

Klamath Falls farmers wary of habitat proposal



KLAMATH FALLS (AP) — Farmers are worried that saving endangered fish in the Klamath Basin means wiping out agriculture.

Farmers spoke out Tuesday night against a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to designate 418,000 acres as critical habitat for the Lost River sucker and short-

nosed sucker, which are endangered species. About half the lands are private property.

Dale Hall, assistant regional director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, issued a statement saying neither private property nor water supplies would be affected by the designation of critical habitat.

But that didn't satisfy farmers.

"I don't trust the federal government. I don't trust any agency. I don't trust any of this endangered species designation," Sam Henzel, a partner in Tri-Cord Farms in Worden, testified at a Tuesday night hearing.

Klamath County Assessor Reg LeQuieu said farmland within the critical habitat boundaries would become almost impos-

sible to sell.

The Klamath County Association of Realtors estimates \$188 million in property losses.

Dave Solem, manager of the Klamath Irrigation District, said he feared the critical habitat plan would eventually put 1,144 farms out of business by laying claim to all their irrigation water.

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Republicans decide discipline against Hatfield unnecessary

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans decided today not to punish Sen. Mark Hatfield for casting the decisive "no" vote on the balanced-budget amendment, a top GOP priority.

Sen. Don Nickles, R-Okla., said the Hatfield situation "was discussed briefly" during a private meeting of GOP senators. Asked if the subject would come up again, he replied, "We're done with the Hatfield situation."

There had been some talk of stripping the 72-year-old Hatfield of his chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole "made it clear there would be no vote" on whether to punish the Oregon senator for his opposition to the amendment, said Sen. Connie Mack, R-Fla.

Several of the senators — primarily newer members — had chastised Hatfield for his vote that doomed the amendment, although others said he should not be disciplined for a vote of principle.

The senators met for more than an hour in a session forced by Mack and Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., after Hatfield's vote doomed the constitutional amendment. They had called the balanced-budget measure a core Republican issue and said party leaders should express the position of the party.

"We had a thorough discussion of the issue," said Mack.

Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., a moderate who parts ways with the official GOP position against abortion, said the meeting centered on the party agenda and the future direction of the GOP.

"I talked about independence," said Specter, who is testing the waters for a presidential bid. "I think independence is an aspect of integrity."

Several senators said the participants discussed ways to give

Dole and future Senate GOP leaders more control over who is appointed to major committees, such as the appropriations panel headed by Hatfield. Assignments currently are based strictly on seniority, and there's no assurance that chairmen will be in harmony with fundamental party positions.

"We talked about enhancing leadership strength," Nickles said.

Hatfield threaded his way through a gauntlet of photographers on his way to the late afternoon meeting, saying only that he couldn't stop to talk. He spent most of the day calling colleagues and getting "very positive" responses, said spokeswoman Julie McGregor.

Last week's cliff-hanger vote was not the first time Hatfield tried the patience of his party. He has been a consistent opponent of war and capital punishment, as well as the balanced-budget amendment.

It was unclear which senators besides Mack and Santorum, who has been a senator for all of two months, were insisting on a discussion of possible retribution. Most senators said after a meeting Tuesday that they were not inclined to punish Hatfield.

The trials of the 72-year-old Republican prompted an indignant lecture from Sen. James Exon, D-Neb., a supporter of the amendment and of Hatfield's right to dissent. "It's about time the freshmen members of this organization come into this body with a little bit of humbleness," he said on the floor.

Another Democrat, Sen. John Breaux of Louisiana, paraded through a mob of reporters outside the closed GOP meeting with a sign that said "Free Hatfield."

"I think they should sentence him to becoming a Democrat," Breaux said.

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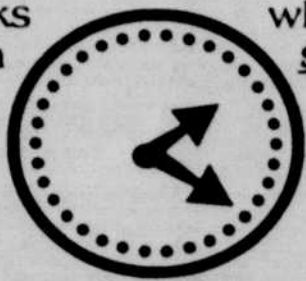
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