Local

Owyhee Monument

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Bentz also introduced the panel who were from left to right: Cecil Dick, Paiute Nation; Scott Meyers, Grant County Judge; Ken Kestner, Lake County Commissioner; Chris Perry, Wheeler County Judge; Mike McCabe, Crook County Judge; Steve Grasty, Harney County Judge; Ted Fiorelli, State Senator; Cliff Bentz, State Representative; Greg Barreto, State Representative; Dan Joyce, Malheur County Judge; Larry Wilson, Malheur County Commissioner: Don Hodge, Malheur County Commissioner; Don Gonzalez, Vale District BLM Manager; Bill Harvey, Baker County Commissioner; Brian Wolfe, Malheur County Sheriff; and Mark Bennett, Baker County Commissioner.

Congressman Greg Walden was unable to attend, but sent a statement saying in essence that more regulations are unneeded and the people should be heard and their wishes heeded.

U.S. Senators from Oregon, Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, were also unable to attend but sent a joint statement concluding with, "We are confident there is a solution that ensures the long-term protection of this unique landscape and local needs and values, but the only way to make sure local needs and values are well represented is through your engagement and input."

Bentz then introduced Fenty to give all present an overview the proposal being made to present to President Obama.

He said that the Owyhee Canyonlands Coalition is a group of Oregon citizens and other organizations that want to see that the Owyhee Canyonlands are preserved for future generations and enjoyed by all Americans for not just one lifetime but in perpetuity.

He spelled out the important points of the proposal that state grazing would continue and that the legislation would actually "grandfather in" grazing and could add facility maintenance and forms of access not currently available.

Current mining claims within the 2.5 million acre proposed monument area would also be "grandfathered" while "protecting" the area from any detrimental future mining, oil and gas development.

He stated that the existing legal roads and routes to both popular and remote areas in the Owyhee will remain open, at which point there was a loud groan of disbelief from the crowd.

Fenty said that he believes that this proposal will bring an economic boom to the area through increased tourism for hunting, fishing, camping and water recreation. It would also preserve critical wildlife and conserve existing water developments and bring an increase in restoration projects.

Afterward, Bentz asked for audience input alternating between pro and con opinions, each person being allowed two minutes to speak their view.

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Of the approximately

30 people who voiced their opinions, the "pro" category reasons included protection of the land, increased recreational opportunities, protection of fish and wildlife, and belief it will create jobs and bring economic stimulus.

The con side reasons are citizens don't feel they need government help to protect the land and have been doing themselves for generations, other monuments have been in constant litigation since being formed, and belief that it will result in job loss as well as no trust in the government to keep its promises.

Bob Skinner of the Public Lands Council spoke against the proposal saying, "It is not in the best interest of locals. I believe the people behind it are anti-grazing. Read the fine print."

Larry Price, a resident of Adrian said, "We don't want the changes it will bring to this town."

Greg Jones, a fourthgeneration Owyhee County resident, said, "We don't want to be like Jackson Hole or Vail. We can take care of our own."

Labron Hardy of Bend, Oregon was for the proposal saying, "We need to preserve this area for the future. This will keep out the destruction from oil drilling and large mines."

Bob Reese of Tillamook has been a hunting and fishing guide for 20 years and believes, "We need to protect the fish and wildlife habitat for the future."

Kirk Richardson of Portland was also for the proposal saying, "Outdoor recreation of all kinds brings an economic boost to the entire area."

Some questions arose from the many locals in the crowd as to who was footing the bill for the travel expenses of those in favor of the monument, who were primarily from the western side of the state.

After the public statement portion of the meeting, the panel members were each given two minutes to speak their opinions.

Commissioner Mark
Bennett commented,
"We must look out for
the people and their way
of life. Actions must be
decided by the people of
the land."

Commissioner Bill
Harvey remarked, "If they
want to preserve the land
they should find a way to
help us do it not take it
over from us."

Judge Mike McCabe added some humor to the situation by saying, "Tell them to take the Deschutes instead and leave us alone"

Cecil Dick of the Paiute Nation was eloquent when he gave his opinion saying, "Be cautious! It is the Indians' experience that treaty from Washington D.C. never tell truth. Leadership changes means truth changes."

Senator Ferrioli agreed with Cecil Dick saying, "Listen to the Indians—they know. Trust is a big issue. People who care should work together to care for the land they love."

Ted Ferrioli's main question was: "We need to be concerned about why they (The Owyhee Coalition) aren't engaging the local people through a Congressional vote rather than

going to the President."

Bentz closed the meeting by thanking all those who helped put it together and those who came to learn and give their opinions. He also promised there would be more meetings and discussions to come.

The Malheur County Court is standing firm behind its resolution (pictured in full to the right) to oppose the monument.

In addition, on September 18, the Oregon Natural Desert Association in Bend responded to that resolution with a number of documents, stating in part, "Our proposal seeks to protect 2.5 million acres of public land in Malheur County via a combination of National Conservation Area (NCA), Wilderness, and Wild & Scenic River designations which would need to be enacted through federal legislation ... The Malheur County resolution mischaracterizes the Owyhee Canyonlands Conservation Proposal as a National Monument proposal, misstates acreages associated with the proposal and is factually incorrect and/or highly speculative in many of its assertions."

Following the meeting, Baker County Commissioners Mark Bennett and Bill Harvey responded with their take on the monument and meeting.

Harvey said, "We went in solidarity and support with Malheur County, which in my point of view is being attacked by the conservation movement. They're trying to take so much land in that county that it devastates their economy. And that's not all they're taking. BLM just followed through and took 1.9 million acres from Malheur, Harney and Lake Counties across the bottom of the state. Combined, two-thirds of Malheur county is being locked up. This is the largest land grab I've seen in a single county."

Harvey also cautioned against assurances that grazing and pasture will be protected. "Current means only what's allowed now and nothing more in the future. So you want to be careful and listen to every word," he said.

Harvey pointed out that most of the environmental visitors came from west side of the state, charged up their cars in Bend, bought gas in bend, brought their camping supplies with them and stayed nowhere near hotels or restaurants. "They spend two weeks on vacation and go home. They've done nothing for the economy here."

Harvey added, "It's pristine because families who live there have protected it for 150 years. There's no need for more protection."

"If they can do it there, they can do it here in Baker County. There's nothing to stop them from trying," Harvey said.

Bennett said, "We must protect the working landscape—which is the people. They kept using the term 'landscape' and no decision should be made without engaging the people who preserve that landscape. There's no threat documented against that landscape. This, to me, is just a sham for a big land grab."

BEFORE THE COUNTY COURT IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MALHEUR IN AND OF THE STATE OF OREGON

IN THE MATTER OF:

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE CREATION OF A
NEW NATIONAL MONUMENT PROPOSED AS THE
OWYHEE CANYONLANDS MONUMENT; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT
OR DESIGNATION OF ANY OTHER NATIONAL MONUMENT, NATIONAL
CONSERVATION AREA OR WILDERNESS AREA ON PUBLIC LANDS
WITHIN SOUTHERN MALHEUR COUNTY, OREGON

RESOLUTION R15-34

WHEREAS, outside interest groups including the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) are advocating for the creation of the "Owyhee Canyonlands Monument" under the authority conferred upon President Obama in the American Antiquities Act of 1906; and

WHEREAS, the American Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 USC 431-433), Section 2, states in part: "That the President of the United States of America is hereby authorized in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and may reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected..." (emphasis added); and

WHEREAS, the proposed 2.5 million acre National Monument includes a staggering 2.1 million acres of public land in Malheur County, which is approximately 47% of all federal lands (4.5 million acres) in Malheur County and more than 1.6 times larger than all private lands (1.3 million acres) in Malheur County; and

WHEREAS, Malheur County's great strength lies in the value of its public lands, and the ability of the public to access and utilize those lands for a variety of recreational and economic uses; and

Resolution of Malheur County in Opposition to Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument

WHEREAS, public land managers have a responsibility to the people of Malheur County to ensure continued opportunities for multiple use activities on public lands; and

WHEREAS, once federal lands are converted to special use lands such as National Monument, Wilderness Area, National Conservation Area or similar enhanced federal designations they permanently loose multiple-use provisions; and

WHEREAS, any of the above special use designations on 2.1 million acres in Malheur County is not in our best interest and will have a detrimental effect on the vitality of our rural communities and the already struggling economic health of our County. Examples include:

- All mining and natural gas exploration efforts will cease as well as the loss of potential jobs from mining operations that have been in the works for several years; and
- Malheur County will lose its #1 ranking in cattle production status for the State of Oregon as the majority of ranches are tied to federal grazing. Cattle production is the #1 commodity in the State of Oregon; and
- Hunting and fishing will be severely limited due to no motorized access; and
- The cost of search and rescue will be a tremendous burden on the County due to very limited access. Likewise, risk of harm to our rescue workers will increase; and
- Efforts to increase our recreational appeal for mountain bike riding and lucrative events will be gone because bicycles are not allowed; and
- Loss of County property tax revenue as many ranchers are tied to federal land; and
 Loss of family ranches and our heritage and history; and
- Rural school numbers will decrease leading to possible school closures (i.e. Garfield County Utah with Wilderness and National Monument designation reports that in 18 years lost 2/3's of its student population); and
- Loss of income tax to State of Oregon as ranchers lose income; and
- Loss of direct jobs and jobs within the supply chain of the agriculture and cattle industries; and
- Ancillary companies and businesses that support the cattle industry and hunting/outdoor industry will struggle; and
- Wildfire threat will increase with more dry vegetation and lack of implementation of best management practices for rangeland; and
- 2 Resolution of Malheur County in Opposition to Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument
 - Wildlife will diminish without access to water developments and salt licks; and
 - Loss of jobs for fire fighters that live in Malheur County; and

· Loss of jobs within BLM; and

 A designation does not readily allow active adaptive management in response to arising environmental issues affecting wildlife, landscapes and human activities such as lack of control for invasive weeds; and

WHEREAS, the idea of an enhanced federal designation has been studied and discussed for more than two years with a diverse local advisory group appointed by the Malheur County Court that ultimately developed an alternative Wilderness Area in the southern part of Malheur County consisting of 45,414 acres. This local proposal was endorsed by affected ranchers and the Malheur County Court.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Malheur County Court hereby declares its opposition to the creation of a National Monument in Malheur County.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Malheur County Court opposes the 2.5 million "Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument" because its establishment is contrary to the best interests of Malheur County and the "smallest area compatible" language of the Antiquities Act

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED that if any enhanced federal designation is enacted on lands within Malheur County, that it be a designation in size and area recommended and, at very least, with input by Malheur County jurisdictions, agencies and stakeholders.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 9th day of September 2015.

Dan P. Joyce
Dan P. Joyce, Malheur County Court Judge

Larry Wilson, Malheur County Commissioner

3 Resolution of Malheur County in Opposition to Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument

Submitted Photos.

Above is the full resolution drafted by Malheur County in opposition to the proposed monument.