

Business & Ag

NRAC

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Attendance included Baker County Commission Chair Bill Harvey, NRAC Chair Doni Bruland, NRAC Coordinator Eric Wunz, and NRAC members Alice Knapp, Cynthia (Cookie) Long, Jan Alexander, Jan Kerns, Laurene Chapman, Chuck Chase, Arvid Andersen, Lyle Defrees, and Dick Fleming.

Wunz said that the United States Forest Service (USFS) is proposing to start charging user fees for boaters, in the Snake River/Hells Canyon area, possibly \$5 to \$10 a day, per person, to which Baker County responded with opposition, he said. In response to a question about the fees, Wunz said, per the proposal, each person in a boat would be charged the fee, and several members, including Chase and Alexander, voiced concern. He said that, while there were no current services or projects mentioned specifically that prompted the proposed fees, the funds would be used for future potential projects, and around 85% of the funds would be used locally.

Wunz discussed some updates regarding the coordination process, and provided the committee with associated documents. He and Harvey spoke about some upcoming timber salvage sale opportunities, via Categorical Exclusions (CEs), including the Cornett/Windy Ridge fire area. Wunz mentioned there's a demand for fir trees.

Wunz said the objection process has been completed for the East Face project, but he didn't hear anything yet about a final decision. During the discussions about the coordination process, Wunz and others voiced concerns about the need to reduce fuel loads, regarding pace and scale. He said that progress is being made on the BMFPR, though it may seem that's not the case. Wunz said that there are positive changes he's seeing, including changes in forest treatment analysis, though some improvements, like moist forest versus dry forest wildfire analysis, need more work. He spoke about the documents he provided the committee regarding the County's response to the BMFPR, and Wunz and Harvey asked the group to review the documents, and to get back to them with some input.

Harvey said that he and Whitman District Ranger Jeff Tomac spent four hours touring the Buck Gulch forest area, west of Sumpter, and he said that Tomac agreed that the Buck Gulch Road is an historical RS 2477 road, and that the USFS will repair, and maintain it. Repair work would include installing three or four culverts, Harvey said. The USFS is determining associated costs and a timetable for work to be completed, and while Harvey and Tomac were on the tour, Harvey pointed out the dangerous level of fuel loads in that area, and that work needs to be completed to remedy that situation. Harvey specifically noted dead fir trees, over 21" in diameter, that

could be cut for firewood, and he said that Tomac agreed in concept, but Tomac would do what he could, to facilitate a solution. Overall, Harvey said, the tour with Tomac went well, and he's excited about moving forward.

Long said she did some research, and she found documents regarding cooperation versus coordination, between the County, and federal agencies, and the protection against the premature release of material an MOU may guarantee. She said that, according to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) handbook, and Department of the Interior (DOI) regulations, "...when other agencies or local governments are unwilling to sign an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), the authorized officer may maintain informal communication on key issues, relevant information, and the partner's preferred outcome. In nearly all cases, however, it is inappropriate to provide the same level involvement in a plan, or project analysis, for an entity unwilling to formalize its participation..."

She said that the BLM wants the County to sign an MOU as a cooperating agency, and that documents she researched state that the coordinating agency status isn't a legal pathway. She emphasized that that's what she discovered, from researching documents. Chase and Fleming asked what all of that means, as far as what the BLM is saying about a coordinating agency status, and Knapp stated that coordination is an option,

to which Harvey responded that it actually is the law. He said no MOU is required between the BLM (or the USFS), and the County, regarding cooperation, and that coordination is recognized as a valid, legal pathway by both federal agencies.

Kerns asked whether BLM Vale District Manager Don Gonzalez, and other staff, could discuss the options of cooperation versus coordination, with the NRAC. She asked whether there would be an objection to the NRAC learning more from Gonzalez and other staff, at a future meeting, about how cooperation could work with coordination, and Harvey said the two don't work together, they work separately. Kerns made a motion to invite Gonzalez and other staff to a future meeting, to discuss the topic, and Chapman seconded the motion. Kerns, Alexander, Long, and Chapman voted in favor of the motion, and Harvey, Defrees, Fleming, and Chase voted in opposition. Knapp and Andersen abstained. The motion didn't carry, and Bruland said that the NRAC could discuss the topic again at a future meeting.

Long said she didn't wish to sound offensive, but, she wondered how Harvey could vote, since he's the Commission Chair, and not an NRAC member. Harvey responded that his vote is valid, and Bruland said she couldn't find any bylaws preventing Harvey from voting.

The next NRAC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 23, 2016, 3 p.m.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, July 29, 2016 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to week-ago prices. Most demand lays with the retail/stable hay. Many hay producers are selling or have already sold most of their first and second cutting hay, and are working on later cutting(s) resulting in higher volumes of hay moving.

Tons	Price Range	Wtd Avg
Alfalfa/Timothy — Large Square Premium	250 205.00-205.00	205.00
Orchard Grass — Large Square Premium	90 160.00-160.00	160.00
Timothy Grass — Small Square Premium	5 170.00-170.00	170.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, July 27, 2016

Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 333

Steer Calves

300-400#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
400-500#	Bulk 147.00 - 160.00	Top 166.00
500-600#	Bulk 143.00 - 151.00	Top 154.00

Heifer Calves

300-400#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
400-500#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
500-600#	Bulk 133.00 - 139.00	Top 140.50

Yearling Steers

600-700#	Bulk 132.00 - 138.00	Top 140.00
700-800#	Bulk 126.00 - 134.00	Top 135.50
800-900#	Bulk 122.00 - 129.00	Top 132.50
900-1,000#	Bulk 106.00 - 118.00	Top 121.00

Yearling Heifers

600-700#	Bulk 123.00 - 129.00	Top 134.50
700-800#	Bulk 118.00 - 126.00	Top 130.00
800-900#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A
900-1,000#	Bulk N/A	Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows	61.00 - 68.00
Butcher Cows	68.00 - 78.00
Butcher Bulls	69.00 - 88.00
Pairs Young	1175.00 - 1485.00
Hfrets	92.50
Stock Cows Young	N/A

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 \$420.00/mbf for Doug Fir & Western Larch. For White Fir they are offering \$325.00/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: \$1,365.10

Silver: \$20.46

Platinum: \$1163.35

Palladium: \$711.50

Bloomberg.com

Planning Commission to meet over tennis court violation

On Wednesday, August 17th, 2016 at 7 p.m. the Baker City Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to discuss a violation of Conditional Use Permit CU-04-002, which originally approved the use of four grass tennis courts for tournament play in the Medium-Density Residential (R-MD) Zone. This approval was contingent on four conditions of approval, one of which read: Prior to the use of the property for tennis tournaments each year, applicant shall cause that portion of Grace Street from the east edge of the McQuisten property to a point thirty feet west of the applicant's driveway to be dust oiled to normal and reasonable standards. The dust oil product shall be approved by Baker City.

On June 27th, 2016, the Baker City Planning Department received a

complaint and photographs documenting a violation of the condition listed above. Dust abatement appears to have been applied by a contractor from thirty feet west of the applicant's driveway to a point approximately ±160 feet short of the east edge of the McQuisten property mentioned in the condition.

The property where the grass tennis courts are located is identified as Tax Lot 801 in Section 19ad of Township 9 South, Range 40 East, W.M. (Ref. #17937). The Baker City Development Code (BCDC) requires a violation of a Conditional Use Permit to be heard before the Planning Commission, who makes a decision on the matter. The Planning Commission will use the applicable criteria listed in BCDC Section 2.2.200-Residential Districts-

Special Use Standards, 4.4.600 –Revocation of Conditional Use Permits and the Baker City Comprehensive Plan. Testimony may be submitted orally or in written form, either in person or to the Planning Department prior to the hearing.

All interested persons are invited to attend this meeting. Persons wishing to testify on this case may do so by presenting oral testimony at the hearing, or by submitting written testimony. Oral testimony will be taken in the following order: applicant, other proponents, opponents, and applicant's rebuttal. Testimony should avoid repetition of issues, address the relevant approval criteria listed above, and be based on the condition of approval noted above. Only comments related to the complaint of failure to comply with the relevant

condition of approval are considered applicable evidence. Telephone conversations cannot be accepted as testimony. All written testimony must be submitted to the Planning Department by no later than 5:00 p.m. on the hearing date, August 17th, 2016, or submitted in person during the hearing.

The staff report will be available for inspection on or before August 10th, 2016 at the County Courthouse at 1995 Third Street, Baker City. Copies of this report and all application materials can be provided at a reasonable cost; digital versions can be e-mailed for free. Please contact Senior Planner Eva Ceder for more information at 541-523-8219 or eceder@bakercounty.org.

The meeting will be held in Council Chambers at Baker City Hall, 1655 First Street, Baker City, OR.

OTEC earns high marks for low rates

Each year, in an annual assessment of financial trends among electric distribution cooperatives nationwide, the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Financial Corporation (CFC) compiles and releases final data from its Key Ratio Trend Analysis.

For 2015, after a series of 145 separate ratios and being compared against 308 similar co-ops that borrow exclusively from

CFC, OTEC had the second lowest irrigation rates in the state of Oregon (9th lowest irrigation rates nationwide).

OTEC came in 2nd for the lowest large commercial rates in the state (14th lowest large commercial rates nationwide).

"Rounding out a decade of relatively flat economic growth, it is impressive that OTEC is consistently able to maintain low rates

and strong financials," said Anthony Bailey, Chief Financial Officer for OTEC. "In total, our average retail cost of energy per kilowatt hour (7.7 cents/kWh) is 7 percent below the state median."

"Additionally, we have been operating on a thinner margin in regards to our debt service when compared with our peers," said Bailey. With the energy usage of OTEC's

residential membership 200 kWh below the state average, OTEC is selling approximately 20 percent less power to its residential members than other cooperatives within the state.

Yet of the 308 co-ops that participated in the financial assessment, OTEC ranked 4th for the lowest rates in the state, 21st lowest rates nationally.

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$335.70/bu/USD

Wheat: \$410.25/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$955.50/bu/USD

Oats: \$189.00 bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$9.55/cwt/USD

Canola: \$446.00 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$115.20/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$147.48/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$59.50/lb./USD

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