

Grants Pass

Daily Courier

\$1.50
THURSDAY
JUNE 13, 2024

Forest therapy guide helps people connect with nature in Southern Oregon



JULIE ANDERSON / Daily Courier

Forest therapy guide Dawn Cogliser stands alongside Grave Creek near the Rogue River, a place she frequents when providing guided forest therapy sessions. A typical session with Cogliser might involve sitting or lying on a yoga mat outside for 15 minutes while she guides participants into a relaxed state. Participants then walk slowly while noticing nature around them.

Research shows benefits of time spent outdoors

By Vickie Aldous
of the Daily Courier

Dawn Cogliser used to go on long distance hikes, averaging 14 miles a day while carrying a 40-pound backpack.

But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, her stress levels working as a nurse practitioner skyrocketed. That stress boosted her body's production of cortisol — the "fight or flight" hormone that can trigger weight gain.

"My own health took a hit," Cogliser said. No longer able to hike as far, she found a new way of spending time outdoors by starting a forest therapy guide business, while continuing to work as a nurse practitioner.

Forest therapy guides help clients relax, connect with the natural world and work through issues they may have.

"It gave me the ability to be present and part of nature, versus just passing through it focused on the task of getting to the destination I was hiking to," Cogliser said.

Most people intuitively understand that spending time outside makes them feel better, and science is backing that up with studies showing exposure to nature improves physical and mental health.

Spending time in natural settings reduces blood pressure, depression, anxiety and the stress-related hormones cortisol and adrenaline.

Plants and trees produce phytoncides, airborne chemicals with antibacterial and antifungal properties that protect vegetation from pests. When humans breathe in phytoncides, their bodies respond by increasing white blood cells called natural killer cells



SCOTT STODDARD / Daily Courier

A segment of the Pacific Crest Trail is seen near Hyatt Lake in Jackson County. Studies show that spending time in natural settings reduces blood pressure, depression, anxiety and the stress-related hormones cortisol and adrenaline.

that target viruses and cancer, research shows.

Cogliser has a T-shirt that sports the phrase, "I'm just here for the phytoncides." "I love science," she said.

Trees also produce oxygen that people need, while humans exhale carbon dioxide that trees use.

Research shows people don't have to venture out into the wilderness to benefit from nature. Spending time in a city park works. Even just having a view of nature through a window speeds recovery in surgery patients compared to patients with no view outside.

Taking a break and going outside helps alleviate "attention fatigue," a state our brains fall into when we've spent a prolonged period of time focused on one thing or many things. People come back refreshed and able to focus again.

In today's high-tech world, nature is an antidote to excessive screen time.

Scientists and doctors started noticing the strain people feel from working on computers during the technology boom of the 1980s — leading to the coining of the term "technostress."

Japanese researchers proposed "forest bathing" as a way to reduce stress and improve health in the early 1980s. Called shinrin-yoku in Japanese, forest bathing involves relaxing in nature and paying attention to the sights, sounds, smells and textures of nature.

Before the advent of artificial light and digital devices, people's cortisol levels naturally fell in the evening while their sleep-promoting melatonin levels rose, Cogliser said.

"What's happened in our digital age is our cortisol doesn't lower and our melatonin doesn't go up," she said.

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Unanimous high court preserves access to abortion pill

By Mark Sherman
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court this morning unanimously preserved access to a medication that was used in nearly two-thirds of all abortions in the U.S. last year, in the court's first abortion decision since conservative justices overturned Roe v. Wade two years ago.

The nine justices ruled that abortion opponents lacked the legal right to sue over the federal Food and Drug Administration's approval of the medication, mifepristone, and the FDA's subsequent actions to ease access to it. The case had threatened to restrict access to mifepristone across the country, including in states where abortion remains legal.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who was part of the majority to overturn Roe, wrote for the court today that "federal courts are the wrong forum for addressing the plaintiffs' concerns about FDA's actions."

The decision could lessen the intensity of the abortion issue in the November elections, with Democrats already energized and voting against restrictions on reproductive rights.

But the high court is separately considering another abortion case, about whether a federal law on emergency treatment at hospitals overrides state abortion bans in rare emergency cases in which a pregnant

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Josephine commissioners take 1st step to allow accessory dwelling units

By Chrissy Ewald
of the Daily Courier

Josephine County commissioners are considering a new tool in the county's fight to create affordable housing.

A proposed change to the county code would allow homeowners to build small secondary homes on their property called ADUs, short for accessory dwelling units but also known as mother-in-law units.

It passed on first reading Wednesday, with commissioners John West and Dan DeYoung voting yes. Commissioner Herman Baertschiger Jr. was absent.

A state law passed in 2021 allows counties to permit ADUs in rural residential areas. Those are areas outside city limits used for housing, not saved for forestry or agriculture.

If county commissioners change the county code, Josephine County would join counties including Deschutes and Lane in allowing this kind of rural development. It would also join the city of Grants Pass, which loosened restrictions on ADUs in 2019.

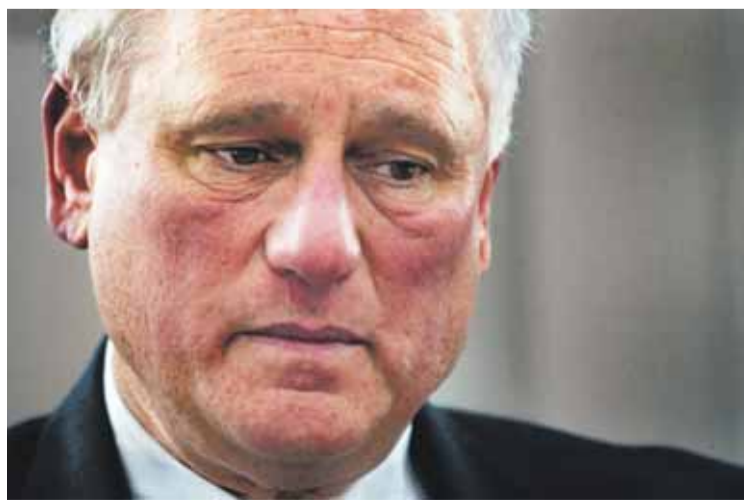
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NEIL GOLDSCHMIDT • 1940-2024

Former governor of Oregon sexually abused young girl

Former Oregon Gov. Neil Goldschmidt is seen during an interview with The Oregonian in 2004. Goldschmidt, who confessed that he had sex with a 14-year-old girl in the 1970s, died Wednesday at the age of 83.

MICHAEL LLOYD
The Oregonian, 2004



By Jeff Mapes
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Former Oregon Gov. Neil Goldschmidt, one of the state's most powerful figures before revelations that he had sexually abused a teenager, died Wednesday, two days before he would have turned 84.

As the young mayor of Portland in the 1970s, Goldschmidt was an electrifying figure. While many American cities were falling apart, he presided over a flurry of innovation in the City of Roses. He helped kill a freeway and launch a light rail. Under his watch, inner-city neighborhoods were lavished with money and attention. Buses sped

passengers for free through a downtown transit mall.

Portland historian Carl Abbott said Goldschmidt showed early in his political career that he was a consummate power broker: "Unlike some other people who think they are dealmakers, he could actually see common points among disparate interests and see how you could pull them together — find something they could all agree on."

Goldschmidt vaulted to national prominence as President Jimmy Carter's transportation secretary. He returned to Oregon and won the governorship in 1986 and eventually morphed into a powerful behind-the-scenes consultant.

By the early 2000s, he was asked to take charge of efforts to remake Oregon's system of higher education. And he was the front man for a Texas firm's audacious deal to buy Portland General Electric — the state's largest utility.

Then came the news in 2004: Goldschmidt admitted abusing a 14-year-old girl while he was Portland's mayor.

The girl was the daughter of a Goldschmidt friend and one-time aide.

Willamette Week reporter Nigel Jaquiss broke the story. He tracked a secret \$250,000 settlement

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No. 193 Issue 34004
Grants Pass Daily Courier
thedailycourier.com



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FRIDAY HIGH 78°
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