

Opinion & Local

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Thank you, voters

To the Editor:
I would like to send a big thank you to the voters of Baker County for the defeat of County Initiative 1-63. Another thank you goes to all the volunteers who worked tirelessly to stop this change to Baker County Government, which was not needed. Change for the sake of change does not always equal a positive outcome. Hopefully the education process that

was started because of this measure will continue and the voting public will again recognize a false narrative for what it is and will value the system we have, which is a representative Republic. This system is what this county was founded on, and it does work when people take responsibility for voting. We're incredibly thankful that the majority of voters in our county saw that.

Suzan Ellis Jones
Baker County Republican Chair

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Wild edibles, EMPs discussed at Oath Keepers

BY KERRY MCCQUISTEN
News@TheBakerCountyPress.com

About 40 people met for the monthly meeting of the Baker County Oath Keepers Tuesday night, filling the Baker City Council Chambers on the heels of the Baker City Budget Committee meeting.

Kody Justus led the flag salute and invocation, and Jake Brown explained for those new to the group how Oath Keepers is a national organization focused on upholding the Constitution and supporting elected officials in upholding their oaths. The members stressed again that Oath Keepers is not a militia or similar organization.

Several members in the group reiterated that by being self-sufficient and prepared at home first, citizens could then turn and help neighbors and friends prepare for emergencies, thereby helping the entire community.

Toward that goal, two key presentations filled the evening, the first by Michelle Cooper regarding the nutritional value of some of the weeds that grow locally, but offer nutritional value that may be overlooked.

Lambs Quarter.

Cooper brought samples of Lambs Quarter, a weed that grows abundantly throughout Baker County. "It tastes better than spinach," she said. Lambs Quarter is non-toxic and contains several key nutrients including potassium, calcium, niacin and iron. In a pinch such as a natural disaster when the produce section of the grocery store may be off-limits, this plant can be picked and eaten fresh or sauteed much like any other leafy vegetable. It can also be dried to make flour.

Cooper also brought photos of a fodder tray system, a stackable system that can be used indoors to sprout and grow wheatgrass, etc.

EMPs.

The next presentation was given by Mark Coombes who discussed the potential effects of Electromagnetic Pulses (EMPs).

"There are two kinds of events that can cause this," said Coombes. "The first is a solar event—a coronal mass ejection." In the 1800s, he said, America's telegraph system was "fried" due to just such an event. A solar event of that size has not since happened.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Mark Coombes talks about Faraday Cages and how to protect electronics.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Jake Brown tells those new to the audience what the Oath Keepers are all about.

He said the second event could come in the form of a nuclear attack, either by ground or air. North Korea, for example, has a program in place to develop electromagnetic weaponry, according to Trevor Loudon in a speech given in Baker City last year.

An EMP, depending on its strength and distance away from a target, could potentially knock out the power grid nationwide and send an electrical pulse through any wiring, destroyed tools and equipment that are plugged in. Experts estimate three years to repair each major transformer station, which may be longer considering the factories making the necessary repair parts would also be down. A hit to an eastern seaboard transformer could have a domino effect across the United States, as the grid is linked together, except for Texas, which has its own separate system.

Coombes discussed making a grounded Faraday Cage (a technology attributed to scientist Michael Faraday and also Benjamin Franklin) in which to store valuable radios and other electronics safely at home.

Preparedness Fair.

Jason Yencopal of Baker County Emergency Management has organized the County's first preparedness

fair, May 30, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. with a special presentation from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. at the National Guard Armory in Baker City.

The Oath Keepers and *The Baker County Press*, along with The American Red Cross, Baker County, The City of Baker City, and the Baker County Sheriff's Department have come together as community partners to help support this free event.

The Oath Keepers discussed bug-out bag and water purification demonstrations at their table. *The Baker County Press* will have cheap entry-level preppers' guides for families available.

Radio.

The group discussed learning how to legally use and become licensed radio operators, as well as potential ideas for educational communications classes.

In other radio news, Leo Castillo, host of the radio show *World Gone Crazy*, which airs Sundays at 9 p.m. on 1490AM, KBKR, ended the meeting saying he was encouraged to see people come together to help each other.

"Wisdom does come with preparing," he concluded.

Castillo stressed that no matter who you are, there is something every single person can do to be better prepared.

— GUEST OPINION —

Forest access hangs in the balance

By Rep. Kerry White
Special to The Baker County Press

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has been working on their closure plan for many years. Citizens for Balanced Use from Montana have been doing our best to educate and help the people of Eastern Oregon keep this forest open. Two members of CBU attended the sold-out Forest Access for All banquet this year in Baker City where Fred Kelly Grant spoke of the coordination process that has been a success all across the nation.

The federal agencies and specifically the Forest Service are resisting the requirement of coordination. Through the coordination process the federal agencies are required to make their plan consistent with the local government's plan.

Since 2007, the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has shuffled five forest supervisors through the agency.

These public employees have been unsuccessful in closing the forest and this is a great thing for the local communities and businesses that rely on the federally managed public lands for their economies, culture and heritage.

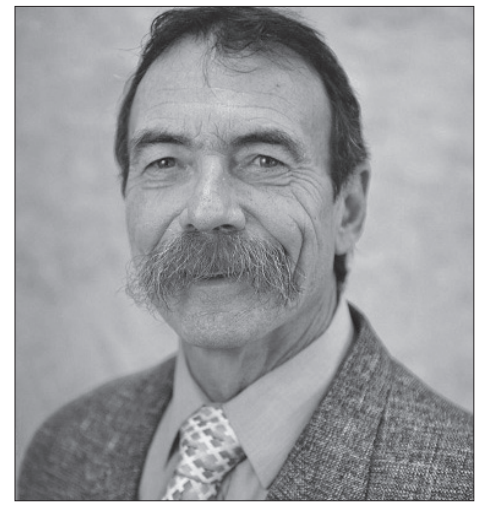
The past supervisors are most often brought in to this forest to subject the people to Washington D.C. mandates with little regard for local government or the people. This is why coordination is so important to preserve the historic nature of the area.

Currently the Forest Service is writing what is called "sub-part A," which will become the guiding document for closing your forest to access.

Sub-part A will designate which roads will remain open, which the Forest Service deems necessary for them to manage the forest. How about what the people need for them to continue to enjoy their public land? The Forest Service seems not responsive to the needs of the people but more toward closing the forest to reduce management cost. Is it really about cost or is it about keeping people out? Could it be the Forest Service has mismanaged this land for so long that keeping people out will stop the public from seeing the destruction to our land they have caused?

Coordination by the Forest Service with local governments is the law and it is time for this federal agency to follow the law.

Sub-part A has been drafted and this is a public document yet the Forest Service has refused to release it. Why? Could it be the closures proposed in Sub-part A are so severe they feel the



Submitted Photo

Elected in 2013, Rep. Kerry White represents Montana's House District 64. He is a founding member of Citizens for Balanced Use.

public's outrage would derail their closure plan?

When will the Wallowa-Whitman forest begin to follow the law and even more important when will they begin to serve the public which they are supposed to serve?

Everyone should be concerned with the actions and the plan being drafted by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

The ability to access this forest for future generations is hanging in the balance.

The Forest Plan Revision is currently on hold until Sub-part A is finalized but local input in Sub-part A has been non-existent.

The new Forest Plan Revision will turn past management direction on its head as this forest will change from a designated open to a designated closed. In other words all roads and trails are considered closed unless posted open. The Forest Service will not be required to post anything. Everything will be closed. Road and trail obliterations will follow shortly and enforcement and fines to violators will become the norm.

Groups such as Forest Access for All and Citizens for Balanced Use are working every day to stop the closures and educate their members and the public on the importance of being engaged. Only through member and supporter engagement can we be successful in keeping our public lands public and open.

Contact the local Forest Service office in your area and demand a copy of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Sub-part A.

Visit with your local County Commissioners about the importance of coordination and urge them to require the Forest Service to follow the law and create a plan that is consistent with the desires and needs of local communities.

Call your state and federal legislators to ask for their help in keeping these lands open.

— CONTACT US —

The Baker County Press

PO Box 567
Baker City, Ore. 97814

Open Monday-Thursday for calls
9 AM - 4 PM
Open 24/7 for emails
Office location: TBA

Phone: 541.519.0572

TheBakerCountyPress.com

Kerry McQuisten, Publisher
Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Wendee Morrissey, Advertising and Sales
Wendee@TheBakerCountyPress.com

David Conn, Advertising and Sales
David@TheBakerCountyPress.com

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President Barack Obama

202.456.1414
202.456.2461 fax
Whitehouse.gov/contact

US Sen. Jeff Merkley

503.326.3386
503.326.2900 fax
Merkley.Senate.gov

US Sen. Ron Wyden

541.962.7691
Wyden.Senate.gov

US Rep. Greg Walden

541.624.2400
541.624.2402 fax
Walden.House.gov

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown

503.378.3111
Governor.Oregon.gov

State Rep. Cliff Bentz

503.986.1460

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli

541.490.6528

Baker County Commissioners Bill Harvey; Mark Bennett; Tim Kerns

541.523.8200
541.523.8201