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# Opinion

## Editorial Board

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## OUR VIEW

# Common sense means more water storage

The folks in Klamath Falls, Ore., are hoping for the best. As they look at a sparse snowpack in the mountains and a forecast for another dry summer, they maintain their optimism.

They say they've seen it before — in 2001, '02 and '03 — and despite the outlook they remain optimistic that somehow enough water will remain available for their crops.

Like the rest of the West, the Klamath region's economy depends on water. Without adequate water, the farms and ranches, and the economy that depends on them, face another difficult year.

But the sad irony is that such hardships could have been avoided. Common sense could have helped them.

Common sense dictates that a region with periodic water shortages should have more storage. Reservoirs, aquifer recharge, lake taps and any other practical means of storing water that is often plentiful in the winter but scarce in the summer need to be pursued. Yet precious little has been done at the federal, state or local levels to create more storage.

The problem is not unique to the Klamath Falls region. Pick a state in the West, and the lack of adequate water storage is the primary problem facing agriculture.

A lot of energy is spent arguing over why the mountain snowpacks are shrinking. Some say climate change is the culprit. Others say it's just another weather cycle.

It doesn't matter. While politicians and others talk about tangential issues they avoid the need at hand — more water storage.

When winter precipitation comes in the form of rain instead of mountain snows, common sense dictates that it should be stored, yet only a few storage projects are in the works around the West.

California is in the grip of a four-year drought. Voters have approved the construction of two reservoirs, but state leaders haven't even decided where to build them. Elsewhere, a few small reservoirs and aquifer recharge projects are contemplated or are underway.

These and many other water storage projects are desperately needed, and now.

We also need to mention the role the federal Endangered Species Act plays in Klamath Falls and elsewhere in the West. Water is sent down rivers to benefit endangered fish regardless of the fact it is needed for people. Billions of dollars have been spent on helping fish, but only a relative pittance has been spent in the past 40 years on water storage as the region's population has mushroomed.

If farmers and ranchers want a preview of where this is headed, they don't have to look far. Western and Southern Oregon depended on the timber industry for generations, yet they have struggled to survive after the northern spotted owl was listed as threatened under the ESA.

The once thriving timber economy

was decimated as logging operations and mills shut down because the owl favors old growth forests. Congress continues to write checks trying to bolster those faltering counties, but what they need most is relief from the ESA.

Just as communities that depended on the timber industry learned that they don't really matter when a threatened or endangered species shows up in their backyard, Western farmers and everyone else who depend on water have learned that ESA-protected fish trump all else.

But no matter what one's viewpoint is on climate change or the ESA, all sides would have to agree that more water storage is desperately needed around the West.

It's a matter of common sense.



Rik Dalvit/For the Capital Press

## OUR VIEW

# Marketing order faces test

If comments made by U.S. Supreme Court justices last week are any indication, the days of a federal marketing order for California raisins may be numbered.

Rooted in New Deal policies that have long outlived their purpose, such orders are nonetheless standard operating procedure for 20 commodities nationwide. If struck down, what follows?

Established in 1949, the federal marketing order authorizes the Raisin Administrative Committee. Its primary job is to regulate the volume of California raisins entering the market to stabilize prices. It also provides money for research and promotion.

When market conditions dictate, producers are compelled to surrender a portion of their crop to a federal "reserve pool," which is intended to limit the market supply of raisins and stabilize their price.

Raisins in the reserve are stored until they can be sold on foreign markets, given to school lunch programs or otherwise disposed of.

Producers are not paid for the raisins surrendered to the pool. Instead, the theory goes, they

benefit from higher prices that result from reduced supply. If the raisins are sold, producers receive a prorated share of any proceeds left after the committee's storage and marketing expenses are paid.

Farmer Marvin Horne of Kerman, Calif., claims the scheme violates his rights under the U.S. Constitution because he must transfer ownership of his crop to USDA without being paid the fair market value — an uncompensated "taking," prohibited by the Fifth Amendment.

Horne tried to avoid the scheme by installing his own packing equipment in 2002 instead of selling his crop to raisin handlers. However, USDA claimed the action made him a handler and fined him about \$700,000 for not setting raisins aside for the reserve pool.

While it's dangerous to read much into things justices say during oral arguments, the fact that the court has twice heard arguments on the same case is telling.

Earlier the government tried to show that Horne could not bring suit unless he first paid assessed fines. That argument was upheld

by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, but overturned by the Supreme Court in 2013. The justices' decision to again hear arguments in the dispute is seen in legal circles as significant.

Both times justices took a dim view of the government's arguments.

"Central planning was thought to work very well in 1937, and Russia tried it for a long time," Justice Antonin Scalia quipped.

An apt and unflattering description of the program and 19 others like it, we think.

The command-and-control policies of the New Deal may benefit some producers and handlers. But they harm others by discouraging entry into the market by some, and diminishing the returns of the most efficient producers.

And in this case, the order can unlawfully take a portion of a crop without offering the producer fair compensation that the court cannot let stand.

Raisin growers, and others covered by similar orders, might well consider a new paradigm for production and marketing in a free market.

# Craters of the Moon — What's in a name?

By FRANK PRIESTLEY  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Frank Priestley



Before throwing caution to the wind and jumping on the "let's create a new national park bandwagon," a more thorough investigation of the proposal is needed.

The recent proposal to send a state memorandum to Congress that would change the name of Craters of the Moon National Monument to National Park, was supported by the Butte County commissioners and State Rep. Merrill Beyeler, R-Leadore. There is local support for the change and we believe that is important.

However, the proposal failed after concerns about it were raised by several voices, including the Idaho Farm Bureau. We would like to stress that we aren't here to claim responsibility for killing the idea and we think it should be given time for thorough vetting. So let's ask the hard questions first and get the answers out in front of all of the stakeholders. If it still seems like a good idea after that then let's move forward with it.

Discussion circulating through the Idaho Statehouse was the proposed change was not more than changing the name on the sign. The Idaho Statesman editorial page says it's a great idea because Idaho doesn't have a national park and it will only cost about \$10,000 to change the signs.

We are curious whether swapping the word "Monument" for the word "Park" on a sign really changes anything. According to National Park Service data, Craters of the Moon is a "lava flow with scattered islands of cinder cones and sage brush," that is visited by about 200,000 people per year. But Craters of the Moon is not unlike the thousands of acres that surround it. The entire Great Rift region from Blackfoot to Arco to Shoshone to Acequia and back along the west side of American Falls Reservoir is as fabulous of a desert as exists anywhere in the world. It's got back roads and caves and old homesteads and wild-life and tons of outdoor recreation opportunities. It's "all that," to anyone who finds solitude in a desert environment.

In all honesty, Craters of the Moon is just a lava flow near the north end of this fabulous desert. Some people would even call it a rock pile, but that doesn't sound "touristy."

The point we are trying to get at here is does Craters rise to the level of national park? If you've just traveled through Yosemite, Glacier or Yellowstone and you arrived at Craters, would it be a let-down? Should we care? Is it enough to just change the name on the sign?

Would this change stimulate the local economy? Liberal think tank organizations are fond of publishing studies that allege the economic benefits of national monuments, parks and wilderness areas. One that was released to support a monument in the Boulder White Clouds region last year claimed more middle-class telecommuters — people who work from home online — would move to central Idaho if a monument was created, or that tourism dollars would shore up the economy. Yet, the facts don't support those claims. We've had a monument in central Idaho since 1924 when President Calvin Coolidge established Craters of the Moon. There is also very little to indicate that Craters is supporting tourism in the region.

In addition, inviting the federal government to make management changes at Craters also raises red flags. One thing we know for certain is that federal agencies and regulations go together like watermelon and sticky fingers. If we invite a name change who's to say the Park Service won't increase the size of the monument or reduce the area available for off-road vehicles, grazing, hunting or other uses that are currently allowed?

We don't want to throw cold water on this proposal. It would be great if Craters could become an important tourist destination, there's just not much evidence that it will — no matter what it says on the sign.

Frank Priestley is president of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation.

## Readers' views

### TPP trade agreement deserves our support

I urge Oregonians to encourage our congressional delegation to support adoption of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement.

TPP boosts Made-in-America exports to some of the fastest growing countries in the world, eliminates trade barriers, creates a level playing field and establishes rules stopping unfair trade.

In 2013 Oregon exported \$2.3 billion in raw agricultural products, as well as other value-added products. Oregon's agricultural exports boosted farm in-

come and supported about 17,400 jobs that can pay 20 percent more than jobs not connected to the international economy.

Foreign trade is crucial for Oregon's urban and rural businesses. Standing still on the TPP is not an option.

With Oregon's strategic Pacific Rim location the TPP is vitally necessary. For Or-

egon companies with products garnering international demand, Asia is essential for our growth.

The TPP will grow Oregon's economy, add family-wage jobs and support industry throughout Oregon.

Stan Baker  
President/CEO

Baker Seed  
Technologies Inc.  
Corvallis, Ore.

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Letters policy: Please limit letters to 300 words and include your home address and a daytime telephone number with your submission. Longer pieces, 500-750 words, may be considered as guest commentary pieces for use on the opinion pages. Guest commentary submissions should also include a photograph of the author.

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