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# Opinion

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## OUR VIEW

# Wetland banks make good business sense, sometimes

Wetland is near the top of the list of four-letter words for many farmers and ranchers. Its mere mention can strike terror in the heart of some farmers who find themselves at the wrong end of a federal or state regulation. Lawsuits over what is, and isn't, a wetland have found their way to the highest court in the land.

In general, the less farmers hear the word wetland, the happier they are.

In recent years an innovative concept has been developed that allows some farmers to put their wetlands to work. Wetlands mitigation banks are simple in concept. Farmers or other landowners can set aside a "bank"



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Chronically flooded land along the Coweeman River near Kelso, Wash., is being converted into wetlands that will yield "credits" for developers to buy to offset wetlands lost to development.

of wetlands. When a developer, county road department or someone else needs to build on a

wetland somewhere else in that same watershed, he can purchase a wetland credit from the bank.

Credits, which are about an acre, can cost anywhere from \$150,000 to nearly \$1 million, depending on the watershed.

The bank owner then guarantees the wetlands will be protected.

The setup, which is used in many states, is an example of how a marketplace — in this case buying and selling credits — can preserve wetlands.

There are pluses and minuses to wetland banks. The idea that agricultural land would be converted from production to a non-productive wetlands is disturbing. That's why it's important that only appropriate lands be used. In the case of a new

bank in southwest Washington, the Columbia River had flooded the land three times and it was a battle just to keep it usable as pasture.

That prevented the owners from converting the land to other productive agricultural uses.

Other wetland banks have been created by breaching dikes that protect farmland. Such conversions are unattractive to us, since productive farmland is already disappearing fast enough without turning it into wetlands.

Under the right circumstances — as is the case with land that is chronically flooded — setting up a wetland bank makes sense. But otherwise, a wetland bank likely won't benefit agriculture.

## OUR VIEW

# Zinke asks key questions about Cascade-Siskiyou monument

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke played his cards fairly close to the vest last weekend when he visited the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon and Northern California.

The original 53,000-acre monument was created in 2000, but last year President Obama added roughly 47,000 acres.

It's one of 27 national monuments created in the last two decades that are under review by the Trump administration.

Zinke's recommendation to the president for potential changes to the Cascade-Siskiyou monument's boundaries is due Aug. 23. We're unlikely to find out what that recommendation will be until Zinke reports to the boss. He didn't say while in Oregon.

But he did drop some hints.

Most intriguing of all: Zinke says he can't find anyone at the Department of Interior willing to admit to having set the boundaries of last year's expansion, or who can explain how the decision was reached.

That's interesting. If the administrative state within the Interior Department accepts that the biodiversity of the region is so unique that it deserves special protections — and Zinke is willing to accept that — it should be easy for them to explain their justification. Why these 47,000 acres in particular?

It's an important question to ranchers who now find their private land encircled by the national monument, and who worry about their grazing allotments on what was national forestland.

Critics of the monument say they've seen the economic damage caused by the original designation, leading them to expect similar restrictions on grazing and logging within the expanded boundary — despite assurances to the contrary.

Zinke said any changes to the national monument would be based on science — which areas contain watersheds, plants, animals, soils and geological features that should be protected. He is also examining how the boundaries affect traditional economic uses, such as grazing and timber, as well as recreational uses, including hiking, snowmobiling and horseback riding. That makes sense.

Those who opposed the expansion can take some comfort in the fact that Zinke is a proponent of multiple-use of federal lands. That's what supporters of the expansion are afraid of.

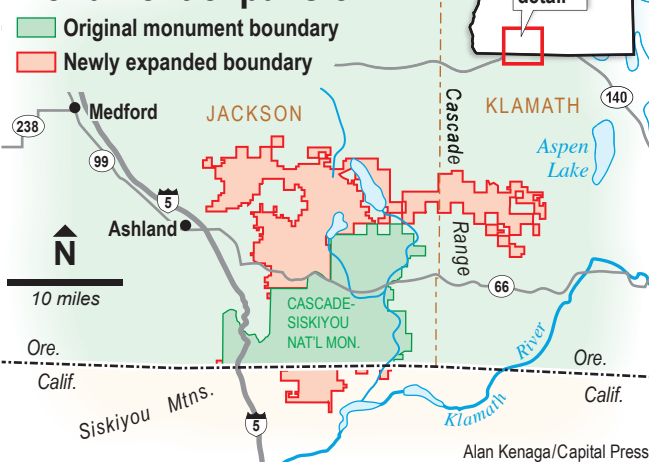
They should not worry. The 47,000 acres added to the Cascade-Siskiyou were public lands before the expansion, and will remain public lands should the boundaries be altered. They will enjoy the protections that have preserved them for more than a century.



Associated Press

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke

## Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument expansion



Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

## Readers' views

### Congress should support renewable energy goals

As an elected official, I understand the challenges (and the pressures) of complex policymaking, where we must represent diverse interests and balance all perspectives. But that's exactly why Oregonians have asked us to do this job. Sometimes, we must

examine the larger picture to make the right decision, whether it's here at home or in Washington, D.C.

One such topic is the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS), a bipartisan policy that promotes competition at the gas pump from home-grown biofuels, including those produced right here in the Beaver State. It has and will continue to deliver significant benefits to our economy and environment

in Oregon and across the United States.

While there's no shortage of opinions about the RFS, there's no debate that clean fuels are helping to deliver savings at the pump for consumers. And because they compete against foreign oil, biofuels increase American energy security.

I encourage Congressman Greg Walden and his colleagues to recognize that any legislative or reg-

ulatory changes to the RFS would be disruptive to a program that is currently working. When so many other policies are in flux, consumers and American businesses need to have a stable energy sector. Please reject pressures to undermine the RFS and protect current renewable energy goals.

Craig Pope  
Polk County Commissioner  
Monmouth Ore.

# Organization responds to vexing cattle market

By JERRY EFFERTZ  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Jerry Effertz



It hasn't been smooth sailing for the beef cattle industry over the past year. For its part, the cattle market has certainly been aggravating. As a beef producer I know the limitations of what any of us at the ranch level can do individually to fully control profitability and assure that the bottom line has more black ink on it than red.

Our industry organizations must not only be aware of those limitations, but be on the lookout for ways that damaging outside influences can be mitigated. Recently the Federation of State Beef Councils did just that, dipping into its reserve funds to support national and international promotion programs that would help increase demand for beef.

The federation allocated more than \$1.2 million from its reserve funds over the last nine months for this effort. These dollars come from state beef council boards who voluntarily remit part of their half of the \$1-per-head beef checkoff to be used at the national and international levels. State board members recognize that beef production states without large population centers benefit from spending their checkoff dollars where most beef consumers live.

The promotions were conducted during a time of high protein production that put significant pressures on the cattle market. One of the efforts was a campaign conducted by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff Program, to drive nationwide sales of fresh beef at retail.

That promotion is based on a program called Ibotta, a mobile shopping app with a subscriber rate of 22 million consumers, mostly millennials. The partnership gave consumers the chance to engage with educational information about beef and then unlock a small cash-back rebate for any ground beef product at any store, nationwide. The Beef Checkoff Program paid for the rebates of verified sales.

Results from the effort significantly surpassed standard Ibotta campaigns. The redemption rate for ground beef was nearly 40 percent; the average Ibotta redemption rate is 23 percent. More than 1.45 million consumers unlocked the beef rebate and

saw beef content, such as videos, recipes and messages, and more than 576,000 redeemed the rebates. In just four weeks more than 631,000 pounds of ground beef were sold.

Many state beef councils contributed additional funding to promote the campaign to consumers in their markets. They helped drive traffic to the app and create broader visibility for beef. The total value of the Ibotta campaign is estimated to be more than \$4.4 million.

But that's only half of it. International promotion funded through the federation allocation and conducted by the U.S. Meat Export Federation, another checkoff contractor, helped move more than a million incremental pounds of beef in Japan and Korea. Among the efforts was a push to have chilled U.S. beef replace Australian beef at all Costco outlets in Korea — which came to full fruition in May 2017. This was accomplished through USMEF trainings, sampling demonstrations, regular visits and meetings to build relationships, and more. It means an incremental increase of over 33 million pounds, which will increase the total U.S. market share in Korea by about 3-4 percent.

These results are gratifying, but obviously only a small portion of what the state and national checkoff-funded partnership does daily to help increase consumer acceptance of and demand for beef in the United States and abroad. I'm proud of the work my fellow beef producer volunteer leaders have done to oversee these kinds of efforts, and the staffs that carry out the programs. And I'm especially proud of all cattle producers who make this work possible through their \$1-per-head checkoff investments.

*Jerry Effertz is a third-generation cattle producer who with his wife, Norma, operates Black Butte Acres Limousin Ranch, raising seedstock cattle and backgrounding feeder calves near Velva, N.D. He is chairman of the Federation of State Beef Councils.*

## Letters policy

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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.

Send letters via email to opinions@capitalpress.com. Emailed letters are preferred and require less time to process, which could result in quicker publication. Letters also may be sent to P.O. Box 2048, Salem, OR 97308; or by fax to 503-370-4383.