

Business & Ag

NRAC: Citizens for Balanced Use update, wildfires among topics

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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The Baker County Natural Resource Advisory Committee (NRAC) held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 22, 2016, 3 p.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse.

Present from the committee were Chair Doni Bruland, Baker County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, Cynthia Long, Lyle Defrees, Alice Knapp, Kody Justus, Ken Anderson, Jan Kerns, Chuck Chase, Laurene Chapman, Jake Bingham, and Emily Braswell.

Also in attendance were local CPA Bruce Nichols, and local miner Ed Hardt.

Bruland called the meeting to order, and introductions of committee members, and public attendees, were made. Bruland mentioned that she had not seen the agenda, available online, and usually sent via email from her to local area newspapers, published prior to this meeting.

Hardt made some comments during Public Participation, regarding the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) overreach of authority, as he recounted some stories from the past, and present, while he urged a major emphasis on the continuing process of coordination between the county, and federal agencies.

The minutes from the last meeting were approved, with a motion from Long, and a second from Justus.

Harvey provided a government-to-government coordination process update, stating that the progress between the County, the USFS, and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), with salvage logging, and sales and potential sales, is going well.

Harvey commented about a five-page handout he provided the committee copies of, from Kerry White, of Citizens for Balanced Use (CBU), based in Gallatin Gateway, Montana. The document, a CBU "ALERT," titled "Major Regulatory Expansion of ESA Listing and Critical Habitat Designation," was written by land use attorney Karen Budd-Falen.

Harvey and other committee members voiced concerns regarding the



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The NRAC discussed the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands Monument, wildfire fighting, and editing sections of the NRP, among other topics.

federal government's overreach on private property rights, and federal grazing permits, through expansion of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), through the release of four separate, final rules, and two final policies, resulting in the listing of more species, and expanding designated critical habitat, discussed in Budd-Falen's document.

This discussion led to comments about the standard for listing, the "best scientific and commercial data available," which the group discussed is often-times ignored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other agencies, and which Budd-Falen said now includes "the principals of conservation biology," described by some scientists as "agenda-driven," or "goal-oriented" biology, not created until the 1980s.

Harvey said that collecting, and providing independent scientific data to the agencies is one way to fight the overreaching, and he mentioned the Bull Trout, to which Kerns responded that there is a 1,000-page study the NRAC has played a pivotal role in compiling, available for viewing at the Baker County Courthouse. Both Bruland and Kerns said it's a good, thorough document.

Defrees began a wildfire/forestry discussion, which was a main topic on the agenda, and he provided copies of a draft policy statement proposal, to the Forestry section of the Baker County Natural Resources Plan (NRP). He said that, because of noted

issues with the lack of personnel to provide watch over fire lines during the wildfire season, including during the night, the following was drafted, and suggested to the committee, to assist with addressing the problem, as part of the Forest Management Policies subsection:

"It is the policy of Baker County that during fire season wildfires shall not be left unattended, that all wildfires be contained and attended until the threat of the fire is reasonably diminished, and that a local firefighting association member shall be on site to represent the county's best interest."

The committee members discussed firefighting issues, including having enough local, able-bodied volunteers, who are qualified to fight fire, a key point Long and Harvey have emphasized numerous times. The discussion included comments and questions about safety and other issues involved with fighting fire at night, including providing watch, and Long displayed two cards she normally carries, one with two lists, titled "Standard Firefighting Orders," and "Watch Out Situations." She pointed out Watch Out Situations No. 2, "In country not seen in daylight."

Several language changes were suggested, and made, to the original, aforementioned draft policy statement to the Forestry section, and adoption of the edited draft as part of the NRP was approved, with a motion from Defrees, a second from Long, and a unanimous vote.

In response to Kerns' question about which section(s) of the NRP were to be reviewed, and edited next, Harvey, and Bruland replied that the Energy section would be the remaining section needing attention, expected to be discussed at the next meeting.

Bruland announced the date of the USFS's public session, to discuss the Proposed Action for the Forest Resiliency Project, on Thursday, March 31, 2016, from 6 to 9 p.m., at the Baker City National Guard Armory, 1640 Campbell Street. This is a Wallowa-Whitman National Forest discussion, and it is the last one of the March sessions for the Ochoco, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, before the comment deadline of April 5, 2016.

Bingham, who is also President of the Baker County Livestock Association (BCLA), said the BCLA recently contributed \$10,000 to the Owyhee Basin Stewardship Council (OBSC), who hired Gallatin Public Affairs to lead the opposition effort to the proposed designation of the Owyhee Canyonlands, as a National Monument. The Oregon Association of Realtors has also contributed \$50,000 toward the opposition effort, Gallatin Public Affairs' Ysabel Bilbao said, during the most recent BCLA meeting.

The next NRAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26, 2016, 3 p.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, March 18, 2016 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to week ago prices in a very limited test. Many producers have decided to hold on to their hay for now, in hopes for higher prices or to feed to their own animals. Many hay producers are sold out for the year.

Tons Price Range Wtd Avg

No new sales confirmed for this week.

Last week:

Orchard / Alfalfa — Small Square Premium
25 195.00-195.00 195.00

Two weeks prior:

Alfalfa — Large Square Good/Premium
85 135.00-135.00 135.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 350

Steer Calves

300-400# Bulk N/A Top N/A
400-500# Bulk 195.00 - 207.00 Top 214.00
500-600# Bulk 180.00 - 202.00 Top 214.00

Heifer Calves

300-400# Bulk N/A Top N/A
400-500# Bulk 170.00 - 185.00 Top 190.50
500-600# Bulk 160.00 - 175.00 Top 182.00

Yearling Steers

600-700# Bulk 150.00 - 175.00 Top 181.00
700-800# Bulk 140.00 - 157.00 Top 160.00
800-900# Bulk 138.00 - 146.00 Top 151.00
900-1,000# Bulk 125.00 - 132.00 Top 137.50

Yearling Heifers

600-700# Bulk 155.00 - 162.00 Top 166.00
700-800# Bulk 135.00 - 143.00 Top 146.50
800-900# Bulk 120.00 - 130.00 Top 135.50
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows 55.00 - 65.00
Butcher Cows 68.00 - 76.00
Butcher Bulls 74.00 - 86.00
Stock Cows Yng. N/A
Younger Hfrts. 82.00 - 117.00
Stock Cows Older. - 925.00 - 1300.00

ProducersLivestock.com

541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Currently the local log market is flooded with fire salvage logs. The log buyer for Malheur Lumber Co. stated they have all the logs they need under contract and are not accepting any new purchases. BCC/LLC of La Grande has receive so many burned fire salvage logs they are no longer accepting logs at the La Grande log yard. Any additional pine logs have to be delivered to the Elgin Log yard cut in plywood lengths and to a 8 inch top. For these pine logs cut in plywood lengths, BCC is offering \$280.00/mbf. They are also paying \$410.00/mbf for Doug Fir & Western Larch. For White Fir they are offering \$310.00/mbf. At the Pilot Rock Saw Mill BCC is offering \$360.00/mbf for a 12 to 15 inch top, for 16 to 19 inch top \$400.00/mbf & offering \$425.00/mbf for 20 inch plus top

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1,223.00

Silver: \$15.83

Platinum: \$960.48

Palladium: \$575.75

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$367.50/bu/USD

Wheat: \$464.25/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$904.50/bu/USD

Oats: \$187.00 bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$10.30/cwt/USD

Canola: \$469.90 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$124.95/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$154.13/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$82.53/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com

Economic Development Council to pen letter to FTC

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The Baker County Economic Development Council (EDC) held its regular Board meeting on Thursday, March 17, 2016, 8:30 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse.

Present from the Board were Chair Craig Ward, Baker County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, Baker Technical Institute (BTI) Director Jerry Peacock, Baker City Manager Mike Kee, and Baker City Councilman Richard Langrell.

Attendance also included

Baker County Economic Development Director Greg Smith, Smith's assistants Julee Hicks, and Phil Scheuers, Baker City Mayor Kim Mosier, Baker City Council member Sandy Lewis, Baker City Council member Dan Lowe, Blue Mountain Community College Small Business Development Center (BMCC SBDC) Advisor Jeff Nelson, Baker County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Shelly Cutler, retired BMCC SBDC Advisor Bob Savage, Baker City Council member Rosemary Abell, Historic Baker City (HBC)

President Larry Abell, and Business Oregon Business Development Officer Melisa Drugge.

Ward called the meeting to order, followed by introductions of everyone present. The minutes from the previous Board meeting were reviewed and approved, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Peacock.

Harvey provided a Commission Chair update, and he said that the joint City/County meeting last Wednesday had gone well, with several topics discussed. He also said that last Tuesday, a meet-

ing with representatives of the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) also had gone well, with discussions regarding danger tree removal, and salvage logging opportunities.

Nelson provided a BMCC SBDC update, and he said that the new BMCC SBDC Director, Carol Frink, who's excited about some new programs in Baker City, was here last Monday, in order to introduce herself, and to meet with Nelson, and others.

SEE EDC PAGE 9