

Business & Ag

Lands access: Commissioners meet with Forest Service management

• MAP ACCURACY AT ISSUE

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The Baker County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Wednesday, April 29, at 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse, the focus of which was a discussion with the United States Forest Service (USFS), regarding the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF) Travel Management Plan (TMP) and other issues.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioner Mark Bennett, Commissioner Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Present representing the USFS were WWNF Supervisor Tom Montoya, WWNF Natural Resource Staff Officer Larry Sandoval, WWNF Environmental Coordinator Cindy Christensen, and WWNF Whitman District Ranger Jeff Tomac.

Attendees included Wanda and Tork Ballard, Ken Anderson, Ed Hardt, Marshall McComb, Gary Dielman, Lorrie Harvey, Alice Knapp, Suzette and Art Sappington, Jan Kerns, Ron Edge, Brenda Holly and Bobbie Danser.

The first part of the informal session involved a discussion between the Board and the USFS team, and Harvey explained this process to the attendees. The second part involved a discussion between the attendees, the team and the Board.

Bennett discussed with the team issues associated with the Existing Condition Road Maps, related to the TMP, and said much work has been completed by Anderson and Hardt, compiling Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477) maps, to aid in the effort. RS 2477 was enacted in 1866 by the U.S. Congress, which granted to counties and states a right-of-way across federal land, when a highway was built.

The Board emphasized the need for the USFS and the County to have the same base maps, with the same scale, in the same format, and with a high level of accuracy. Bennett said there is a lot of confusion.

Christensen said the focus of the current effort is what the existing



Todd Arriola / The Baker County Press

Representatives from the WWNF at left met with the three County Commissioners (at right) Wednesday.

conditions of the roads are. Montoya said the best way to accomplish the accuracy desired is to sit down with the maps, and determine the conditions, road by road, in order to clear up some issues.

Harvey asked Montoya if this idea could be implemented, and Montoya said yes.

Kerns asked Montoya about his background working with communities and counties before, and Montoya began discussing his travel management plan experience in 2006, as a district ranger in Idaho, and then in Nevada, from 2008-2011. He said these were positive experiences, and in Nevada, 90% of the roads were identified.

Hardt asked Montoya whether a washed out road in the Jarbidge River area was rebuilt, a major concern of Hardt's, and Montoya said that it had been completed to the camp ground in the area. Hardt discussed the 1872 mining laws and RS 2477, and expressed concerns about road closures.

Hardt asked Tomac about smaller logging operations opportunities associated with bug infestation, and Tomac responded that there are difficulties with the amount of acreage and whether to complete projects of that type through the U.S. Farm Bill, or via another method.

Montoya was asked by an attendee whether there's a demand for logs from the regional timber industry, to which Montoya replied there is. He explained that there is a demand from industry in Oregon, Idaho and Washington.

Tork Ballard asked Christensen about TMP

alternatives Baker County submitted, and she said that survey results had been placed on the Existing Condition Road Maps. Ballard expressed concerns about using that information as-is, and Christensen said the input requested was whether a road was still being used. Ballard voiced concern again, stating that with a large number of individuals surveying the roads, there would be conflict with opinions about what roads were still being used.

Harvey asked Christensen about opportunities to go over the maps again before a final decision, because having the public gather information about road use is a monumental task, and she responded that there will be, to attempt to eliminate issues.

Wanda Ballard asked Tomac why the Baker City watershed isn't a high priority, stating it's a disaster waiting to happen. Tomac responded that the City and County watersheds are high priorities, but it's very difficult and costly to complete projects in the areas, considering the terrain and other issues. He said the officially designated watershed for Baker City is an area of 10,000 acres, with additional acreage.

Ron Edge expressed criticisms to the Board about the litigation between the County and Columbia Basin Helicopters, Inc., initiated by the previous Commission, but he said he's pleased with the efforts of the current Commissioners.

Danser asked Christensen about road condition surveys, and Christensen said that an accurate map is desired, and infor-

mation about what conditions the roads are in.

Sappington discussed some issues with the team and the Board, including road closures, maintenance of roads, and forest timber access. He explained that he sent a letter with his concerns to Regional Forester Jim Peña, and Montoya said that Sappington should receive a response to that letter soon. Harvey asked Sappington to continue to follow up with the USFS, and to send the Board a copy of that letter.

Anderson commented to the team about the importance of mining resources, access to those resources, and granted mining rights. He talked about land use legal issues, but also discussed some solutions to those, which would streamline processes and improve the economy.

Bennett said that the roles and leadership of the Baker County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) should be established by the committee by the next regular Commission session, which is next Wednesday, May 6.

Jan Kerns commented that at the earliest public meeting (next session), she would like to discuss that topic with the Board. Kerns, the current Chair of NRAC, explained that there are 18 members of that committee, and that the newer and less experienced members need to be brought up to speed concerning laws, regulations, and terminology.

The next session is a regular, bi-monthly session, scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 2015, at 9 a.m.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, April 24, 2015 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week. Trade activity and demand picked up slightly this week. The continued good weather in several areas of Oregon has slowed down demand, as pasture grasses are growing causing end users to be able to turn animals out on pasture rather than purchase and feed additional hay. Export hay business seems to slowly be picking up, however continued issues with few containers available and backup of containers needing to be loaded at the shipping ports continues to slow down the ability to export hay overseas. Most producers have sold all that they plan to sell for this season.

Eastern Oregon: No new sales confirmed.

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, April 22, 2015

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 681

Steer Calves

300-400# Bulk 262.00-308.00 Top 310.00
400-500# Bulk 277.00-305.00 Top 310.00
500-600# Bulk 253.00-278.00 Top 281.00

Heifer Calves

300-400# Bulk 247.00-263.00 Top 270.00
400-500# Bulk 233.00-257.00 Top 265.00
500-600# Bulk 214.00-249.00 Top 254.00

Yearling Steers

600-700# Bulk 224.00-253.00 Top 258.00
700-800# Bulk 194.00-212.00 Top 217.00
800-900# Bulk N/A Top N/A
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

Yearling Heifers

600-700# Bulk 204.00-231.00 Top 235.50
700-800# Bulk 184.00-212.00 Top 218.50
800-900# Bulk 166.00-181.00 Top 188.00
900-1,000# Bulk 154.00-169.00 Top 173.00

Thin Shelly Cows 82.00 - 93.00
Butcher Cows 95.00 - 107.00
Butcher Bulls 104.00 - 123.00
Stock Cows Yng. 1275.00 - 1900.00
Younger Hfirts. 114.00 - 146.00
Pairs B.M. - 1475.00 - 2200.00

ProducersLivestock.com

541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Doug Fir is \$415.00/mbf
White fir is \$365.00/mbf
Ponderosa Pine is brought sold on diameter splits
6 to 11 inch dib \$300 to \$310/MBF
12 to 17 inch dib \$350 to \$375/MBF
18 to 23 inch dib \$400 to \$430/MBF
24 inch plus dib \$450 to \$500/MBF

DIB is diameter inside bark at small end of log.
MBF is thousand board feet lumber, net scale.
People interested in selling logs should call and get specific quotes from saw mills.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1200.90

Silver: \$16.57

Platinum: \$1,155.63

Palladium: \$776.85

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$363.25/bu/USD

Wheat: \$477.00/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$979.25/bu/USD

Oats: \$241.00 bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$10.27/cwt/USD

Canola: \$449.20 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$151.13/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$213.88/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$79.90/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com

Wolf delisting one option

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission decided to direct staff to develop two options for delisting wolves from the state Endangered Species Act: one that would delist wolves in eastern Oregon (boundary Hwys 97-20-395) and one that would delist wolves statewide. The state's Wolf Plan calls for initiating a process to delist wolves from the state Endangered Species Act when Oregon reaches the objective of four breeding pairs for three consecutive years in eastern Oregon. This objective was met in early 2015.

"This is a success story," said Russ Morgan, ODFW Wolf Coordinator in his presentation of the Biological Status Review. "Not very many years ago, we had no known wolves in Oregon. Now we not only have wolves, but the population is healthy and growing."

Much of the public testimony was against a delisting, and Commissioners noted that the option of no action also remained on the table.

Commission Chair Finley said a final proposal may not be available until the fall.

Firewood permits on sale

Firewood permits for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will go on sale May 1. Personal-use firewood permits can be purchased for \$5 per cord, with a four cord minimum and a 10-cord maximum. Personal-use firewood permits will be available at Forest Service offices and at several local vendors beginning May 1. Commercial firewood permits are only available at Ranger District Offices.

Vendors will sell firewood permits in 4-cord packets. An additional vendor fee, up to \$2, will be charged for each 4-cord, \$20 firewood permit pur-

chased at a local vendor.

Firewood cutters will be required to keep a record of the date, time, and quantity of firewood removed. There is a chart on the front of the permit called the "Product Quantity Removal Record." This requirement will be enforced. Additional information can be found in the Firewood Guide that accompanies each permit.

Firewood cutters are required to carry an axe, a shovel, an 8 oz. capacity or larger fire extinguisher, and have their chainsaw equipped with an approved spark arrester.