

KATY

Coba says goodbye to Department of Ag, but she isn't done with service to Oregon

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Paulette Pyle is a Reagan Republican and Katy — everyone calls her Katy — is a Robert Kennedy Democrat. But Pyle, who for many years was grass roots coordinator with the pro-industry Oregonians for Food and Shelter, loves Katy Coba.

When Pyle deemed The Oregonian newspaper was picking on Katy in its coverage of pesticide mishaps, she called a reporter with a rival publication to complain.

Because everybody loves Katy.

Not literally everybody, of course. Some in the media believe she's been a lax regulator of Oregon agriculture and some in activist groups believe she's too friendly to what they define as Big Ag. But it's fair to say most people who have dealt with her for more than a decade love Katy Coba.

"We do," Pyle said.

And as Coba leaves the Oregon Department of Agriculture after 13 years as director — she's both the first woman to hold the job and the longest-serving — people who make a living in farming, ranching and natural resources are bidding her bittersweet goodbyes.

They hate to see Coba leave the ag department, but they're pleased Gov. Kate Brown appointed her director of the state Department of Administrative Services and her administration's chief operating officer.

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Katy Coba, Oregon Department of Agriculture's outgoing director, stands in a wheat field near Pendleton, Ore.

Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

"I have two passions. One is agriculture, the other is public service. I believe in it. I'm concerned about the disconnect between citizens and government, between Oregonians and state government."

— Katy Coba



Courtesy of Katy Coba

Young Katy Thorne, right, greets Robert Kennedy when the presidential candidate made a stop at the Thorne family wheat ranch outside Pendleton, Ore., in 1968. Now Katy Coba, she credits her parents with putting Kennedy's beliefs into action and instilling a commitment to public service.



Courtesy of Oregon Department of Agriculture
Agriculture Director Katy Coba visits a dairy farm.



Capital Press File

Katy Coba speaks during Natural Resources Day at the Oregon Capitol in 2011. Oregon Farm Bureau President Barry Bushue looks on.

Forest Service disputes Humane Society's wolves claim

USFS: State didn't seek cancellation of forest grazing

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The Colville National Forest issued a statement Monday contradicting a claim by the national head of the Humane Society of the United States that state wildlife managers asked the Forest Service to cancel grazing to prevent conflicts between cattle and wolves.

In a Humane Society blog post Sept. 9, Wayne Pacelle,

the organization's president and CEO, wrote that the state Department of Fish and Wildlife "saw a problem brewing and asked the U.S. Forest Service to withdraw the grazing permit, but the federal agency rebuffed the request."

Through a forest spokesman, the Forest Service said it was not asked to pull permission to graze. The agency said it has been working with state officials and advisers to prevent wolves

from attacking livestock.

"There has been no request made by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife or the Washington Wolf Advisory Group to withdraw the grazing permit. The Colville National Forest will continue working closely with these organizations to help reduce predator/cattle conflicts," the Forest Service stated.

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Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Wolf advocates protest Sept. 1 in Olympia the shooting of wolves in the Colville National Forest. The U.S. Forest Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife dispute a claim by the president of the Humane Society of the United States that state wildlife managers asked the Forest Service to withdraw a grazing permit to prevent conflicts between wolves and livestock.

Maine monument's creation concerns Malheur County ranchers



Capital Press file photo

A sign posted in Jordan Valley opposes the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument in Malheur County, Ore. Jordan Valley is nearly surrounded by the proposed monument.

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

JORDAN VALLEY, Ore. — The president's recent creation of a national monument in Maine, despite local opposition, has Malheur County residents concerned.

Ranchers and other Malheur County residents formed the Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalition this year to fight a proposed 2.5 million-acre national monument in an area of the county known as the

Owyhee Canyonlands.

Malheur County residents voted 9-1 earlier this year in opposition to the proposal, which is being pushed by the Oregon Natural Desert Association, an environmental group in Bend, and Portland's Keen Footwear.

Monument opponents believe supporters will ask President Barack Obama to use his authority under the Antiquities Act to create the Malheur County monument.

On Aug. 24, Obama declared

87,500 acres of land in northeast Maine as the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument.

Residents who live near that site also opposed that plan, as did the state's governor, legislature and congressional delegation, according to the Washington Post.

"It does heighten the concern he's going to do it," Jordan Valley rancher Mark Mackenzie said about the Maine declaration.

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