

Most Oregon Measure 49 properties remain undeveloped

By **Mateusz Perkowski**
EO Media Group

SALEM — Most of the farm and forest properties made available for development in Oregon under a decade-old ballot initiative haven't yet been subdivided, according to state land use regulators.

Meanwhile, county governments and affected landowners don't appear eager to take advantage of a program that would steer home-building away from more valuable natural resource lands.

Of the properties that have been subdivided under Measure 49, a property right law passed in 2007, about 62% are in agricultural zones, 16% are in forest zones and 11% are in mixed farm and forest zones, according to the Department of Land Conservation and Development. The remainder are in rural residential zones.

"The farmland seems to be getting developed at a faster rate than the other categories," said Sarah Marvin, a senior planner with DLCD, during a Nov. 20 hearing before the House Agriculture and Land Use Committee.

Oregon voters passed Measure 49 to amend another ballot initiative approved three years earlier, Measure 37, which allowed landowners to seek waivers of land use regulations imposed on their properties.

Landowners could also seek compensation for lost property values under Measure 37, but most counties could not afford to pay those claims and instead opted to waive restrictions on development — stoking fears of major new subdivisions that would interfere with agriculture and forestry.

Under Measure 49, those development rights were

scaled back so that most landowners could only build three homes per property, or up to 10 homes if they could sufficiently prove that regulations reduced their property values.

Roughly 4,200 new parcels were approved by Oregon land use regulators under Measure 49, but only 1,700 parcels were actually created — leaving about 2,500 new parcels that could be created in the future, according to DLCD.

In areas such as Southern Oregon, the possibility of development occurring outside urban growth boundaries may raise the chances that newly built homes will be prone to wildfire hazards, said Marvin. "A lot of Measure 49 homes sites are going into extreme fire risk areas."

To mitigate the risks from such home-building, DLCD enacted rules in 2014 under

which landowners in farm and forest zones can transfer their development rights to rural residential zones or areas that have already been largely subdivided.

Since then, however, not one county government has implemented an ordinance that would allow landowners to transfer these development credits, Marvin said. That's likely because county officials have limited time and resources to create such programs.

"They'd have to compete with other things on their agenda to get this in," she said.

If landowners were excited about transferring their development rights, they'd probably demand that county officials make that option available — something that clearly hasn't happened, said Jim Johnson, land use specialist with the Oregon

Department of Agriculture.

"There's not, in my opinion, a real demand for it," Johnson said. "If nobody is asking for it, the county has other things to do."

While the development credit transfer system should be a "win-win for everybody," it's likely that Oregon's program is too restrictive to be enticing to landowners, said Dave Hunnicutt, president of the Oregon Property Owners Association.

Landowners are unlikely to want to jump through the program's regulatory hurdles without an incentive, Hunnicutt said. "There'd better be something valuable at the end of that."

Currently, development credits can only be transferred within the same county, which is a geographical limitation that probably discourages landowners, he said.

Those in remote rural counties would be more interested in the program if they could transfer the development credits to more urbanized areas, Hunnicutt said.

Allowing more flexibility makes sense, since geographical restrictions won't prevent property development under Measure 49.

"Those are going to happen and there's nothing anyone can do to stop them," Hunnicutt said.

Another possibility could be to allow additional dwellings to be built with the development credits if they're transferred from farm and forest land into rural residential zones, said Rep. Brian Clem, D-Salem, who chairs the House Agriculture and Land Use Committee.

"I feel like we need to sweeten the pot somehow," Clem said.

Buffalo hunt nets Creating Memories support

By **Ellen Morris Bishop**
EO Media Group

On a blustery bone-chilling Sunday morning with weather aiming to snow, Jim Allen, his son Cash, and friend and hunting advisor Stan Sophia, set out to make a dream come true: a buffalo hunt and a trophy bull. There was more at stake than just the meat and the massive trophy head. Allen, a dry-wall contractor who lives in Sutherlin, Oregon, won his hunt through an online auction to benefit Wallowa County's Creating Memories: a non-profit that provides outdoor experiences to disabled youth. All of the \$6500 that he had paid to hunt the bull on the Stangel Bison Ranch would go to the charity. Stangel donated the bull. Valley Meats cut and wrapped the meat. And a Prineville taxidermist would mount the head.

All that was needed was for Jim Allen to bring in his buffalo.

The bull was 6 years old, an animal in his prime. But bulls of that age are prone to wander. They are not the best breeding stock, said Marta Stangel, who is one of the ranch's chief buffalo wranglers and works with her dad, Bob, to manage the herd. This particular animal had a few other quirks, including one eye that was not functioning properly. While he was a prime specimen for a hunt, he was not high on the Stangel's list to become a dad. The Stangels turned the bull out for a last few days of solitude on grassland east of Ant Flat Road.

Allen gladly took suggestions from the Stangels. On the property there's not much to worry about except an old tractor that bullets might ricochet off if you miss, and a house that is more than a half-mile away. When you hunt a buffalo, the best kill shot is well below the hump, at a spot behind the elbow. Then a small caravan of trucks headed up Ant Flat Road.

Allen, and everyone else, wanted this to be a hunt, not a drive-by shooting. And so the group stopped on a hilltop, where Allen, Cash and Sophia, began a hike to find their quarry. A few minutes out from the vehicles, Allen stopped abruptly and pointed to a small brown dot on a distant hillside.

The group paused, determined the wind direction and approximate distance and planned their long stalk. They crossed a valley, and climbed a hill, keeping downwind of their quarry. But it's hard to remain undetected on a windswept, open grassland, even if you are wearing camo.

By the time they reached the top of the hill, the buffalo had noticed the presence of humans, and ambled across the valley and back up the hill they had recently descended.

The hunting party followed. Allen tried once to set up a shot, but the now-wary bull's position did not allow a clear shot. The group moved again. This time, Allen used his backpack and his son's as a brace. He sighted in the bull. He took his time. He exhaled. Cash put his hands over his ears. One shot from Allen's Nosler 30, shooting a 180 grain round took the bull down. He stayed where he fell. It was over.

Allen is no stranger to bringing down big game. Last year he traveled to South Africa, where a hunt with Joubert ProHunt netted him a cape buffalo, sable, jackal, stem buck, water buck, heart beast and a blesbuck. But he had never hunted an American bison, although it was a long-time dream. "Creating Memories is a really



Photo contributed by **Ellen Morris Bishop** / EO Media Group

Jim Allen (left) and his hunting friend Stan Sophia make a plan to meet up with a buffalo on the move, while Cash Allen (right) shoots a photo.

worthy cause to support," he said. "I'm glad I could help them out, and make my own memory at the same time."

Creating Memories board member Jack Burgoyne, said the hunt and Allen's contribution, along with the contributions of Stangels and others, would greatly help the nonprofit continue its programs for disabled children and their caregivers. Creating Memories provides outdoor

activities and adventures for disabled children, including fishing, hunting and time outside in the back-country. Their board of directors and volunteers includes former big game guides, fishers and hunters. Recently, Creating Memories acquired the 97-acre Boy Scout Camp at Wallowa Lake, and has renovated the buildings to be handicapped accessible, and in fact, handicapped inviting, Burgoyne said.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

FRIDAY

La Grande police at 10:31 a.m. received a complaint from the 2100 block of Oak Street about an aggressive pit bull dog that attacked another dog Thursday.

A caller at 12:02 p.m. reported a dog in with livestock on the 63000 block of Mountain Glen Road, La Grande.

La Grande police at about 10:30 p.m. responded to another dog complaint, this time at Depot Street and Y Avenue about barking dogs. The officer could not find the homeowner and left a message for the code enforcement officer to follow-up.

SATURDAY

La Grande police at about 2:35 a.m. responded to a fight on the 2200 block of Adams Avenue. The parties involved went their separate ways.

A Union County sheriff's deputy, a little after, 11:30 a.m. responded to the 800 block of

South Second Street, Union, on a call about an assault. The deputy took a report.

A La Grande police officer at 5:35 p.m. responded to a dispute involving child custody. The officer explained options to both parents.

The Union County Sheriff's Office at 11:24 p.m. received a report of a prowler on the 200 block of South 12th Avenue, Elgin. A deputy found no prowler.

SUNDAY

La Grande police at about 2:35 a.m. responded to a fight on the 2200 block of Adams Avenue. The parties involved went their separate ways.

La Grande police at 2:11 p.m. responded to a report of a burglary on the 3100 block of Island Avenue.

A La Grande resident at 8:36 p.m. reported receiving obscene phone calls. Another resident at 8:36 p.m. reported telephonic harassment.

And firefighters responded to 12 calls for medical assistance on Sunday, seven on Saturday and seven on Friday.

'Dive-in' movie night held Friday

LA GRANDE — The City of La Grande Parks & Rec is planning a family-friendly dive-in movie night Friday at Veterans' Memorial Pool, 401 Palmer Ave. The special event runs from 6-8 p.m. and will include a viewing of "The Grinch" plus candy, soda, ice cream and popcorn for sale.

Tree lighting at Max Square follows Christmas parade

LA GRANDE — La Grande's Christmas parade, sponsored by La Grande Main Street Downtown, will begin Saturday at 5 p.m. The parade will travel along Adams Avenue to Max Square, where the Christmas tree will be lit.

Festive winter Saturday offered in Union

UNION — Downtown Union will be a Winter Wonderland Saturday. From noon and 6 p.m., there will be vendors, food and music up and down Main Street. The Christmas Parade begins at 5 p.m., followed by the tree lighting and a visit from Santa. Also, the Lions basketball tour-

namment will be happening on all day, and a steak dinner in honor of Pearl Harbor Day will be served 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the VFW High Valley Post 4060.

The VFW invites the public to join in the dinner as a way to remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and to honor all World War II veterans. The dinner includes steak, baked potatoes and salad, for \$14. All World War II vets and their spouses eat free.

Teen Book Clubs — join us

LA GRANDE — Cook Memorial Library is seeking new members for the library's middle school and high school book clubs. This is a free activity. Clubs meet monthly in the library's Community Room. For more information, call 541-962-1339 or visit the library at 2006 Fourth St., La Grande.

Christmas tree fundraiser benefits Philly trip

LA GRANDE — The Imbler/Elgin Philly group is selling Christmas trees as a fundraiser for the students' upcoming trip. The lot, at the former veterinarian clinic at

LOCAL BRIEFING

From staff reports

Island Avenue and Walton Road, will be open from 2-8 p.m. Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and noon to 6 p.m. Sundays until the trees are gone. Call Aimee Patterson at 541-786-2388 for more information.

City Council holds public hearing on warming station

LA GRANDE — The La Grande City Council will meet beginning at 6 p.m. Wednesday, in the Commons of the La Grande Middle School, 1108 Fourth St. The council is considering the appeal against the Union County Warming Station's conditional use permit, preventing the shelter from opening at 2008 Third St. Public comment will be taken on the appeal during the meeting. According to a news release from the city, during the public comment section of the public hearing, those who wish to address the council must fill out a public speakers registration form, provided at the back of the room. The completed forms must be placed into the box at the podium before you start your testimony.

Each speaker will be given three minutes for his/her comment.

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