

JUNE 14TH-JULY 31ST 2023

**DESNUTES COUNTY HOMELESSNESS**



## Outreach/mapping update

Using the On X app I have started doing extensive mapping of Deschutes county with the goal in counting as many homeless as possible. When possible I do an assessment and learn as much as possible. My goal has been to learn where they came from, why are they homeless, is anybody helping them, identify barriers that have kept them homeless and would they accept sanctioned camping?

There are six areas the county has requested I prioritize

- China Hat
- Juniper Ridge
- East Antler
- Pierce road near La Pine
- Sisters
- Skyliners Road West of Phil's trailhead

Combined I have mapped out over 1500 miles to date.

**China Hat:** Of the areas I have mapped, there is over 120 RVs and almost 200 cars. I have counted 43 tents. Many RVs appear to be currently unused by campers. It appears that at least a third are used for storage. I estimate there are approximately 210-260 homeless in the areas I have mapped. I have talked to 73. 48 (65%) have reported to me that are not from Deschutes county. 54 (73%) have told me they would consider sanctioned camping. 9 (12%) report having contact with an outreach worker offering help with housing.



**Juniper ridge:** There is over 45 RVS and 190 cars in dirt world. I have counted 14 tents. There are areas that are not safe so have not been able to map certain areas. I estimate there is approximately 110-130 homeless there in the areas I have mapped. I have talked to 31 of them. 17 (54%) are not from Deschutes county and 22 (70%) are interested in services and would also accept sanctioned camping. 4 (12%) tell report having contact with an outreach worker offering help with housing.

**East Antler:** There are over 80 RVs and about 170 cars. I have counted 22 tents. There are areas that are not safe so I have mostly stayed close to the main road. There are approximately 140-170 homeless. I have spoke to 35 of them. 22 (62%) have told me they are not from Deschutes county. 10 (40%) tell me they would accept sanctioned camping. 6 (17%) report having contact with outreach offering housing.

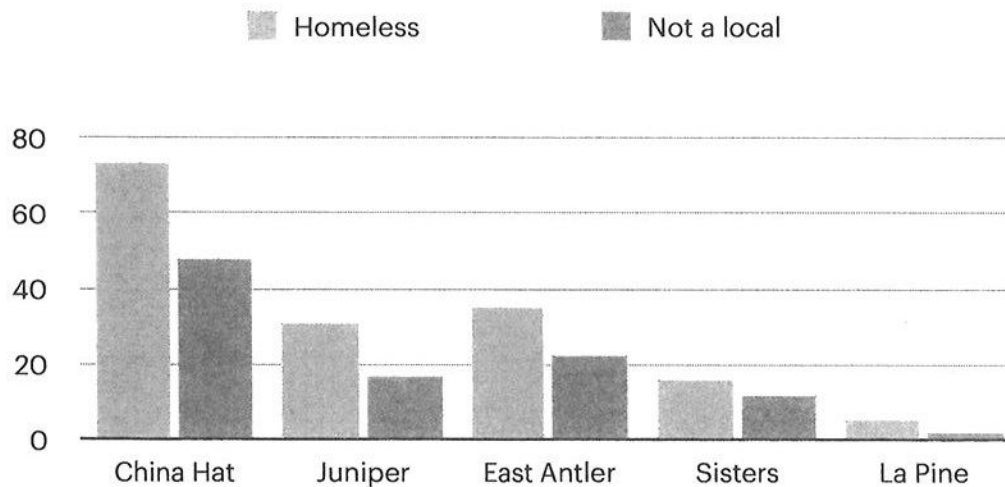
**Sisters:** There is 37 RVS in the area I have mapped. There are 12 tents. I estimate approximate 80-120 homeless in Sisters. I have spoke to 16 homeless and 12 (75%) tell me

they are not from Deschutes county. 7 (43%) told me they would considered sanctioned camping. 3 (18%) report having contact with an outreach worker offering housing.

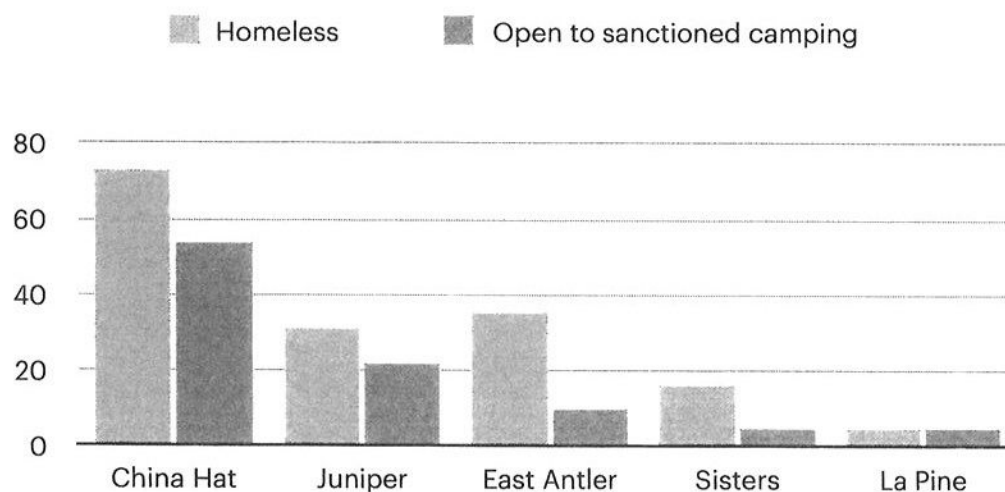
**La Pine:** I have not mapped the areas with the highest concentration of homeless. They are in the deep woods and am getting an escort there soon. Of the areas I have mapped I have seen 9 RVs and talked to 5 homeless. 2 (40%) of the homeless are not from Deschutes county. All 5 would accept sanctioned camping. 1 (20%) report having contact with an outreach worker offering housing.

Skinners road. No assessment yet.

The overall consensus with the homeless I have met is so far 63.8% of the homeless I have met came from outside the county. They came for a variety of reasons. Many have told



me me they are here of the lax rules and the decriminalization of drugs. 58.7% percent are very open to sanctioned camping. As for barriers to getting off the streets. over a 100 told me exactly what it was they needed. Things like needing a car part, a job, a phone, contact with their family, gas. A relatively easy fix with the right support.



### Success stories:

I met the Santiago family in China hat. I did a fun raiser and got a car part they needed to move on. The family left CH and moved to Alaska where the father has a job. They told me I was the first outreach worker to ever approach them.

I met a stranded husband and wife living in China Hat. They had been there a month and did not know how to get help. I got them Gas, food and supplies. I reconnected them with their family and they left China Hat and now live back in Salem Oregon.

I met a homeless man and his son living in their truck outside the Lighthouse shelter. I got his family to pay for his ID. He got a job in Eugene where is family lives. The snow live with that family.

I met Chantel in Sisters and helped her get work clothes. She got a job, saved money, got a job and has since left the county and lives in a safe parking site.

I met a family living in their RV in China hat. After several tries I was able to get them prioritized for housing. This gave their family hope and for the next month they will live with their family before finally moving into traditional housing.

I met a stranded homeless man panhandling in Bend. I got him a gas card and he left the community. He is going back to Portland and into the Victory outreach program.

I helped a veteran panhandling at Walmart get back to his family in San Fransisco.

## **Providers:**

Outreach:

The two major ones in Deschutes county the Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST) and Central Oregon Veterans Outreach (COVO). COVO is will know by the most of the homeless I have met. They are liked and respected. The most common complaint though is COVO has limited resources and can't do much more than provide food and other minor things.

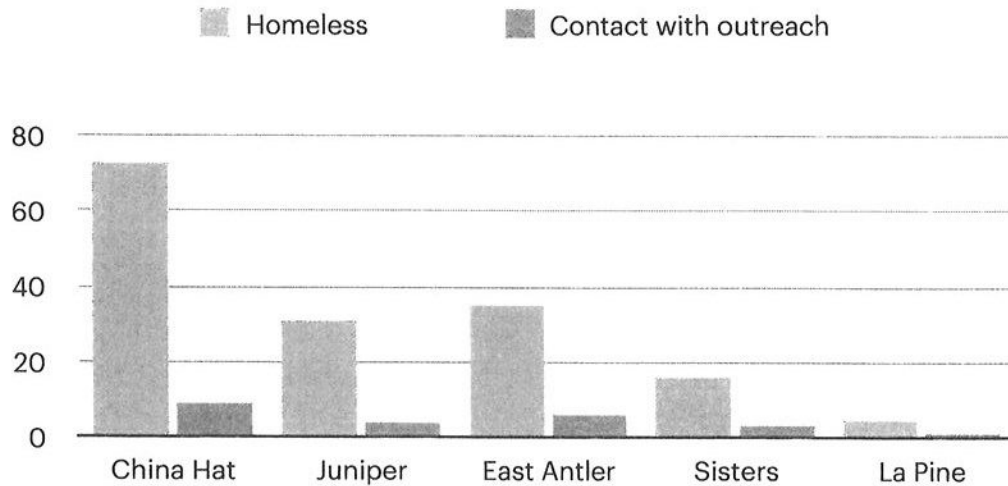
The HOST team does direct street outreach and case management support to individuals with Serious Mental Illness and/or Substance Use Disorders who are experiencing literal homelessness. I have only met one homeless person currently utilizing their services. I have been told they do not proactively approach the homeless, but wait for them to come to them. This seems to be a major flaw in their model as most homeless will never do that.

## **Shelters:**

The Lighthouse: The Lighthouse is located in Bend Oregon and is considered a low barrier shelter. I have done extensive outreach in that area, met with many current and former clients. Over 90% tells me they have serious problems with this shelter. The most common complaint I hear is rampant drug use and dealing inside the shelter. I personally entered that shelter four times and sat down in the milieu for a few hours each time. I was not once approached by anyone offering services or asking who I was. A majority of the

time staff stay in the backroom away from clients and they have current clients manage the shelter. When I did ask about services, a majority of the time I was given short incomplete answers. I have interviewed 4-5 homeless with their testimonies of what its like living there.

Shepards house ministries: A majority of the homeless I have met that live in Shepards housing like it. When I go there and ask questions they have given me as much time as needed. When I email leadership they respond to me within a day. It appears to be a well managed program. I plan to volunteer there and learn more.



The 2023 Point in Time count concluded there are 1067 homeless in Deschutes county. My high estimate does not exceed 700 and very likely less when I map the entire area. 7% of the homeless report addiction as the leading cause of their homelessness. I believe it is closer to 75% of all adults currently homeless in Deschutes county.