

Outdoor Rec / Local

Public invited to comment on sage-grouse conservation plan

Given a finding by the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada that the Bureau of Land Management's designation of Sagebrush Focal Areas in its 2015 greater sage-grouse plan amendment for Nevada was illegal, the Bureau today offered the public an opportunity to comment and share issues for its consideration as it explores potential amendments to greater sage-grouse land use plans, to help improve sage-grouse conservation, and to strengthen communication and collaboration between states and the federal government.

The plans, which were adopted in 2014 and 2015, provide guidance and direction about the management of public lands in 10 Western states: California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Montana.

"The BLM is committed to being a good neighbor

and cooperating with its partners at all levels of government, including states, as well as tribal leaders, industry and conservation groups, ranchers, and other stakeholders throughout the amendment process," said BLM Acting Director Mike Nedd. "During this process, we are particularly interested in hearing from the many governors whose states put hard work and time into collaborative efforts to develop the existing plans. We welcome their input."

The U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada ruled in March 2017 that the BLM failed to adequately evaluate the designation of Sagebrush Focal Areas in its 2015 greater sage-grouse plan amendment for Nevada.

In order to comply with the court's order and to address issues raised by various interested parties, and to consider recommendations in the August 4, 2017 report prepared

by the Department of the Interior's Greater Sage-Grouse Review Team in Response to Secretary's Order 3353 (SO 3353), the BLM intends to consider amending these plans.

The BLM will soon publish a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to announce the beginning of a scoping process to solicit public comments on greater sage-grouse land management issues that could warrant land use plan amendments.

The BLM also wants to receive input on whether that planning effort should occur through state-by-state amendment processes, and in particular looks forward to receiving comments from the Governors of each state. The notice has been sent to the Federal Register and is awaiting publication.

Publication of the notice initiates a process that could eventually result in some changes, significant changes or no changes

at all. The notice can be read on the BLM website: <https://on.doi.gov/2fNuFPt>.

"The federal agencies and states involved in developing the Report in Response to Secretarial Order 3353 remain committed to an approach that balances durable, long-term conservation of the Greater Sage-Grouse without adversely affecting economic development in local communities across the West," added Nedd.

The Notice of Intent is posted on the BLM website here and is awaiting publication.

The public can provide comments for 45 days from the date the notice appears in the Federal Register using this webpage: <http://bit.ly/GRSGplanning>.

The BLM will announce any public meetings it plans to hold through local media in each state.

BLM reversal: Mining not deemed threat to sage-grouse

Based on a recent analysis and review of data available that showed that future mining is not a significant threat to sage-grouse habitat, the Bureau of Land Management has canceled its Sagebrush Focal Area withdrawal application and the Department's proposed withdrawal of 10 million acres of federal lands from location and entry under the mining law in Greater Sage-grouse habitat in six Western States.

The BLM also terminated the associated environmental analysis process. The notice of cancellation can be found on the BLM website here: <https://on.doi.gov/2hOpRxn>.

The BLM determined the proposal to withdraw 10

million acres was unreasonable in light of the data that showed that mining affected less than .1 percent of sage-grouse-occupied range.

"The proposal to withdraw 10 million acres to prevent 10,000 from potential mineral development was a complete overreach," said Acting BLM Director Mike Nedd. "Secretary Zinke has said from the beginning that by working closely with the states, who are on the front lines and a valued partner in protecting the health of these lands, we can be successful in conserving greater sage grouse habitat without stifling economic development and job growth. And that's what we intend to do--protect

important habitat while also being a good neighbor to states and local communities."

The recommendation to withdraw nearly 10 million acres from location and entry under the mining law was one of many land use restrictions proposed for a new management area designated as the Sagebrush Focal Area (SFA). However, that recommendation was unreasonable in light of the data available. In particular, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2005 "Not Warranted" decision, the 2010 "Warranted But Precluded" decision and the 2015 "Not Warranted" decision all showed that mining—including locatable mining—was not a significant threat

to sage-grouse.

The lands will continue to be managed in accordance with existing plans, programs, policies and regulations in Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming.

They had been temporarily segregated, or closed to new mining claims for 2 years when the Department originally proposed the lands for withdrawal in 2015, while the agency studied whether locatable mineral exploration and mining projects would adversely affect habitat important to the greater sage grouse.

That temporary segregation period expired September 24, 2017.

Arrests made in Lookout Mountain game violations

On September 25, 2017, Chase Rusinovich (dob 01/03/97) of 92891 Island View Road, Astoria, Oregon, Austin Barter (dob 12/02/1996) of 92100 Makai Road, Astoria, Oregon, Max Andersen (dob 09/10/1996) of 2 McClain Road, Astoria, Oregon and Jake Marinovich (dob 06/18/1996) of 40164 Angberg lane, Astoria, Oregon were all charged with multiple game violations following a lengthy investigation by the Oregon State Police Game Division.

Jake Marinovich was charged by a District Attorney's Information in Baker County Circuit Court for Aiding the Taking of a

Buck Mule Deer during closed season and Offensive Littering.

Max Andersen was also charged by District Attorney's Information with Unlawful Hunting of Wildlife during closed season, three counts of Unlawful Taking of a Buck Mule Deer, Unlawful Taking of a Doe Mule Deer, three counts of Unlawful Waste of Wildlife, Hunting without a Valid License, Hunting during a Closed Season and Offensive Littering.

Austin Barter was also charged by District Attorney's Information with Unlawful Hunting of Wildlife, Unlawful Taking of a Buck Mule deer, Unlawful

Taking of a Doe Mule deer, two counts of Unlawful Waste of Wildlife, Aiding the Unlawful Taking of Mule deer, Unlawful Possession of Wildlife and Offensive Littering.

Jake Marinovich was charged by District Attorney's Information with Aiding in the Unlawful Taking of a Buck Mule deer and Offensive Littering.

All of the charges stemmed from an investigation of illegal poaching of mule deer in the Lookout Mountain Unit in Baker County.

The illegal activity is alleged to have occurred between the dates of November of 2015 through

November of 2016.

The case originated based on citizen involvement. Citizens called the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife who notified the Oregon State Police game division upon finding dead mule deer in the lookout unit.

Because some of the animals that were illegally taken were trophy mule deer under Oregon statute the penalties can include \$7500 restitution per deer and mandatory hunting license suspension.

Citizen participation in the case lead to the arrest of all of the individuals involved.

Sumpter City Council meets

• CANNABIS SALES TAX CHECKS TO BE CUT SOON

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH
Meghan@TheBakerCountyPress.com

Sumpter City Council met on October 10, 2017 to hear reports and discuss several items of business. Meeting minutes of September 12 and 18 were approved, as was payment of bills.

Fire Department Report

Fire Chief Kurt Clarke reported the open house went well, with some new faces there. Some equipment was moved to the pavilion to be stored for the winter. Everything with the burn pile went well last Saturday and he thanked those who participated. He mentioned an upcoming wildland fire course in La Grande. The Fire Department's annual Spaghetti Feed fundraiser will be October 24 from about 4 p.m. to about 8:30 p.m.

He reminded everyone that the brush truck is on call and whenever it leaves town, it is actually expanding coverage for Sumpter, because the more it goes out, "the more they come when we have an issue."

Council member Robert Armbruster said he received a nice e-mail from Diane Miller regarding the bumpile. Clarke stated there will be another one on the 21st.

Clarke asked when the check from the 3% marijuana tax is expected and if it is no longer required that the funds go to public safety. City Recorder Julie McKinney stated that according to an e-mail she received, OLCC is supposed to be cutting checks tomorrow. The 3% that was originally designated for public safety now goes in the general fund.

Planning Commission Report

John Young reported no new applications. The commission spent 45 minutes going over the Comprehensive Plan, goal 12. They are not quite done with it.

Mayor Cary Clarke asked, in light of all the fires in California, what is the status of the City's evacuation plan. Young stated he has about two-thirds of it and that he will set a goal to have it to Council by next March for their consideration.

Utility Manager Report

Julie McKinney read a report from Utility Manager Jeff McKinney. Water tests were conducted at five locations for lead and copper residual. These have always showed little to no contaminant and he anticipates similar results. Water is processing at 90 gallons per minute, with the source stream running a little higher than in past, due in part to heavier than usual snowfall. The four-wheel-drive quit working on the City truck and will be repaired during the normal fall maintenance.

McKinney will be pushing for winterizing a little earlier than usual. City ordinance requires customers to take all reasonable precautions to avoid damage to utility lines, including during freezing weather. He reminded everyone to let a small amount of water run during the coldest months. If the City has to excavate the street to thaw lines, it is likely the homeowner will be billed. He hopes with everyone's cooperation to avoid the expense and inconvenience of having to make such winter repairs.

RFP for Equipment Shed

Julie McKinney said CIS gave her three names to contact about the building but she needs design specifics. The foundation is 40'x83' and the building will need two equipment doors and a man door. She asked if the stem wall that is there can be used and Clarke stated it can. Clarke will try to put something together in the next week or so with details on needs for power, lights, plugs, and such.

Resolution 344: Move Budget Capacity

Resolution 344 to move cannabis-related capacity within fiscal water and sewer funds for the 2017/2018 budget, removing the funds from funds to be used to repay an expected federal loan for DEQ-mandated sewer upgrades, was approved unanimously.

Council Input

Clarke stated that during the last mayors' meeting, the city manager of Baker City mentioned the possibility of Sumpter losing ambulance service, with a cost of sixty thousand between transporting from Sumpter and Haines. Clarke suggested this might be something to which to apply the cannabis sales tax funds, as it's too expensive for the Sumpter Fire Department to transport.

Clarke stated that with winter coming, everyone needs to check and clean flues to avoid flue fires. The City has a stovepipe brush available to loan out.

Public Input

LeAnne Woolf read the list of Sumpter's October events.

Jim Sheller, grooming chairman and president of the snowmobile club, reported they just got a new replacement Cat. Instead of pulling a groomer, they will be tilling—the new way of grooming trails. He stated the need for everyone to get behind the snowmobile club and said otherwise the Forest Service is going to try to force the trails out. He mentioned the decision of a judge in Idaho that snowmobiles must be included in forest management plans. Membership in the snowmobile club is only \$35 per year.

Sheller also mentioned the need for younger volunteers and there was some discussion of how to reach out to them. Sheller said there are lots of young riders but they are not joiners. He stated the Poker Run is a big draw for Sumpter, but they need volunteers to run it.

Kurt Clarke asked about insurance on the old fire truck. McKinney stated it had liability coverage only. Clarke said it got mashed up pretty good due to the building collapse and it will take about \$1,000 to make it presentable. He said they will work on that and may look at fundraising for repairs after the tender is paid for.

Quail Ridge ladies golf and bridge

The October 4th Quail Ridge Ladies Golf Winners were: 1st Flight Dana Endicott; 3rd Flight Carol Irvine.

Bridge Winners: 1st Mar-

tha Cassidy; 2nd Lavelle Raley; and 3rd Marilyn DelFatti.

For September 27, the Golf Winners were: 1st Flight Judy Karstens;

2nd Flight Sammye Linzel; and 3rd Flight Marianne Klinger.

Birdies: Dana Endicott (2) and Judy Karstens. Bridge winners for Sep-

tember 27 were: 1st Sandy Grover; 2nd Janice Smull; and 3rd Karen Lewis.