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Wed, Jun 23, 2021 at 8:44 AM

Good morning everyone,

Two items of note for you:

Section 17 and Stage 4 Fire Restrictions

At 8 AM today, the Coconino National Forest closed and Flagstaff entered Stage 4 fire restrictions. Among other things, the latter decision means the FUTS segments onto Observatory Mesa are closed, as is all of the City open space immediately surrounding our campus and Section 17.

Section 17 is neither national forest nor open space, so it technically is not subject to the current restrictions. However, given its location, the extreme fire danger, and how thinly stretched our firefighters are, we think it best to follow the USFS and City decisions. We are therefore closing Section 17 to public access, effective immediately. We did consult yesterday afternoon with the Flagstaff Fire Department about this, and they agreed that this is the correct course of action.

During this time, only Lowell staff, volunteers, Board members, and those with specific business (e.g., deliveries, construction, visitors with tour reservations or meeting appointments with staff) will be permitted past the Mars Hill overlook pillars.

I hate to do this and hope this will be a short-lived closure. We all look forward to welcoming back our hikers and dog-walkers as soon as conditions permit.

Astronomy Discovery Center

Conditional Use Permit review by P&Z

The City has recommended approval of our CUP for construction of the Astronomy Discovery Center. P&Z will review the information packet and recommendation at its meeting at 4 PM this afternoon, June 23. The packet and the link to the virtual Teams meeting is at http://cityweb.flagstaffaz.gov/agendaquick/agenda_publish.cfm?id=&mt=ALL&get_month=6&get_year=2021&dsp=ag&seq=1175.

Groundbreaking

This week is the annual meeting of Lowell's Advisory Board, so in conjunction with that, we have scheduled a ceremonial groundbreaking for the ADC on Saturday, June 26, at 1:30 PM. We are live-streaming the event, and you are welcome to watch it on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmEu5OjDrZl>.

I hope everyone is doing well. Several of our staff and Board, along with so many others, live in the current SET area, and I am most grateful to the ground and air crews working to keep them and their homes safe. Hopefully a healthy monsoon will arrive soon (as the latest NWS models seem to be indicating for next week) and abate the danger for us all.

Best regards,

Jeff