

## USFS says Sisters tree vandalism is "selfish act", seeks public's help

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Federal law enforcement officers want the public's help in prosecuting those responsible for cutting off the tops of about 50 trees on the Deschutes National Forest about four miles south of Sisters.

"This was a selfish act at the public's expense," Perl said. USFS photos.

Deschutes National Forest Law Enforcement Officer Fred Perl said it appears someone destroyed the ponderosa pine and western juniper trees in late December because the trees obstructed skyline views. The site lies off Harrington Loop Road where several homes are scattered on private lots adjacent to federal land.

"We're reaching out to the public to see if anyone heard chainsaws operating or saw vehicles in the area, during that time," Perl said. "We want the community to know we take this very seriously and would appreciate their assistance."

Perl said the work was done by someone skilled at tree climbing and chainsaw use because the trees were cut at various heights. "It is an extremely dangerous practice and it takes some expertise," he said.

USFS officials ask for the public's help in finding those responsible for topping about 50 trees in the Deschutes National Forest, about four miles south of Sisters. Cutting or damaging trees on public land is punishable by a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or six months in jail, or both, plus restitution. The crime can be prosecuted as a felony if timber values exceed \$1,000.

Perl asks anyone with information about the incident to telephone him at (541) 549-7641, or through the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office at (541) 693-6911.

“This was a selfish act at the public’s expense,” Perl said.

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