

SLANT

• What links the largest mass shootings in the U.S in the past 30 years?

Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas (2017) at least **59**
more than 500 wounded **killed**

Pulse nightclub, Orlando (2016) **49**
killed

Virginia Tech (2007) **32**
killed

Sandy Hook school (2012) **26**
killed

Luby's restaurant, TX (1991) **22**
killed

San Bernardino (2015) **14**
killed

Fort Hood Military Base (2009) **13**
killed

Binghamton, NY Immigrant Center (2009) **13**
killed

Navy Yard headquarters (2013) **12**
killed

Aurora, CO movie theater (2012) **12**
killed

Columbine High School (1999) **12**
killed

The common denominator is guns. We can talk about mental illness or terrorism, but you can't talk about shooting without talking about the guns that fired the bullets. Your ideology or your mental state don't matter if you can't get hold of a weapon capable of killing masses of innocent people. We've reached a point in America where the shooting at Umpqua Community College in 2015 in which 10 people, including the gunman, died doesn't even warrant inclusion on most mass-shootings lists. That's how out of control it is.

Gun control. Now.

• **Dolores is just the documentary we need** after 18 hours of brilliant but relentless pounding on the Vietnam War by PBS documentarian Ken Burns. Opening Friday, Oct. 6, at Eugene's Broadway Metro, the new film details the career of Dolores Huerta, who organized the United Farm Workers with Cesar Chavez, devoted her life to human rights and environmental justice and, at the age of 87, continues to work — mostly on community organizing. Huerta fought racism, sexism, income inequality, the down sides of advanced capitalism and big ag. Her life is a light for all of us, and Peter Bratt's documentary captures it.

• **Why not our own Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley for president in 2020?** We hear rumblings and see him more and more on national TV. *The New York Times* included Merkley in its Oct. 1 story on "Who Can Beat Trump in 2020." Yes, he was listed last, but the *Times* said: "If the populist wing is looking for a Plan C, Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon humbly suggests himself. He was the only senator to endorse Mr. Sanders in 2016, has been spending a fair amount of time in Iowa of late, and has become the go-to guy on Capitol Hill for liberal groups like MoveOn." We'd love to see an Oregonian in the White House.

• It's time to sign! **The deadline for collecting 7,000 valid signatures on a Eugene initiative petition to create an independent elected city auditor is Oct. 12.** "We know auditing saves agencies money," says Gary Blackmer, recently retired director of the Oregon Secretary of State Audits Division. "We calculated it all different ways at the Oregon Secretary of State Office, and looking at three-year averages we return about \$5 for every \$1 spent." Sounds like a good deal to us. See details of the independent auditor proposal at cityaccountability.org.



NEWS

BY MAX THORNBERRY

GIANT TREE GROVE
IN THE CRABTREE
VALLEY

PHOTO: DARRYL LLOYD

PUSHING BACK AGAINST TRUMP

A local organization proposes expanding, not shrinking, national monuments

A Springfield-based group is pushing back against the Trump administration's review of national monuments. Friends of the Douglas-fir National Monument is working to propose a new national monument in Oregon. The proposal comes on the heels of Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke submitting a list of 27 national monuments designated since 1996 to be reviewed.

National monuments such as the Cascade-Siskiyou that lies in both California and Oregon — are pieces of land afforded special protections by the U.S. government. The proposed Douglas-fir National Monument would include roughly 760 square miles of land in the north, middle and south Santiam River watershed. Most of the land is Willamette National Forest, with pockets of privately owned and Bureau of Land Management property.

In April, President Trump signed Executive Order 13792, charging Zinke to review all national monuments designated since Jan. 1, 1996, that were 100,000 acres or greater in size, or "where the Secretary determines that the designation or expansion was made without adequate public outreach and coordination with relevant stakeholders."

The list of 27 national monuments was released on May 5 by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Only one of Oregon's monuments came under review, but a leaked memorandum showed that Secretary Zinke recommended shrinking the Cascade-Siskiyou monument.

In light of recent events, a call to establish another monument might seem out of place; however, vice president and mastermind of Friends of the Douglas-fir National Monument, Stephen Sharnoff, sees an opportunity. He doesn't expect the current administration or Congress to establish a new monument but says raising awareness about protecting old-growth forests is important.

"Protecting the few stands of old-growth forest is a high priority, but it's also critical to restore the large acreages of cutover land to a healthy forest condition," Sharnoff wrote in an email to *EW*. "Most of the area in the proposed monument was heavily logged in the decades after World War II, and it now is a mosaic of stands of different ages. We hope to see it become a real forest again." The group points to other iconic tree species such as the redwoods and Joshua trees that have namesake national parks or monuments.

Sharnoff pitched the idea to the local Audubon society about two years ago. There he met Audubon member David Stone, who eventually became the president of Friends of the Douglas-fir National Monument. The group was incorporated as a non profit last August.

The American Antiquities Act of 1906 gave presidents the power to set aside parcels of government-owned land as national monuments with the goal of protecting biodiversity. Democratic presidents established nearly all of the monuments under review, and the two dedicated by George W. Bush were expanded during Obama's tenure in the oval office.

Oregon senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley responded to the leaked memo that showed Zinke's proposal to shrink the Cascade-Siskiyou monument, citing the overwhelming public support and feedback for the original designation.

"It is unacceptable that the administration would try to dismiss the voices of the majority of Oregonians who worked in good faith to make themselves heard in favor of protecting and expanding the Cascade-Siskiyou Monument," Wyden said in a press release. "The fate of this Oregon treasure should not be another state secret on top of everything else this administration has tried to keep in the dark. These public lands belong to all Oregonians, and they should remain open to everyone to enjoy and use, not be managed by a memo thousands of miles away in Washington, DC." ■

For more information about the monument visit douglasfirnationalmonument.com.