

Trump administration decision 'could simplify or moot the issues'

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The Association of O&C Counties and the American Forest Resource Council both filed complaints against the expansion, arguing the national monument can't include federal property that's dedicated to timber harvest.

Those cases were stayed after the Trump administration decided to review the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and others created in the past two decades.

During the summer, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke submitted recommendations implying the monument should be reduced by roughly

16,600 acres that were previously open to logging under resource management plans.

The Association of O&C Counties is dissatisfied with this proposal, since Zinke did not address the inclusion of more than 35,000 acres of so-called O&C Lands in the monument.

O&C Lands were once granted to a railroad but then repossessed by the federal government and devoted to logging, with Western Oregon counties receiving a portion of the timber revenues.

The counties' lawsuit against the federal government should be re-activated since their fundamental problem would not be resolved under the

recommendations delivered during the summer, according to the Association of O&C Counties.

"Since that time, however, the Secretary has completed his review and submitted his final report to the President and there is no clear prospect of relief. If anything, the opposite is true," the group said in a court brief.

The American Forest Resource Council likewise argued that its lawsuit might as well be resumed since it won't be mooted by anything other than a complete reversal of the expansion.

"This inevitableness means that a stay only kicks the metaphorical

can down the road, while continuing to worsen the harmful impacts the Monument expansion is having on the timber industry," according to AFRC's court brief.

The timber group claims the monument's expansion has effectively shut down timber harvests that were planned for the next 10 years in the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Klamath Falls Resource Area.

"Timber on federal lands is highly regulated, and the sudden evaporation of millions of board feet of timber in one resource area is not easily absorbed in another area that is under similar sustainable management," the brief said.

Attorneys for the federal government said it "simply is not accurate" that timber harvests have completely ceased in the region, noting the expansion did not cancel timber sales that were already approved.

Delaying the litigation until Dec. 1 would prevent the court from wasting resources, since the Trump administration may reach a decision that "could simplify or moot the issues."

Senior U.S. District Judge Richard Leon sided with the government in both cases and agreed to prolong the stay until Dec. 1, when the parties will submit a joint report on the status of the litigation.

CAHNRS faculty members are evaluated annually

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"I think they do feel industry is calling all the shots (and) shared governance has been compromised," Potts said. The AAUP considers shared governance to be a "shared responsibility among ... governing boards, administrations and faculties" for running the university.

Several current and former faculty members spoke with the Capital Press about the issue.

Breeding dispute

Nnadozie Oraguzie, a former WSU sweet cherry breeder, says the Washington State Tree Fruit Research Commission pulled its funding of \$180,000 per year until he provided a strategic plan for his breeding program. Oraguzie submitted a plan after checking it with his supervisors at WSU's Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Prosser.

Oraguzie said the industry set the direction, and he did everything it wanted him to do.

"They'd say, 'This is what we want you to do,' and if you don't do what they want you to do, of course you're setting yourself up for not getting any funding," he said. "It's not about what they want me to do that I'm not doing."

Oraguzie said CAHNRS leaders directed him to get the funding back from the commission.

Former research commission manager Jim McFerson is now the director of WSU's Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center in Wenatchee. He told the Capital Press the sweet cherry breeding program was then in the process of being re-established. He said progress wasn't being made quickly enough on fundamentals, the steps before plant selection, breeding progress or new varieties.

"Things gradually got better, but they were never at a level that was viewed as sufficient," he said. "This is growers' money. We know it's a long-term investment; no one expects a new variety in five years, for God's sake, but there is an expectation, as with any program, that the aspects of the program will be run ... acceptably. The program never really ran as efficiently and effectively as the committees felt it should."

The commission communicated its concerns on a regular basis through the breeding program advisory committee and to WSU and Prosser staff, McFerson said.

The commission and industry do not get involved in personnel matters at the university, McFerson said, adding that the commission only comments on projects it funds. Oraguzie's program received the same level of communication and concern as other commission-funded projects, he said.

Oraguzie said CAHNRS administrators at the time told him if he stayed at WSU, he'd face three to four years of reviews that would be posted online for anyone to see. His other option was to resign and receive six months' salary. Oraguzie chose the second option.

Oraguzie left the university in 2016 after eight years, and is applying for professor or scientist positions around the U.S.

"I think this is all about money," Oraguzie said. "The industry is dictating what to do. If the industry says, 'We don't like somebody,' WSU



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Ron Mittelhammer, dean of CAHNRS: "... We can't lose sight of the fact that every faculty member is ultimately an employee and has an obligation to be accountable to the taxpayers of Washington and other funders that provide funds for their salaries and operations."



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Washington State University wheat researcher Kulvinder Gill. He questions how administrators handled his research and breeding projects.

has to comply. They don't want to lose the money they're getting from industry."

Administrators blamed

Kulvinder Gill, a wheat geneticist at WSU, blames CAHNRS administrators for damaging his connections with industry members who provided funding for his research.

He was hired as Vogel Endowed Chair in 2002, funded by the Washington Grain Commission. The commission decided to end his funding in 2014, even though his research on Clearfield wheat varieties was going well, he said. No clear reason was given, Gill said.

He believes CAHNRS administrators misled the commission, telling the organization he was not working with other wheat breeders. CAHNRS asked him to give his material to other wheat breeders to finish his varieties, he said. Gill refused, thinking it was an inappropriate request.

"I didn't think that was the right strategy for my varieties, so I decided to finish those myself," he said.

A CAHNRS administrator asked him to step down from the endowed chair. Gill refused, as that was the position he was hired to fill. After Gill refused, CAHNRS reviewed the endowment. Gill doesn't consider the review valid, since he received no questions after his presentation.

"They took the endowment away even though my (yearly) evaluations were really good, varieties were coming along, the research part was going well," Gill said.

Gill also received additional funding from the commission for his projects. He said

he was doing better than the objectives he had promised.

"They tried to push me out as hard as they could," he said of the CAHNRS administration.

Gill elected to remain at WSU and develop his varieties without commission funding.

"That's why we named this recent variety Resilience, even though we had zero funding, no support from CAHNRS and no support from the grain commission," he said.

Gill is now developing wheat varieties that better tolerate warm weather, using funding from a \$16 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development, now in its fifth year, and the government of India.

Gill said he has no problem with the grain commission or its members.

Gill said CAHNRS administrators need to be fair, even if they don't like him or his research process. He believes evaluations are used as a punishment.

"They have not been fair to me, at least," he said. "I'm learning I'm not the only one. They should not be targeting people. I still say I deserve justice. I was badly treated and wrongly treated. If I was not performing, then taking everything away from me makes sense. If I can develop these varieties without any support, imagine what I can do with support."

Research mission

Mittelhammer, the CAHNRS dean, points to WSU's mission as a land-grant university.

"I'll admit sometimes we're at cross-purposes with



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Randy Fortenbery, small grains economist at Washington State University. Conflicts can arise at almost every university, particularly in times of political turmoil, declining resources and controversial public policy issues, he said.

faculty who oppose getting input from others, but we can't lose sight of the fact that every faculty member is ultimately an employee and has an obligation to be accountable to the taxpayers of Washington and other funders that provide funds for their salaries and operations," he said.

Potts, of the AAUP, believes the industry should have some say, but said faculty members were hired by the university to conduct research broadly.

"I think it's dangerous to let them have all of the say," she said. "It's dangerous to say just because industry doesn't appreciate them at the moment that they no longer deserve to be employed."

Mittelhammer agrees on that point.

"The industry should have some say; they should not have the only say," he said.

In cases where a "problematic" faculty member is considered for tenure, the case should go before a faculty status committee of their peers, Potts said. In some cases, a committee refused to hear the faculty member's case, she said.

CAHNRS faculty members are evaluated annually by a career guidance committee and in their fifth year by a promotion and tenure advisory committee. Tenure and a promotion are normally granted in the sixth year. Faculty are evaluated by tenured peers in the department, at least four tenured faculty members from "peer institutions," the CAHNRS promotion and tenure committee and the provost's promotion and tenure advisory committee.

CAHNRS faculty evaluations are "rigorous," "fair,"



Dan Wheat/Capital Press File

Jim McFerson, former manager of the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission in Wenatchee.

mission funds about \$2 million in research projects each year, with \$1.6 million going to CAHNRS researchers and \$455,000 to USDA researchers in Pullman, including the Western Wheat Quality Laboratory.

In deciding which research to fund, the commission has a pre-proposal meeting to discuss possible projects and offer feedback or ask questions, he said. Then, at a research review, scientists make a final project proposal to commissioners, county Washington Association of Wheat Growers representatives and other farmers.

If farmers feel a project isn't working, they'll decide not to fund it, Squires said.

The nine-member Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission funded or oversaw funding for 43 research projects under the direction of 22 WSU researchers working on apples, cherries, pears and stone fruit, for a total of \$2.66 million in the 2017 funding cycle, said Mike Willett, now the commission manager. Commission members are growers appointed by the state's fruit and apple commissions, and the state agriculture director appoints a pear grower.

The industry identifies priority areas and solicits proposals from scientists.

"We assume that when a researcher writes a proposal for us, they've identified that those are the objectives they feel they can meet given what they understand about the field of study and what they feel they can do in the period of time in the project," he said.

Neither commission has a say over tenure or employment, Squires and Willett said, adding that those decisions fall to the university.

Willett said the commission is satisfied with the work WSU researchers are doing, as evidenced by a 2013 decision to double its research assessment to set up a \$32 million endowment for tree fruit research.

McFerson, the former commission manager, said he too is sensitive to the potential for micromanaging by the industry.

"The bottom line is, scientists can choose not to apply (or) choose to apply for funding, and if you're funded to do a project, those are the objectives," he said. "If you're not making progress, funding doesn't happen by magic."

Randy Fortenbery, a small grains economist at WSU, said he doesn't know about specific complaints raised by other faculty, but he has never felt pressure to provide a specific research result.

Such conflicts arise at almost every university, particularly in times of political turmoil, declining resources and controversial public policy issues, he said.

"There's also the issue of how people communicate (about) their research and whether or not their message is being received in the way they intended it to be," he said.

However faculty members are evaluated, Fortenbery said the process must be transparent.

"I think there's always room for additional transparency, but these are also personnel issues, so there's some things that, by law or university mandate, can't always be completely discussed out in the open among everybody," he said.

Commission funding

The federal and state governments provide the lion's share of funding for CAHNRS, but commodity commissions provide a significant portion of the college's research budget. The CAHNRS 2018 fiscal year budget is \$98.5 million, \$41.2 million of which goes specifically to the college's office of research.

The Washington Grain Commission funds 28 research projects conducted by 36 WSU scientists and 19 USDA Agricultural Research Service scientists devoted to wheat, said Glen Squires, commission CEO. The com-