

Editorial...

Saving the West

The 41-day occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is over.

It's going to take a while for Oregon to heal up. Damage to the Refuge will need fixing; damage to relationships in Burns and the surrounding countryside may leave some permanent scars. From any perspective, the shooting death of Robert LaVoy Finicum is a tragic episode that will leave an indelible mark on his family, his friends — and the officers who pulled the triggers.

And the quixotic, futile gesture of the Bundy outfit has done lasting damage to the effort to work through some very real issues surrounding the use of public lands in the West.

The urban-rural divide in Oregon and across the West is a real gulf (*see related column, page 15*). Actions like those of the Bundys only widen the chasm.

It doesn't have to be this way.

There are plenty of folks who want both to see the landscape that feeds our souls AND the livelihoods of those who live on the land protected and preserved. Those goals are — despite our conflict-driven “discourse” — NOT incompatible. There are many people who are working toward a sustainable, natural approach to land management that works to accomplish a multiplicity of goals. It is they, not militant agitators, who deserve recognition.

The Malpai Borderland Group, along the New Mexico/Arizona and Mexico line is worthy of admiration and emulation. Those involved embody the right mind-set and — more importantly — the right kind of action. Here's their mission statement:

“Our goal is to restore and maintain the natural processes that create and protect a healthy, unfragmented landscape to support a diverse, flourishing community of human, plant and animal life in our borderlands region.

“Together, we will accomplish this by

working to encourage profitable ranching and other traditional livelihoods, which will sustain the open space nature of our land for generations to come.”

Right here at home, there is the fine example of Doc and Connie Hatfield. Doc Hatfield died at his home here in Sisters almost exactly four years ago. On his death, *High Country News* offered up a tribute:

“The Hatfields helped found Country Natural Beef because they hated the fact that cattle often beat up the land. They disliked the conflict between ranchers, bureaucrats and environmentalists. And as businesspeople, they resented the negative way urban people looked at public-land ranching.

“So the Hatfields tried something radical. They started talking to people outside of the ranching world. The conversation began in Sisters with 30 or so ranchers and environmentalists and federal agency people sitting in a circle and talking about ways to bring back grasses, heal gullies, convince springs to flow again, and manage cattle to coexist with wildlife. Doc and Connie were the glue that held the group together and the grease that helped even quarrelsome individuals slide past each other.”

Also here in Sisters, Dorro Sokol and Cris Converse worked with local nonprofits and the Forest Service to devise an equitable plan that allowed restoration of Whychus Creek and preserved and enhanced the access to irrigation water for Pine Meadow Ranch.

Loud, futile — and fatal — stunts like the Bundy occupation of Malheur will not save the West. The actions of people like the Hatfields and partnerships like those between local NGOs and agencies and Pine Meadow Ranch will. Tip your cowboy hat to these folks. They're the Western heroes of the 21st century.

Jim Cornelius, News Editor

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Showers 55/32	Showers 47/32	Rain 49/29	Mostly sunny 50/27	Mostly cloudy 50/29	Mostly cloudy 50/na

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Rachel Marsden

American Voices

PARIS — Some of the people running for the U.S. presidency sound as if they've been watching too many tough-guy Hollywood action and science-fiction movies.

During the New Hampshire Republican primary debate, candidates were asked about the satellite that North Korea had launched into orbit just hours earlier. The launch has since been widely dismissed by defense and intelligence experts as a useless public relations stunt. But when you're thrown a pop quiz on foreign policy and national security, you're probably going to resort to your most closely held principles — or maybe the last thing you watched on Netflix.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who sounded like he'd swallowed a Michael Crichton screenplay, raised the possibility of a nuclear satellite triggering an electromagnetic pulse, taking down the electrical grid on America's Eastern Seaboard and killing millions. His solution?

“We ought to put missile defense interceptors in South Korea,” Cruz said.

Why must every security and defense issue involve both a highly implausible scenario and the U.S. running around the globe like it was an on-call repair service?

Cruz also said of the non-nuclear launch that it's an example of why “I've pledged, on the very first day in office, to rip to shreds this Iranian nuclear deal so we're not sitting here in five years, wondering what to do about an Iranian missile launch when they have nuclear weapons.”

The newly minted nuclear deal with Iran has already led to a windfall of economic deals for France's Peugeot, Airbus and others, as well as an estimated \$18.4 billion in contracts for Italian companies, thereby guaranteeing shiny European “loafers on the ground” in Iran. But that doesn't sound as hardcore as “Rambo” Cruz springing into action to pick a fight.

When asked what he would do to bring home an American college student who was detained in North Korea, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush mentioned “weakness” several times in his response, insisting

that America needs to stop signaling it. Bush knows something about signaling strength: He has none other than his mom, the formidable former first lady Barbara Bush, at his side on the campaign trail and in television interviews. No one's going to be bullying America when she's around. Maybe Barbara Bush should be running for the presidency — if only because, even at 90 years old, she doesn't have to keep telling everyone how tough she is.

Why does the projection of strength always have to involve so much talking? Talking about being strong is actually pretty weak. Real strength is demonstrated by action and results.

Silence and surprise are the wingmen of true strength. Just ask any special forces operator. Consider the current Russian military action against the Islamic State in the Middle East — a methodical swamp-draining involving a lot of military hardware and little in the way of talk.

Ramzan Kadyrov, the pro-Putin head of Russia's Chechen Republic known for leaking information on social media (including photos of dead Islamic terrorists), has now blabbed to Russian TV that Chechen special forces have infiltrated the Islamic State and are providing intelligence for Russia. Unsurprisingly, the Kremlin has declined to comment. But if it's really happening, it's further evidence of the effectiveness of quiet professionalism — Kadyrov's boasts notwithstanding.

The most sensible response to the foreign-policy pop quiz in the debate came from Donald Trump.

“I deal with (China),” Trump said. “They tell me they have total, absolute control, practically, of North Korea. They are sucking trillions of dollars out of our country — they're rebuilding China with the money they take out of our country. I would get on with China, let China solve that problem.”

Some of the presidential candidates have great potential as Hollywood action heroes or science-fiction script advisors. Hopefully the one who gets elected is firmly grounded in reality.

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