

Trump's victory encourages Owyhee monument opponents

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

JORDAN VALLEY, Ore. — Some Eastern Oregon ranchers believe Donald Trump's victory makes it less likely that President Barack Obama will declare a national monument in Malheur County during his last months in office.

Ranchers in Malheur County formed the Owyhee Basin Stewardship Coalition earlier this year to fight a proposed 2.5 million-acre national monument, which would represent 40 percent of the county's land base.

The Owyhee Canyonlands monument is being pushed by the Oregon Natural Desert Association, an environmental group in Bend, and Portland's Keen Footwear.

Opponents believe supporters will ask Obama to use his authority under the Antiquities Act to create the monument.

Malheur County rancher and OBSC board member Elias Eiguren said the fact that many polls were so wrong about the presidential election gives him hope that there are a lot more people out there than anyone previously realized that support stances such as the one his group has taken.



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

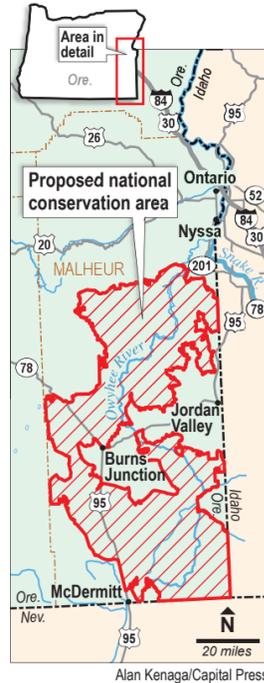
"I'm honestly more encouraged," he said about Trump's victory. "I think ... we have a lot more support than we even know. It's just a matter of getting the word out there about what's happening."

He said the thought has entered his mind that a nearing Trump presidency could cause monument supporters to increase the pressure because they see their window closing.

"That thought certainly crossed my mind but the manner in which the (victory) happened gives me a lot

of hope," Eiguren said. "I don't think the president is going to see this as a good thing to do. I think it would be distasteful for him to do it because of what the voters said."

Jordan Valley rancher Mark Mackenzie said he's not 100 percent convinced that Obama won't designate the national monument in his waning days in office but he also believes the American people sent a strong message that they are not happy with the way the federal government and bureaucrats are acting.



He's also encouraged by Trump's promise to roll back some of Obama's executive orders, rules and regulations.

"Trump made it very clear he is going to roll back those presidential orders and proclamations," he said. "That should be enough to deter (Obama)."



Customers shop for produce at the Boise Farmers' Market in August. A Boise State University poll of 1,000 people in Idaho's Treasure Valley area shows strong support for agriculture.

Poll shows strong urban support for Idaho agriculture

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — A Boise State University poll shows that residents of Idaho's largest urban area consider agriculture to be the Treasure Valley's most important economic sector.

The poll results come as somewhat of a welcome surprise considering the Treasure Valley area of southwestern Idaho is dominated by the Boise area, where the majority of people are assumed by many farmers to not have a strong understanding or appreciation of agriculture.

But the poll shows otherwise.

When asked which sector is most important to the Treasure Valley economy, 24.8 percent said agriculture, which ranked first, ahead of small business (18 percent) and hi-tech (17.2 percent).

"I was a little bit surprised by the results," said Corey Cook, dean of BSU's School of Public Policy, which conducted 1,000 phone interviews with Treasure Valley residents on a variety of subjects. "I think most of us would have thought tech would have come in first."

The poll included interviews with people from different parts of the valley.

Agriculture scored highest in Canyon County, which includes Nampa and Caldwell and is closer to the heart of farm country. But ag also fared well in Ada County, which includes Boise and Meridian, the state's two most populous cities.

"Even in the city of Boise, ag was right up there," Cook said.

Agriculture accounts for

a large chunk of the valley's economy when its secondary impacts are included, and a lot of people obviously are aware of that, Cook said.

"From that perspective, it's not surprising," he said of the results. "I think obviously they got it right."

When asked which should be a top priority in the Treasure Valley, increasing affordable housing or preserv-

ing farmland, 57.2 percent of respondents chose preserving farmland, compared with 32.2 percent who supported creating more affordable housing.

Those results would be expected in other parts of Idaho, "but to see that in the Treasure Valley says a lot," Cook said. "That was a pretty stark response."

In Nampa, 71.1 percent favored preserving farmland over affordable housing but even in Boise, which is by far Idaho's largest city, 50.4 percent favored it while 39.4 percent chose affordable housing.

Treasure Valley farmers were pleasantly surprised by the results.

"As a farmer, it makes me feel good that all the long hours and risk we take to raise a crop is appreciated by the public," said Meridian farmer Drew Eggers. "I sure feel good about that."

Nampa farmer Janie Burns, who is helping lead the effort to try to stem the rapid loss of ag ground in parts of the valley, said the results are encouraging.

"It's so great to have members of the public interested in preserving farmland," she said. "It shows there is a lot of public interest in the subject."

"As a farmer, it makes me feel good that all the long hours and risk we take to raise a crop is appreciated by the public."

Drew Eggers,
Meridian farmer

Oregon farmers see Christmas tree shortage

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Retailers across the U.S. are coming to an uncomfortable realization as the holiday season approaches.

The abundant supply of Christmas trees they've come to expect in recent years has turned into a shortage.

"They didn't realize how quickly we had rolled over to an undersupply," said Bob Schaefer, CEO of Noble Mountain Tree Farm near Salem, Ore.

While farmers are benefiting from higher prices, the shortage has sparked concerns of market share loss to artificial trees.

The industry won't be able to quickly ramp up production because trees typically spend two years in the nursery before being planted in the field, Schaefer said.

The problem is aggravated by insufficient recent seed crops, he said.

For Noble firs, the most popular tree species, an adequate supply of seedlings may not be available until 2019, Schaefer said.

The immediate impact is on prices.

Trees are selling for 8 per-



Workers load Christmas trees onto a truck at Noble Mountain Tree Farm near Salem, Ore. Farmers are reporting a tree shortage that has driven up prices this year.

cent to 15 percent more than last year, Schaefer said. Noble firs are selling for roughly \$28 while Douglas firs are selling for up to \$18, he said.

In terms of supply, the shortage isn't so severe that retailers will end up with empty tree lots, said Betty Malone, co-owner of Sunrise Tree Farm near Philomath, Ore.

"I think everybody will get something, just maybe not the species or size they want," Malone said.

Much of the shortage was caused by farmers getting out of the tree business during the recent glut, which depressed prices, she said.

Between 2010 and 2015, the number of Christmas tree growers dropped more than 30 percent, from 699 to 485, according to Oregon Department of Agriculture data.

Tree sales in Oregon plummeted 26 percent during that time, from 6.4 million trees to 4.7 million trees, according to

a survey by USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Meanwhile, farmers were planting fewer trees than they were selling.

About 3.7 million trees were planted in 2015, down from 5.6 million in 2010, according to USDA NASS.

"A lot of people got burned in the last decade," said Casey Grogan, whose family owns Silver Bells Christmas Tree Farm near Silverton, Ore.

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