenities such as food service, shopping and possibly a swimming pool, spa, gym or lounge.

To attract horse campers, build at least four to eight corrals. Construct new outdoor education facilities which would serve snowmobile, bicycle, RV and hiking groups. Create areas for outdoor sports for park visitors such as archery, basketball, frisbee golf, tennis and volleyball. Consider constructing student lodging facilities.

The plan says "most outdoor school experiences include overnight camping experiences. To make the facilities attractive as an outdoor education option, feasibility, design and funding for a student-lodging facility should be pursued." Encourage rental services for recreational equipment. The plan also suggests building a covered outdoor gazebo in the recreational area for gatherings.

For the other campgrounds in the county, Anson Wright and Cutsforth, there could be upgrades to provide electrical, water and sewer for campers. Make changes to accommodate larger RVs with rear access doors and slides on both sides of the RV and to provide full hook-up such as power, water and sewer to meet the requests of users

Some of the future goals spelled out in the plan would include improvement in signage with new signs at the entrances and near roads to aid with park visibility to travelers. Reduce campsite density to offer more privacy which enhances customer satisfaction and foster repeat business from campers. Improve the campsite amenities by installing upgrades such as power, water or sewer.

The plan looks at all these improvements as possibilities which are not necessarily going to happen. It was developed by the planning department staff and the parks plan sub-committee made up of citizens Sheryll Bates, Kirsti Cason, Greg Close, Kim Cutsforth, Mike Gorman, Carla McLane, Burke O'Brien, Thomas Wolff and Clint Carlson. The commissioners voted unanimously to accept it.

In other business at the Sept. 5 meeting, the commissioners approved a jail contract with Umatilla County to house Morrow County prisoners. The contract says Morrow County will pay Umatilla $430,700 to reserve 20 daily beds at the jail for the current fiscal year. The county will be charged $59 per day for each prisoner lodged at the jail. If the county houses more prisoners, on an available only basis, than the allotment, it will be billed for the usage. If it houses fewer than the 20 allotted, the county will receive a refund.

The commissioners also approved at $486,698 contract with Granite Construction Company out of Hermiston for road work between Ione and Boardman. Granite was the low bidder.

In other business the council approved an aggregate gravel and rock pit site on Aaron Heideman property.

In further action the commission voted to approve county administrator Darrell Green to serve as an alternate on the Columbia River Enterprise Zone, CREZ, board. He will replace Greg Sweek who resigned to take on the position as paid administrator for the CREZ.

The commission was told that a new human resources director has hired to replace Karen Wolff who recently retired. The new person is Karmen Carlson. The commission was also told by Green that the county is proceeding to the request for proposals for engineering and design services phase of the new Irri-

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Ice bucket challenge for ALS comes to town

Desirae Ruth, employee in the Bank of Eastern Oregon Mortgage Department, did her part in the ice bucket challenge to raise awareness for ALS. Rhonda Winters is pouring. *-Photo by David Sykes.*

Heppner has joined in the challenge to raise money and awareness for ALS in a couple of ways. One is with the ice bucket challenge, where businesses and residents agree to have a bucket of ice water poured over their head and then challenge the next person. The other is the walk to defeat ALS scheduled for Sept. 23 in Portland where Team Heppner Walk to Defeat ALS will participate. Those who choose to forego the ice bucket may make a donation instead.

Local residents Terra Adams, Delia Robinson and Martha Munkers have been diagnosed with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) Lou Gehrig disease. This disease is a neurodegenerative disease which affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cords.

Organizers Judy Healy, Darcy Hostetler-Robinson, Rhonda Winters, Stephanie Rill and Betty Fayette Hickerson would like to invite everyone to support the cause by donation or joining them in Portland on the 23rd from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the World Trade Center, 121 SW Salmon St. for the walk.

A donation jar is available at Murray's Drug in Heppner to raise awareness, help fund research for a cure and help support the needs of the local chapter patients.

Bikers pedal through the area

Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway Riders posed for the camera as they rode through Heppner. *-Photo by David Sykes.*

The 7th annual Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway group passed through Heppner last week on another successful ride organized by the Heppner Chamber of Commerce and community volunteers. Twenty-three riders climbed over 8,000 feet in elevation in the 108 mile ride.

Bikers came from Menlo Park, CA; Vancouver, Washougal, Battle Ground and Woodinville, WA; Portland, Scappoose, Oregon City, Gladstone, Bend, Heppner and Pendleton. Some had participated previously, but some were new riders. Riders noted they enjoyed the beautiful scenery, the challenge of the ride and each other's company.

Several riders commented that they enjoy the clean, friendly atmosphere of Heppner and will bring others to ride on the next ride scheduled for Sept. 21-22, 2019.

Driver cited in Lexington incidents

The driver involved in multiple incidents in Lexington last week was cited for reckless driving and reckless endangerment after crashing into the house at Cutsforth Corner.

A further update from the Morrow County Sheriff's Office stated Jesus Garcia was also cited for failure to perform duties of a driver, criminal mischief and trespassing following reports of additional incidents that were later determined to have been caused by the same driver who crashed into the house.

Garcia was cited and released on the additional charges because he was transferred to the hospital in Hermiston for surgery.

Following completion of the investigation, the District Attorney will decide if the incidents will be reviewed by the Morrow County grand jury.

Farms damaged by fire may receive assistance

Farms and ranches suffering severe damage from the Hinton/Willow Creek fire may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Morrow County Farm Service Agency (FSA).

For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must have created new conservation problems that, if untreated, would be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use, is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area, affect the productive capacity of the farmland or impair or endanger the land.

The types of measures that may be eligible are removing debris from farmland, grading, shaping, or releveling severely damaged farmland, restoring permanent fences or restoring conservation structures and other similar installations.

Producers who have suffered a loss from the fire may contact the local FSA County Office and request assistance from Sept. 17 to October 16, 2018. For more information about ECP, please contact the Morrow County FSA Office at 541-676-9011 or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/or.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.