

Oregon lawmakers propose state control of public land

SALEM (AP) — More than half of Oregon land is owned by the federal government, but Republican lawmakers have raised the possibility of transferring it to state control.

A bill sponsored by Grants Pass Republican Rep. Carl Wilson and three other lawmakers would create a task force to analyze the costs and benefits of such a move, reported *The Statesman Journal*.

Wilson emphasized that he does not support selling Oregon's public land into private ownership and that his bill only calls for a study.

"I'm not sure if this is a good or a bad idea, or how it would actually work," said Wilson during a Thursday hearing on his bill. "But I have to believe Oregonians would do a better job of caring for our lands than a federal bureaucracy."

The bill exempts national parks, monuments, wilderness areas and tribal lands from being considered for transfer to the state.

During the hearing, every public speaker offering testimony opposed the idea of state control. Conservation and sportsman's groups said Oregon couldn't afford to manage the land, while others disputed the need to fund such a task force when Oregon is facing a \$1.8 billion shortfall.

Some speakers pointed to the state's plan to sell the 83,000-acre Elliott State Forest as evidence that federal lands may end up being privatized if moved to state control.

"The ultimate outcome of this bill would not be state land management of our public lands," said Dan Morse, conservation director for the Oregon Natural Desert Association. "The more likely outcome would be the future sale of our public lands when the state can't reasonably afford to manage them."

Wilson and other rural Republicans say studying the possibility is necessary

because it may be one way to improve rural economies. Cutbacks in logging due to overregulation have limited their countries' ability to fund services or protect against wildfires, the Republicans said.

“ But I have to believe Oregonians would do a better job of caring for our lands than a federal bureaucracy. — Rep. Carl Wilson

"We used to have a vibrant economy, with good wages and good places to work," said bill co-sponsor Rep. Sal Esquivel of Medford. "So much of that has been shut off."

LETTERS

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If you think your group crying is going to stop that, get over yourselves and join the majority of the nation to help put a stop to the catastrophe this past President has gotten us into.

We, the conservative people of this nation feel we need to put a halt to the madness. You can either be an American and combine forces with us and stop spreading the cancer of hate, go live in those countries you love so much that support terrorism and socialism, OR join the fight to be free of government subjection and corrosion. If you choose to leave, please hurry. We don't need your negativism. The country doesn't need your negativism!

Yvonne Suckow

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To the Editor:

The following letter is a response to the article "Swim records fall at district meet," which appeared in the February 14 edition of *The Nugget*. As a member of the boys swim team, and competitor at the 2017 Sky-Em District Swim Meet, I can personally attest to the success of our Lady Outlaws this season. The breaking of four school records deserves worthy recognition and praise. I personally congratulate every member of the Sisters High Girl's Swim Team for their success and

dedication this season.

I would also like to congratulate every member of the BOYS swim team, as they were not mentioned in the above article. Our boys team worked hard this entire season, and grew closer as a cohesive group of swimmers. We might not have broken four school records, but our spirit and growth individually and athletically is worth mentioning.

At the district meet the Boys 200Y Medley Relay and Boys 200Y Freestyle Relay, finished 10th. Both relays consisted of George Bates, Sam Mitchell, Will Werts, and Jackson Rheuben. George Bates swam well, finishing 13th in the 100-yard breaststroke, and swam a 1:06.33 in the 100-yard freestyle. Jackson Rheuben finished 10th in both the 50-yard freestyle and 500-yard freestyle, showing his strength as both a sprint and distance swimmer. Sam Mitchell, Jordan Pollard, and Connor Crowe all competed in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle, setting new personal records, all of whom did excellent jobs as first time competitive swimmers.

Least importantly, Will Werts (that's me) rounded out his high school swim career with a ninth place finish in the 100-yard butterfly, and now owns an eggplant-colored purple ribbon to prove the fact. He plans to hang his ninth place ribbon next to the girls swim team article, a true juxtaposition of success and mediocrity.

Will Werts

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