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Opinion

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OUR VIEW

It's time to bring illegal immigrants in from the cold

Donald Trump has raised a lot of eyebrows with his comments on illegal immigration.

"When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. ... They're sending people that have lots of problems and they're bringing those problems with us," he said during his announcement that he was running for president. "They're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime, they're rapists, and some, I assume, are good people."

Trump was roundly criticized by the left, and by a fair number on the right who feared his harsh rhetoric might harm the eventual Republican nominee next fall. Business associates

dropped contracts with Trump as Hispanic groups and the Mexican government yelled for his head.

It looked as though Trump and his outsized ego would quickly become a footnote in the 2016 campaign. But then Kathryn Steinle, a 32-year-old woman, was shot to death by an illegal immigrant as she walked with her father on a pier in San Francisco.

Her accused assailant, Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez, has a history of drug-related felonies. He has been deported five times, and has returned five times.

Arrested this spring for selling marijuana, he was set free by San Francisco officials rather than being turned over to federal immigration officials to be

deported a sixth time.

"The crime is raging and it's violent," Trump told Fox News after the killing. "And if you talk about it, it's racist."

Trump's rhetoric is inflammatory. He's wrong on so many levels, but he's not entirely incorrect.

There are some 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States.

All have violated federal law by entering the country illegally. Millions have further submitted fake papers to employers.

More than 300,000 are classified by the U.S. government as "criminal aliens," having been arrested and convicted here or in their home country of a crime.

The vast majority have not committed other crimes, let alone violent felonies. They are regular people trying to escape intolerable conditions at home. Otherwise good people.

Probably.

We equivocate because we don't know who they are, or what they've done at home. The empathy we may feel for their situation, or the sincerity of their intentions does not, dare we say, trump the legitimate security concerns their presence raises.

It's time to bring these people in from the cold.

Congress must offer illegal immigrants temporary legal status and a path to permanent residency after 10 years if they meet strict

requirements — no prior felony convictions, no violations while awaiting residency, learning to speak English and pay a fine and back taxes. We think the border should be secured. A viable guestworker program must be established, and employers must verify the work status of their employees.

It's time we allow our neighbors to come out of the shadows and introduce themselves.

Once vetted, the country can fully appreciate their cultural and economic contributions, and they can enjoy both the responsibilities and benefits of legitimate residence.

And maybe we can put an end to the charged rhetoric.

OUR VIEW

A good year for the Oregon Legislature

It is common to find farmers and ranchers holding their breath and crossing all of their fingers and toes whenever the Oregon Legislature is in session.

That's because the state's best and brightest have, on occasion, fallen short of those qualities when it comes to agriculture. It seems some elected officials profess to know everything there is to know about farming — all evidence to the contrary aside.

That's why this year's legislative session is remarkable. While not perfect, the work product the legislature generated is worthy of praise.

Of particular note is the fact that compromise appears to have come back into vogue in the state Capitol. Not long ago, an "all-or-nothing" mindset dominated the political landscape, leaving innocent bystanders scratching their heads. Issues such as field burning were decided based as much on emotion as on science.

This year, the legislature ultimately rejected radical proposals that would have banned aerial applicators, restricted antibiotic use in livestock — the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is working

on that issue — and regulated genetically modified crops.

At the same time, legislators made good progress on difficult issues ranging from funding for much-needed water projects to helping neighboring farmers mediate disagreements that can arise over GMO crops.

Of particular note was the Legislature's approval of \$50 million for water development

projects. That includes about \$11 million for the pumps and equipment to provide water from the Columbia River to Umatilla Basin farms in Eastern Oregon. Though it's not full funding for the projects, it's certainly a good start.

The GMO mediation bill originally required farmers who refused mediation and then filed suit against their neighbors to pay court costs if they lost. When anti-GMO

activists objected to that language, a compromise was reached in which judges will consider the refusal when deciding on sanctions.

Among the other agriculture-related issues, the Legislature:

- Added \$14 million to Oregon State University's budget for agricultural extension and research. This allows administrators to significantly increase those efforts after nearly a decade of reductions.

- Tightened the regulation of aerial applicators, especially while spraying forestland, and set up a hotline for complaints.

- Protected farmers who offer agritourism activities such as hay rides from liability provided they post signs and are not found to be negligent.

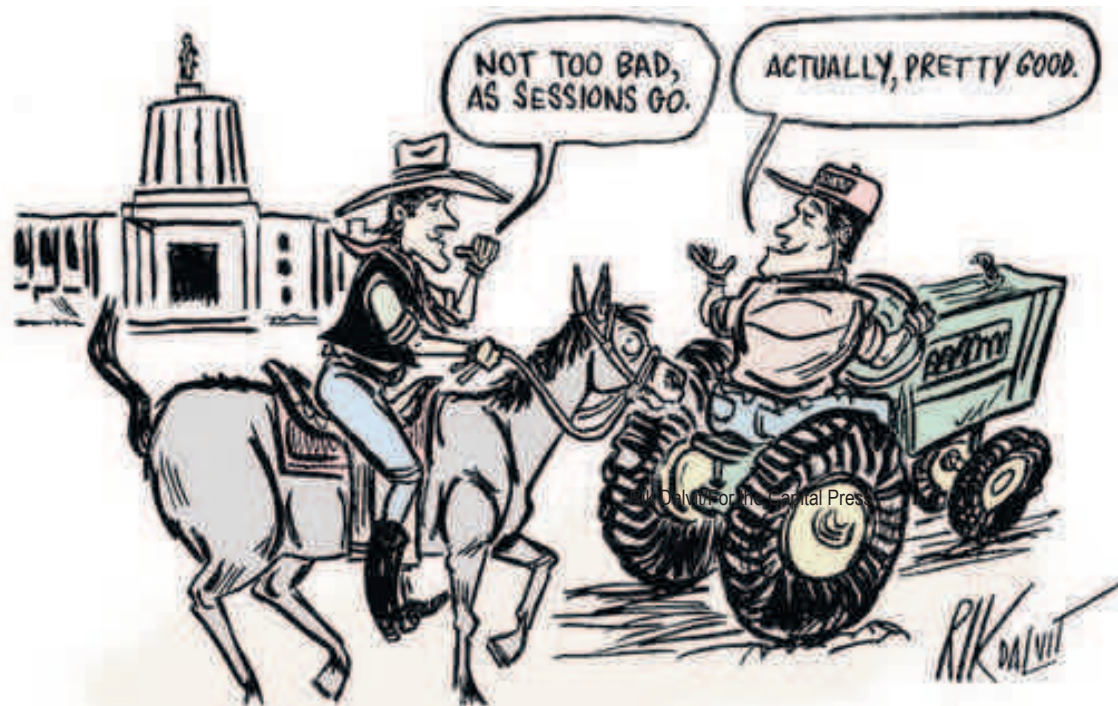
- Passed a bill that allows landowners to set up special assessment districts to fund USDA Wildlife Services, an agency that offers predator control.

- Extended research on canola in the Willamette Valley. This had been a highly contentious issue among seed growers, who argued canola could introduce new weeds and diseases into the area.

- Resolved a legal quandary in which state law had banned farmers selling raw milk from advertising. Legislators lifted the ban, which was unconstitutional, but left in place other restrictions on raw milk.

These bills allow Oregon's farmers to head back to their fields with the knowledge that the legislature did its best to find workable compromises on issues that are important to them.

The result is that farmers, and Oregonians, will come out ahead.



Wallowa-Whitman forest planning still underway

By TOM MONTOYA
For the Capital Press

Guest
comment
Tom Montoya



The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is well into summer mode. And that means the usual increase in forest activities, forest visitation and the opportunity to enjoy the seasonal splendor of the Blue Mountains.

As we approach the bustling summer season, I wanted to relay the status of ongoing planning projects here on the forest.

As most of you know, we are continuing to engage our communities on forest plan revision, focusing on several key topics that have been brought forward through formal public comments and continued public involvement. The forest will be participating in upcoming public engagement opportunities through assistance from local organizations including counties, tribes, members of the public and stakeholder groups.

We don't have all the meetings scheduled in the communities surrounding the Wallowa-Whitman, but are working hard on making sure our publics have an opportu-

nity to be a part of this dialogue on the Forest Plan Revision. So more information is coming soon about meetings in the area and how you can participate.

Secondly, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is continuing its efforts to complete Subpart A of travel management planning. Subpart A process is a science-based, interdisciplinary roads analysis at the forest level which will be documented in a Travel Analysis Report (TAR). It is important to understand that Subpart A is a process and not a decision with actions to be implemented. The TAR is a living document that displays findings as opportunities and recommendations to inform future management decisions. The TAR will support the objectives found in the current Wallowa-Whitman forest plan as amended.

The road system identified under the Subpart A analysis would: 1) be a baseline system

for Forest Service administration and management of natural resources across the forest; 2) consider long-term funding expectations; 3) describe potential options for roads not identified as necessary for future resource management needs; and 4) provide recommendations for roads where resource concerns have been identified as well as looking at those roads where we do not have concerns. Based on the analysis roads could be considered for a status change (opened, closed, decommissioned or converted to a motorized trail). These are only recommendations which would be considered as part of future project level decision-making.

The Wallowa-Whitman remains committed to completing the Subpart A analysis by this fall.

The forest has incorporated key public concerns raised during the public involvement process over the past 8 years. A preliminary draft TAR that addresses these concerns is currently undergoing review at our regional office.

Based on the review results, the forest will complete any updates or changes needed and the complete TAR will be

made available to the public and shared with our communities. It is also important to understand that the TAR is a living document that may be updated as needed in the future. This analysis is only providing road management suggestions for future site-specific planning efforts, and those site-specific planning efforts will be open for comment from the public prior to any decision.

I strongly encourage further public involvement during site specific project planning efforts when road management decisions will actually be made.

Many folks may recall that the forest previously prepared an environmental impact statement and Record of Decision for Subpart B of Travel Management. Subpart B is the process to actually designate the roads, trails and areas available for public motor vehicle use and publish in a motorized visitor use map. After careful consideration and recognizing intense community concerns, it was determined to withdraw the decision in early 2012.

In March, 2015, Jim Peña, Pacific Northwest regional forester, directed me, as for-

est supervisor for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, to defer any additional work required under Subpart B of the Travel Management Rule until after the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision is completed, with the following exceptions: Hell's Canyon National Recreation Area, Bald Angel and Sled Springs Travel Area decisions, to comply with court orders that resulted from past litigation, and complete implementation of the decision on the South Fork Burnt River Travel Planning Area.

In line with the regional direction, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest outside the above exceptions has paused Subpart B analysis until the forest plan revision is complete. Although the process is currently paused, we continue our efforts to develop and build trust and relationships with our communities, and when we resume work across the forest on the Subpart B analysis we hope to continue to work with you through both formal and informal engagements.

I recognize that travel management planning continues to generate considerable public interest and debate. I also know that forest access

is vital to sustaining the customs, culture and economic stability of the region and that there are also those who are concerned about the impact of the road system on natural resources.

Because of these concerns the forest remains committed and obligated to providing a safe, responsible and affordable transportation system that meets the needs of the natural resources and public. I understand that this process has been and continues to be challenging, but we look forward to innovative opportunities and creative solutions that result in meeting community needs, improving forest resource protection, all while meeting the intent of the agency's national policy.

Thank you for taking time to engage on these important issues, and I look forward to all of our community conversations.

Have a safe and enjoyable summertime in the splendid landscape of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

Tom Montoya is supervisor of the Wallowa Whitman National Forest in Eastern Oregon.