

Local

Commissioners receive public lands resolution

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Baker County Commissioners received a submission Tuesday from the Baker County Republican Party, regarding the Public Lands Resolution that group passed 18-6 at its last meeting, according to the email from Chair Suzan Ellis Jones, which accompanied that resolution.

Commissioners Mark Bennett and Bill Harvey responded by thanking Jones for the submission. Bennett indicated that they could now proceed to look at the resolution as it had been presented by a citizen group.

The local resolution follows in the footsteps of another resolution already passed by Klamath County Commissioners as well as the Republican National Committee.

Two years ago, The Baker County Republicans submitted a Second Amendment Resolution to the County, which was adopted as a County resolution, albeit with modifications to the original. The Republicans hope Commissioners, similarly, will adopt this new resolution on a county level.

“Utah State Representative Ken Ivory and American Lands Council worked with us all the way on the wording of this resolution,” said Chair Suzan Ellis Jones.

Last year, Ivory came to Baker City and gave a six-hour seminar on Constitutional Law and the history of public lands in America.

Both Bennett and Harvey attended and praised Ivory’s presentation at the time.

The return of public lands to more local control is also a plank in the Oregon Republican Party’s platform.

Last month, a Federal subcommittee was launched to address the subject.

The full text of the Baker County Republican Central Committee Resolution number 15-01 is:

WHEREAS, the United States government has direct management responsibility for roughly between 635 and 640 million acres of land; and

WHEREAS, this acreage amounts to 28% of the 2.27 billion acres of land contained in the United States; and

WHEREAS, federally controlled land is concentrated in the West, comprising 62% of Alaska, and 47% of the eleven contiguous western states combined; and

WHEREAS, the federal government only manages 4% of all lands east of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the statehood enabling contracts for all newly created states east and west of Colorado are the same regarding the

transfer of federal lands within their borders; and
WHEREAS, despite the fact that the statehood enabling act terms regarding the transfer of federal lands are the same for all newly created states both east and west of Colorado, the Federal Government controls on average less than 5% of the lands in states east of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has failed to honor same statehood terms for the transfer of federal lands with MT, WY, CO, NM, AZ, UT, ID, NV, WA, OR, CA and AK and today still controls more than 50% of the lands in these states and more than 80% of lands in Nevada; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States declared these enabling act contracts to be “solemn compacts” with enforceable rights and obligations on both sides; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States also declared in 2013 that “the constitutional equality of the States is essential to the harmonious operation of the republic” and that our nation was, and is, a union of states equal in dignity, power and authority”; and

WHEREAS, in 1976 the United States Congress purported to nullify its nearly two hundred year old duty of transferring ownership of public lands by passing the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA); and

WHEREAS, public lands previously held “in trust for the states ultimately to be created” (Shivley v. Bowlby, U.S. Supreme Court) were managed for their resource value prior to the passage of FLPMA; and

WHEREAS, the unanimous 2009 U.S. supreme Court case Hawaii v. Office of Hawaiian Affairs speaks to the proposition that Congress cannot by subsequent, unilateral action alter or diminish the rights conferred upon a state in consequence of its admission to the Union; and

WHEREAS, after the passage of FLPMA our public lands are instead being mismanaged perpetually for their so-called conservation value; and with the effect that the conservation values are squandered rather than preserved.

WHEREAS, the National Association of Forest Service retirees recently issued a paper describing the un-sustainability of current federal forest management practices; and

WHEREAS, the resulting increase in catastrophic wildfires is needlessly killing millions of animals and destroying habitat and watersheds for decades; and

WHEREAS, western

states are incurring inordinate expenses to suppress forest fires related to failed federal forest policies; and
WHEREAS, local, state and national economies are all being adversely impacted by the loss of use of the natural resources thus being managed; and

WHEREAS, The Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management lose \$2 billion each year managing public lands. States consistently generate positive financial returns. The four states we examined – Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico and Montana earn an average of \$14.51 for every dollar they spend on land management; the Feds lose 27 cents. These states earn on average seven times more for every dollar spent

that the federal agencies on timber and energy development, 35 times more on grazing, and 25 times more on recreation. In New Mexico this amounted to nearly \$817 million in 2014, enough to pay the salaries of 17,000 teachers according to the state land office; and

WHEREAS, Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), Secure Rural Schools (SRS), and other federal transfer payments are merely offsets for federal restrictions on the ability of local and state governments to generate revenues from the productive use and stewardship of the lands and resources within their boundaries; and

WHEREAS, these transfer payments have been unreliably funded and are financially inadequate to compensate Baker County or the State of Oregon for federal breach of their Oregon’s Enabling Act; and

WHEREAS, PILT, SRS and other federal offset payments foster the political exploitation of western states that are compelled to accept political “bargains” in Washington each year to secure funding and payment of these offset payments (for example, members of Congress from western States had to agree to \$200 billion in additional Food Stamp funding in the 2014 Farm Bill to secure \$400 million in PILT payments); and

WHEREAS, under the guise of “sequestration” to cut federal expense, the federal government is cutting western states revenues in the form of PILT, SRS and FML (Federal Mineral Lease) through cutbacks, thereby causing an economic hardship on the State of Oregon and Baker County; and

WHEREAS, states east of Colorado pay billions each year to subsidize western states to not use their lands and resources to educate their own children and care for their own communities; and

WHEREAS, western states already manage millions of acres of state lands generating more revenue

with less expense and less environmental damage in general than federally managed public lands; and
WHEREAS, the federal government discourages capital investment and job creation by taking 10 times longer to approve energy and mineral development permits than states where the federal government honored the promise to transfer title to the public lands to the states; and

WHEREAS, the Institute for Energy Research discovered in 2013 that there is more than \$150 trillion in mineral value locked up in federally controlled lands; and

WHEREAS, Baker County is a political subdivision of the State of Oregon; and

WHEREAS, nearly 53% of the total land within the state of Oregon and 52% in Baker County is managed by the federal government; and

WHEREAS, in June 1857, without enabling legislation from Congress, Oregonians voted to hold a constitutional convention and drafted a governing constitutional document; and

WHEREAS, it was modeled after the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights and closely follows the constitution of Iowa, Indiana, and Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the federal government promised all states that it would transfer title to the public lands within the newly created states; and

WHEREAS, Baker County, a subdivision of the State of Oregon, as well as other western states are still waiting for the federal government to keep the same promise to them that it made and kept with all states east of Colorado; and

WHEREAS, the “western states” of 1828 (as the states east of Colorado called themselves at the time) succeeded in compelling the federal government to transfer their public lands because they understood the duty of the federal government to dispose of the lands and they joined together and now have these sustaining revenues (i) generating tax revenues to educate their children (ii) growing their economies, and (iii) responsibly managing their abundant natural resources; and

WHEREAS, despite the fact that the statehood promise is the same to dispose of the public lands upon being admitted as states, states east of Colorado have less than 5% federally controlled lands while the Western States (excluding Hawaii) have more than 50% federally controlled lands; and

WHEREAS, the State of Oregon and Baker County have been damaged by the inordinate cost and substantial uncertainty

regarding the national government’s infringement on the State of Oregon’s and Baker County’s’ sovereign control of public lands within their borders; and

WHEREAS, withdrawals of public lands from use, and economic activity, through such federal action as monuments, wilderness designation, wild and scenic, back country, ACEC’s, wilderness study areas, road closures and other such designations constrict the value of Oregon and Baker County’s economic vitality and reduce the available property tax revenue to Baker County for Public Safety, county services, and educating our children; and

WHEREAS, Oregon State and Baker County officials have the constitutional responsibility and duty to manage our abundant lands and resources strategically and prudently for the health, safety and welfare of our citizens; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, Utah passed the Transfer of Public Lands Act demanding the federal government work with Utah for the orderly transfer of federal public lands expressly excluding national parks, military bases, Indian reservations and other heritage sites; and

WHEREAS, under the Transfer of Public Lands Act, federal public lands will become state public lands to be managed through local planning for the multiple-use (including traditional uses like mining and grazing, hunting, fishing, recreation, timber harvesting and thinning, open space, economic activity, etc.) to be planned and managed by each unique county; and

WHEREAS, the Transfer of Public Lands Act has received broad support from governors, attorney generals, state legislators, members of many Western States Congressional delegations, and other public officials located throughout the west, and many other and private individuals and organizations within the many neighboring western states; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the Transfer of Public Lands Act will require the persistent and relentless efforts of Oregon’s governor, attorney general, and legislature along with the unwavering support of local governments and public and private individuals and organizations; and

WHEREAS, legal analyses by the Sutherland Institute and the Federalist Society conclude that the intent of the parties, the text, and the context of the statehood enabling acts, obligate the federal government to dispose of public lands; and

THEN BE IT RESOLVED, each county will manage their own local resources in a sustainable

manner, exclusive of state control.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that no restrictive designation will be imposed, nor can it be encumbered or sold unless there is full county concurrence with all terms of the encumbrance, including, but not limited to, ACEC’s, wilderness designation, wild and scenic, or any restrictive road closures or any other restrictive designation unless there is county concurrence of the affected county; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the State of Oregon and Baker County call upon the federal government to honor to all willing western states the same statehood promise to transfer title to the public lands that it honored to all states east of Colorado; and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the State of Oregon and Baker County Republican Party call upon all local, state and national leaders and representatives to exert their utmost power and influence to urge the imminent transfer of public lands to all willing western states for the benefit of these western states and for the economic viability of the nation as a whole; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, THE BAKER COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY supports the passage of a Transfer of Public Lands Act. Which means three things for Oregon and Baker County. First it allows our citizens to protect our land directly. Second it permits our citizens to manage our lands responsibly. Third, it leaves a legacy for the next generation. The American West’s abundant natural resources must be protected and those closest to it will do the best job. Also, along with federal laws protecting and pertaining to; right of ways, water rights, grazing and mining in order to hold the federal government to its long-overdue promise to transfer title to public lands to the State and counties so as to protect the State’s public education system and economic vitality, and to preserve the important historical and cultural contribution that our public lands provide to the State of Oregon and Baker County and the rest of the counties in Oregon, the nation, and the world. WE URGE THE

TIMELY AND ORDERLY TRANSFER OF FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS TO WILLING STATES FOR LOCAL CONTROL THAT WILL PROVIDE BETTER PUBLIC ACCESS, BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, AND BETTER ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY; Passed by the full Baker County Republican Central Committee on: May 7, 2015.

Library schedules ‘Parents are heroes’ event across County

Baker County Library District is hosting, “Parents are our heroes!” events at each of its satellite branches the last week in May in preparation for the Summer Reading Program. Parents of young children are invited to these free events which will feature

tips on how to be an effective Reading Partner with kids, build other early learning skills, and a preview of the library’s summer reading program. Participants will receive free books, refreshments and “literacy bags.”

Event locations, dates

& times:

- Huntingdon Library, May 27 3-4:30 p.m.
- Haines Library, May 28 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- Richland Library, May 30 10-11 a.m.
- Halfway Library (meeting at the park), May 30 12:00-1 p.m.

Swim team results posted

Baker YMCA swim team hosted their Dive & Dash on May 2-3. 92 swimmers represented six teams. The following are the results for Jared Miller, Justin Miller, Jacob Miller and Riana Scott, swimming for La Grande Swim Club.

Girls 13-14 200 Yard IM 2 Scott, Riana L; Boys 13-14 200 Yard IM 1 Miller, Justin D; Boys 15 & Over 200 Yard IM 1 Miller, Jared C; Girls 13-14 200 Yard Backstroke 1 Scott, Riana L; Boys 13-14 200 Yard

Backstroke 1 Miller, Justin D; Boys 15 & Over 200 Yard Backstroke 1 Miller, Jared C; Girls 13-14 100 Yard Butterfly 1 Scott, Riana L; Boys 13-14 100 Yard Butterfly 2 Miller, Justin D; Boys 15 & Over 100 Yard Butterfly 1 Miller, Jared C; Girls 13-14 200 Yard Breaststroke 1 Scott, Riana L; Boys 15 & Over 200 Yard Breaststroke 1 Miller, Jared C; Girls 13-14 100 Yard Freestyle 2 Scott, Riana L; Boys 13-14 100 Yard Freestyle 2 Miller, Justin D; Boys 15 & Over 100 Yard Freestyle 1 Miller, Jared C; Boys 11-12 200 Yard Freestyle 5 Miller, Jacob N; Girls 13-14 200 Yard Freestyle 1 Scott, Riana L; Boys 13-14 200 Yard Freestyle 1 Miller, Justin D; Boys 15 & Over 200 Yard Freestyle 1 Miller, Jared C; Boys 11-12 100 Yard

Breaststroke 1 Miller, Jacob N; Girls 13-14 100 Yard Breaststroke 2 Scott, Riana L; Boys 13-14 100 Yard Breaststroke 2 Miller, Justin D; Boys 15 & Over 100 Yard Breaststroke 2 Miller, Jared C; Boys 11-12 50 Yard Butterfly 5 Miller, Jacob N; Boys 15 & Over 200 Yard Butterfly 1 Miller, Jared C; Girls 13-14 100 Yard Backstroke 2 Scott, Riana L; Boys 13-14 100 Yard Backstroke 1 Miller, Justin D; Boys 15 & Over 100 Yard Backstroke 1 Miller, Jared C; Boys 11-12 50 Yard Freestyle 1 Scott, Riana L; Boys 15 & Over 50 Yard Freestyle 2 Miller, Jared C; Girls 13-14 500 Yard Freestyle 2 Scott, Riana L.