

Local

Transfer of public lands

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Jordan Noyes from U.S. Representative Greg Walden’s La Grande office attended, as did Baker County Commissioners Bill Harvey and Mark Bennett. Several members of the County’s Natural Resource Advisory Committee, or NRAC, also attended, including Chair Doni Bruland.

The remainder of the audience was composed of miners, ranchers, business owners, Oath Keepers and citizens spanning Baker, Union and Umatilla Counties.

Ivory’s Baker City seminar last year focused nearly exclusively on civics and Constitutional Law—and how those lessons support the concept of the transfer of public lands back to the states.

The seminar was again free to the public due to a sponsorship by the Baker County Republicans

This year’s workshop began a little differently, focusing on the effects and causes of the recent wildfires that have devastated much of Baker County, and continuing on to the Constitutional law lessons after lunch.

“This didn’t have to happen,” began Ivory, referring to the recent wildfires

Ivory pointed out the irony of the big feel-good print story in western Oregon while covering eastern Oregon fires being, “They saved a rabbit.”

He pointed to all the thousands of other animals that were killed. “They’re burying them as fast as they can so people don’t see this,” he said. For example, a herd of elk was killed in the Cornet/Windy Ridge Fire, 30-47 animals depending on the government source, and nearly immediately buried.

Ivory quoted Harry Truman: “We don’t propose, like some people, to meet today’s problems by saying that they don’t exist, and tomorrow’s problems by wishing that tomorrow wouldn’t come.”

He stated that the founding fathers had set up the U.S. Constitution to promote “good government” and that now, like then, is a political opportunity for change.

“When you look at managed lands versus unmanaged (federal) lands side by side, one side is burned to a crisp and the other isn’t even touched.”

Ivory said a number of events have occurred, moving toward the transfer of public lands. Utah State did an extensive economic analysis, he said, and decided, “The State could afford to manage its own land.”

Several East Coast states such as South Carolina, Georgia, New Hampshire and Tennessee have passed Transfer of Public Lands resolutions. Most states east of Colorado have taken back management of public lands, and consider it an unfair tax burden on their states to keep supporting Federal management of lands in the West.

Canada has also successfully completed decentralizing its own public lands management, returning that stewardship to its provinces.

“Killing thousands of animals, destroying our watersheds, destroying



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

The banquet room at the Sunridge was filled with participants who attended the full-day seminar.

our air quality—this is not what most sane people would call environmentalism.”

Kate Grace from Halfway had just returned from Montana and South Dakota and said that the smoke from the fires in Oregon was so thick she couldn’t see the towns in front of her from the road. Ivory said Salt Lake City residents were experiencing similar air pollution situations from the Oregon fires

Several attendees from around the room gave stories of their experiences.

“I never knew I was this sentimental,” said Bennett, who regularly travels Dooley Mountain. Most of Dooley burned last month. Bennett continued, “It will never be there again by the time our kids, grandkids—We could lose highway 245 to erosion. It’s a tearjerker. I used to see bears, wildflowers, turkeys, and now all that isn’t going to be there anymore. My wife and I believe we have responsibility for stewardship of the land. God has challenged us to be good stewards—and now it’s all gone.”

Ivory asked Bennett if he had a magic wand, what would he do to fix the situation.

Bennett spoke to 300 acres of beetle kill on USFS-managed lands, which because of national policy, local employees have no power to treat. The beetle kill area threatens the Burnt River watershed and Bennett says after at least eight years, it will take another two at least before he expects action.

He said he’s invited the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and the Nature Conservancy to come see in person how to see how west-side and federal policies are affecting eastern Oregon, how the City of Unity has dwindled from 250 to 71 people due to a dead forest economy.

Ivory said, “All over the west, county commissioners are saying their number-one export is their children.”

He added, “Excess timber is either carried out or burned out.”

He posed questions to the attendees, asking why the current land management system wasn’t working and why someone in western Oregon should care.

Annette Bates spoke up and said, “It’s lack of education and misinformation. They just don’t know. They hear Bo Derrick and Mariah Carey and what’s what they look at—we get our own spokesmen.”

Cal Foster, who helped

found the Greater Bowen Valley Rural Fire Department, lost 2,000 acres in the Trail Creek area. Foster believes the lack of education is on purpose because those on the opposite side of the state simply don’t care.

Other tables repeatedly pointed out the problem with the heavy ground fuel load resulting from lack of management and appropriate logging.

Still more in the room posed other theories. One gentlemen said, “Some people want to see it burn. It’s from Agenda 21, which includes the elimination of rural living. They want to make us dependent upon the government for all things.”

Others pointed out that USFS policies are not law, and that citizens should stop accepting them as such.

Another common sentiment was that the Environmental Protection Agency was completely out of control, as are the environmental groups that keep filing suits, using the strategy “sue to accrue,” garnering more funds to thereby further control federal policies.

“Every system is perfectly designed to achieve the results that it gets,” quoted Ivory from W. Edwards Deming.

At present, fifty-percent of the State of Oregon’s funding comes from Federal dollars. “The federal government is in bad shape,” Ivory said. “What is your backup plan? If you got fifty-percent of your revenue from one customer who is broke, what would you do?”

Rep. Barreto said, “Having all your eggs in one basket is not good.”

From audience thoughts, Ivory moved into video from Princeton University Professor Robert George, who instructs in the area of jurisprudence. George went over the purposes of the Bill of Rights, and spent some time speaking to the importance of the 10th Amendment, detailing rights reserved to states.

Ivory also reiterated some of the general premises as during the year prior.

“Rights we don’t know are no better than rights we don’t have,” he said.

Delving deeper into Constitutional law, Ivory believes that the Federal government has stopped honoring the terms of the states’ original enabling acts—the agreements under which statehoods were formed, and which have since been declared “solemn compacts” by the

U.S. Supreme Court.

At one point in time, the majority of U.S. states situated east of Colorado were up to 90% federally controlled. However, those states exercised their rights as states, and reclaimed their lands and jurisdiction. Why, he asked, hasn’t this same situation been done for the western states?

“Rights we don’t exercise are the same as rights we don’t have,” he stressed.

Ivory pointed to middle school civics lessons that no longer show the U.S. as a compound republic with states and their internal separation of powers on one side of the scale to balance out the federal government and its separation of powers on the other. He said most Americans are only aware of the three branches of federal government, and stop there.

“You’re assuming the federal government wants to play by the rules,” one attendee called out.

“In our system, we are the boss,” Ivory said.

He went on. “The states have more rights. The federal government only has the rights that are listed—enumerated rights.”

“But how do we overturn the Supreme Court,” asked another man, “if they come back and say no. Through litigation?”

Ivory cited several Supreme Court decisions that summed up the sentiment from the Justices that if a State asks, “Mother may I?” then that state doesn’t grasp the concept of its own sovereignty.

“The independent power of the states serves as a check on the Federal government. It’s a healthy tension. This tension is required for balance, to protect individual freedoms,” he said.

“I feel so responsible to my kids that seeing that vision of what’s coming—” Ivory paused. “We have a choice to make.”

Ivory also quoted President John Quincy Adams. “Duty is ours. The results are God’s.”

The following morning, Holloway and Ivory embarked on a tour of the Cornet/Windy Ridge Fire aftermath along with NRAC member Kody Justus and his family, and forestry expert Arvid Andersen.

The group stopped at various locations across Dooley Mountain, before meeting for a private brunch in Bridgeport and then returning to Baker City to begin the return trek to the Boise Airport.

More information is available at www.americanlandscouncil.org.

9/11 vigil

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Justus spoke about the effects the terrorist attacks had caused, and the personal effects on him. He went on to say that the attack had caused him to realize, “We must work together. As we have just seen in our communities with the fires, we can’t all be responders, but we can all find a place where we can contribute to the fight. The struggle is real, and we have to go at it together.”

Following Justus’ words, different attendees spoke of what they were doing on 9/11, and the impact the day made on their lives.

Stirring patriotic music played throughout the ceremony.

Flameless candles and glow sticks were handed to participants to hold in remembrance of all the lives lost.

Harvey then took a place in front of the crowd and invited the crowd to pray with him. He had the firefighter stand on either side while he spoke about all first responders. He pointed out that the uniformed crews are “our heroes today. They are the ones running in to the burning buildings while everyone else runs out.”

Harvey thanked the Baker City crew, and then invited the attendees to step forward and shake their hands.

A line formed, and each participant shook each firefighter’s hand and thanked them for their dedication.

When asked what had brought them to the observance, attendees had a similar refrain:

“So that those who died are not forgotten,” said Sierra Smithart, as she stood with her baby on her hip.

“I wanted to show respect,” said her partner, Josh Kepner.

Ramona Creighton said, “9/11 was the first time I had ever felt afraid in my own country” and husband John Creighton said, “I want to show they are not forgotten.”

Suzy Dyke, who works at the hospital, remembered the day clearly. “I was at work and we had patients on the floor, so I was trying to keep an eye on what was happening. You can’t stop surgeries to watch the screen, but we all wanted to.”

Carol Dyke, explained why she had felt driven to organize the event. “It was Benghazi,” she said. “I was incensed and so angry. I felt I had to do something.”

That first “something” was making posters and walking up and down Campbell Street carrying them.

“I didn’t care if people thought I was crazy!” she explained. “Pretty soon many of my friends joined me, and we carried the posters together.”

The second year was a more formal event, and 2015’s included the Fire Department much like the 2014 event.

“I had invited the other first responders, too,” said Dyke, “but it’s a Friday, and there’s a football game at the High School, so law enforcement couldn’t come.”

When the memorial was finished, the fire crew lowered the flag and then respectfully folded it

Next year’s observance is in the planning stages. Dyke said she would like to use Geiser-Pollman Park, and “hang the flag from the fire truck above the new pavilion.”

Jeff Kleck

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

He said, “To continue to become more valuable because if I become more valuable as a painter and my painting become more valuable then what you have in your house becomes more valued. The other thing is that as I’ve looked into how to sell paintings more people by the painter than the painting meaning it’s the story behind the painter, it’s the person quite often that they buy.”

He continued, “Some people like to start with some of the early stuff because it may not be as polished as some of the later stuff but again we go back to it tells a story and if ever it were the case there was an antique road show and for some reason somebody brought a painting and for some reason I’d done my job and been recognized and the great-great grandkids had a first and middle piece then it tells a tale and increases the value. When I think about painting now that is what I think about. Then along the way you can’t do it without just loving it.”

Kleck said, “I’ve learned more and more that even if I make mistakes, I can correct them for the most part and that my wife tells me that it is not my job to judge what people might like in my art, it’s my job to paint. I might paint something that somebody loves so who am I to judge.”

Barbara added, “Some of my favorite stuff he throws in the garbage. I’ll go to work, I’m a flight attendant, saying ‘oh I love that painting’ and come home three or four days later and find it is gone and he’ll say ‘oh, threw it away.’” It is frustrating for her Kleck acknowledges. The Klecks currently live in Gilbert, Arizona where Jeff is a principal for a charter school Called Arizona Agribusiness and Equine Center that specializes in Agriculture “Plus we have early college components where all of our students are not only high school student but also enrolled in a community college we are associated with by grade 9.”

Kleck says he loves coming back to Baker County “Baker people are just great people. We would love to come back to Oregon, don’t know if we are in a spot where we could but we have thought about getting a second home either here in Baker or the coast, we’ve looked at few places. We’d love to if it worked out, that’d be great.” Kleck would like to continue to grow as an artist and, “Expand that commitment to people who buy my art and to continue to be better. Maybe enter stuff in competitions, maybe win some. I hope to be able to have gallery stuff someday.”

For now you can find some of Kleck’s work at the Baker City Saddle Shop or on his Facebook page J Kleck Studios.