



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Craters of the Moon National Monument Superintendent Dan Buckley tours the Eastern Idaho recreation area on July 10. Advocates for the monument have proposed to change it to a national park, which has raised some concerns within the agriculture industry.

## Ag wary of park designation for Craters of the Moon

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Capital Press

ARCO, Idaho — Advocates for creating a Craters of the Moon National Park insist their proposal would boost tourism to the scenic Eastern Idaho basalt flows simply by changing the names on signs.

Some local ranchers and Idaho Farm Bureau Federation officials, however, aren't sold on upgrading the national monument's status, concerned about new restrictions on grazing and shipping forage, or the possibility that its borders could expand.

A grassroots group supporting the name change, led by Butte County Commissioner Rose Bernal, has been meeting with surrounding county commissions, organizations, agricultural interests and politicians to garner support. The group hopes Congress will act by 2016, in time to benefit from publicity surrounding the centennial anniversary of the National Park Service. Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, has told the group he'd consider backing their cause if they can produce broad local support. Bernal said the group is

about ready to approach the congressional delegation.

The national park would encompass only the original 54,000-acre monument, created by presidential decree in 1924. A 411,000-acre National Park Service preserve and a 273,000-acre Bureau of Land Management portion that allows grazing were

Blaine County on July 14.

Supporters note Idaho is the only western state without a national park fully contained within its borders. Bernal said she sent a letter about the proposal to every grazing permittee using the monument and hasn't heard back from any of them.

Idaho Farm Bureau lead-

don't get you that far when you're dealing with a bunch of bureaucrats in Washington, D.C.," Thompson said. He said Farm Bureau will wait for county chapters to vote on the issue before taking a formal position.

"Every year we see recreation interests putting pressure on grazing, and then the Forest Service or BLM will reduce grazing," Thompson said.

Sheep rancher Henry Etcheverry opposes the change, worried he'd lose half his herd if his grazing access to the monument were restricted. Etcheverry said he was barred from grazing in the monument's Bear Park area shortly after the 2000 expansion.

"I don't trust (the federal government) at all," Etcheverry said. "I think they would take away our grazing rights."

Buckley said tourism has increased by roughly 30,000 visitors on average at the last three monuments to become national parks. A 2014 Park Service study shows Craters of the Moon had a \$6.6 million economic impact and contributed to 112 local jobs.

**They have very good intentions, but good intentions don't get you that far when you're dealing with a bunch of bureaucrats in Washington, D.C.'**

Farm Bureau spokesman John Thompson

added to the monument in 2000.

Since the national park campaign started in April, the Idaho Senate has unanimously approved a resolution in support and a House resolution had strong backing before it was tabled.

The group has also circulated petitions and obtained blessings from the Idaho Association of Counties and all surrounding county commissions but Blaine County. Bernal was scheduled to have another meeting with

ers joined Craters Superintendent Dan Buckley on a tour of the monument in late June. Farm Bureau spokesman John Thompson said the organization remains concerned the change could open the door for the federal government to later restrict grazing, or charge a fee for highway access, despite Buckley's assurances that the highway is state-owned and both scenarios are unlikely.

"They have very good intentions, but good intentions

## Onion assessment cut in half for Oregon, Idaho growers

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

NYSSA, Ore. — The assessment fee for onions grown in Eastern Oregon and Southwestern Idaho has been cut in half.

Onion growers in the area are under a federal marketing order and were being assessed 10 cents for each 100 pounds of onions they produced.

That assessment has been trimmed to 5 cents by the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee, which administers the marketing order. The new rate became effective July 1. The assessment cut will save the average grower about \$25 an acre, said Grant Kitamura, chairman of the IEIOC's promotion committee, which recommended the assessment cut.

"It's definitely going to save us some money," said Oregon farmer Bruce Corn. "Every little bit helps."

About 20,000 acres of big bulb onions are grown on both sides of the border in the Treasure Valley and the assessment generates a little more than \$900,000 a year.

The IEIOC's research and export budgets will not be impacted by the assessment cut but the majority of the reduced revenue will come out of the committee's promotions budget, which will be slashed from \$635,000 a year to \$250,000, Kitamura said.

Promotion committee member Paul Skeen, a Nyssa, Ore., farmer, said a lot of people thought the money spent on promotions wasn't being used as effectively as it could.

"There were people who felt like we weren't getting the right bang for our buck," he said.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

An onion field near Ontario, Ore., is shown in this July 8 photo. The assessment fee for onions grown under a federal marketing order in Eastern Oregon and Southwestern Idaho has been cut in half.

Kitamura said there would be a major reduction in travel and local promotions, but the committee will continue to maintain a major presence at industry trade shows and in the media.

Gone will be the feel-good type of promotions, particularly those aimed locally, he said.

"Those are effective at promoting good will but they're not really effective for moving product," he said. "We're trying to get lean and mean."

## Farm Bureau leaders praise Stallman

Organization's president says he won't seek new term next year

By TIM HEARDEN  
Capital Press

Farm Bureau leaders in the West say outgoing American Farm Bureau Federation president Bob Stallman oversaw big changes in agriculture during his tenure and has fought for national policies beneficial to the region's growers.

Oregon Farm Bureau president Barry Bushue, who is also the AFBF's vice president, called Stallman a "transformational leader" whose "strong and decisive style" has set a new standard for ag leaders nationwide.

Stallman's legacy "ensures that agriculture will not be taken for granted and that public pol-

icy-makers never forget how important agriculture is to our nation," Bushue said in an email.



Bob Stallman

Bushue hasn't decided whether to seek Stallman's seat, OFB spokeswoman Anne Marie Moss said July 15.

Washington Farm Bureau state president Mike LaPlant said that although farmers and ranchers represent less than 2 percent of the U.S. population, Stallman has been "tireless" in telling their story.

"He has helped the broader audience of American consumers understand how increasing regulations and production costs make the hard job of feeding a growing population even harder," LaPlant said in an email. "Most importantly, Bob has helped them see

# Local GMO control initiative faces setback

Proposal would overturn Oregon's statewide legal pre-emption

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

A proposed ballot initiative to overturn statewide pre-emption laws for biotech crops and pesticides in Oregon has been dealt a legal setback.

Under the "Right to Local, Community Self-Government" initiative, counties and cities would be immune from Oregon's pre-emption statutes, allowing them to regulate issues currently under the state's sole jurisdiction.

Proponents have gathered more than 1,000 signatures in favor of the initiative, which was enough to begin the ballot title drafting process for the 2016 general election.

However, the Oregon Secretary of State's office recently rejected the initiative for making overly broad revisions to the Oregon Constitution.

Specifically, the initiative would "effectuate fundamental constitutional changes to the structure and division of powers of state and local governments" and alter the power of the legislative and executive branches, according to state attorneys. Such a sweeping "revision" can't be accomplished with a ballot initiative, they said.

A revision of the Oregon Constitution must instead be approved by two-thirds of both legislative chambers before a referral to voters, said Paul Diller, a law professor at Willamette University.

The initiative was also rejected for making multiple changes to the Oregon Constitution that weren't closely related.

Proponents now have the choice of challenging those findings in court or attempting to write a new initiative that overcomes the hurdles identified by the state's attorneys.

Mary Geddry, a chief petitioner for the initiative, said that proponents haven't yet decided on a course of action but

disagree with the government's conclusions.

"It does not mean everybody is just going to roll over," she said. "We believe it's a worthy cause and we'll try to get it done one way or another."

Apart from genetically modified organisms and pesticides, the initiative would allow local governments to regulate "fracking" in oil and gas developments, coal exports and other activities that affect air and water quality, Geddry said.

"We're talking about fundamental rights," she said. "Communities don't have the right to say 'no' under the current system."

Oregonians for Food and Shelter, an agribusiness group, worries that the ballot initiative would preclude any statewide regulations, resulting in a patchwork of rules from county to county, said Scott Dahlman, its policy director.

"Anything that keeps it off the ballot, we are excited to see," he said.

The Secretary of State's determination is a "substantial" reversal for initiative proponents, since they now face the prospect of a legal battle or an overhaul of their proposal, Dahlman said.

"Either way, they've got a significant process ahead of them," he said.

Revising the initiative to pass constitutional muster would be very difficult, Dahlman said. "It looks like a pretty fatal blow to this effort."

Diller of Willamette University said there's little case law dealing with how far-reaching constitutional changes must be to qualify as a "revision," so the proponents face an uncertain legal landscape.

"It's a bit of an open question whether they might achieve success by appealing this decision to the courts," he said.

Even if proponents do ultimately obtain approval to circulate their petition for signatures, the initiative still faces a steep obstacle to getting on the ballot.

Constitutional measures such as this initiative must receive more than 117,500 valid signatures, about one-third more than initiatives that alter Oregon statutes.