

Feds bolster security at preserves

By Terrence Petty & Steven DuBois
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — The government has beefed up security at national wildlife refuges in states south of Oregon as an armed standoff over federal land policy has created tensions in the region and shows no sign of ending soon.

Additional security officers were sent to preserves in southern Oregon, Northern California and Nevada as four occupiers remain holed up at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and say they will not leave without assurances they won't be arrested.

"No specific threats or incidents have occurred, but we remain vigilant to ensure employee and visitor safety throughout the region," Jody Holzworth, a Sacramento-based regional spokeswoman for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said in an email Wednesday.

The additional security measures are in place at the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which straddles the

Oregon-California border; Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada; and Modoc National Wildlife Refuge in Northern California.

As the holdouts drag out the occupation, a federal grand jury indicted standoff leader Ammon Bundy and 10 others who have already been arrested. Assistant U.S. Attorney Geoff Barrow said Wednesday that the indictment also includes "others," perhaps a reference to the remaining occupiers.

The 11 face a conspiracy charge of using intimidation to prevent federal officers from doing their work at the refuge, which is in a sparsely populated area of southeastern Oregon.

The occupation began Jan. 2, with Bundy and his followers demanding the federal government turn public lands over to local control. After his arrest during a traffic stop late last month, he repeatedly has called on the holdouts to go home to avoid bloodshed.

Authorities are monitoring the standoff but have not moved in to the federal

property, instead arresting the main figures Jan. 26 on a remote road outside the refuge. That's where police shot and killed Arizona rancher Robert "LaVoy" Finicum during a confrontation.

The FBI says Finicum, a spokesman for the armed group, reached for a gun in his jacket pocket. Bundy supporters say his death was not justified.

His death led to protests this week by those supporting the occupation, while local residents rallied to urge the holdouts to leave, further dividing the strained community.

Federal authorities fear those tensions could pop up elsewhere.

Preserves and other sites run by the Fish and Wildlife Service nationwide are being extra vigilant, said Gavin Shire, the agency's chief of public affairs.

"Due to the evolving situation in eastern Oregon, all service stations are on alert and being advised to take appropriate caution," Shire said in a statement.

Students rally against proposed tuition hike

EUGENE (AP) — Students at the University of Oregon are protesting a proposed 4.7 percent tuition hike, arguing that the increase isn't affordable.

About 50 students rallied outside the campus administration building Wednesday, undeterred by the afternoon's rainy weather, reported *The Register-Guard*. That protest was followed by a tense hour-long meeting in which students accused school officials of undermining their education.

"I work 20 hours a week on campus," said 26-year-old Ted Yanez, a mathematics major with a wife and one-year-old child. The tuition increase, he said, "doesn't seem like much, but even that makes it hard to support a family."

The UO Board of Trustees will vote in March about whether to raise tuition by 4.76 percent for in-state students and 4.46 for out-of-state students. The university's

figures show that UO has raised tuition by more than 70 percent over the past decade.

"The reason we're increasing tuition is because our costs are going up," Provost Scott Coltrane told students during the Wednesday meeting. He said faculty wage and benefit costs are increasing and the Oregon Legislature is steadily cutting higher-education funding.

"We don't relish raising tuition. It's a hard decision," he said.

But students argued that UO administrators are tone deaf to the impact of tuition increases.

"We have to look at other revenue sources," said Shawn Stevenson, the student government finance director. According to Stevenson, the tuition increase would force students to provide 80 percent of the \$15 million UO needs.

"That's frankly not OK," he said, suggesting capping tuition increases at 3.5 percent.



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