

Documents show value of recreation at Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument

Information was heavily redacted

By **TONY SCHICK**
Oregon Public Broadcasting



Bob Wick/Bureau of Land Management

The Trump administration may shrink the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in southern Oregon.

Recreation in an untamed part of southern Oregon generated far more economic benefit than grazing and logging put together. Yet it's difficult to say how changing the boundaries of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument might alter that mix.

That's because of the way the Trump administration heavily redacted documents it recently released. They were made public in response to a Freedom of Information Act request from Oregon Public Broadcasting, EarthFix and other parties about the controversy-shrouded Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

The documents are part of the Trump administration's review of several national monument designations, including the one in southern Oregon. Both supporters and opponents of the monument expansion say the multiple pages of blacked out information are a troubling sign.

The Cascade-Siskiyou monument is a 114,000-acre pre-

serve connecting three mountain ranges in southern Oregon. It was designated a national monument to preserve the region's biodiversity. In 2017, President Barack Obama doubled its size just before leaving office. The Trump administration is now considering shrinking it.

Among the newly public documents is an economic assessment from the Bureau of Land Management that estimates recreation generated \$16.6 million in economic output and supported 200 jobs in 2016. Estimates for ranching and timber were \$1.1 million and \$600,000.

"Economics is not the reason for the monument. If

there is a recreation benefit, and according to the BLM there is a remarkable economic recreation benefit, that's a byproduct. That's a bonus. That's frosting on the cake," said Dave Willis of the Soda Mountain Wilderness Council. "Green is gold. When you protect public lands it's economically better off in the long term than degrading them."

The Interior Department, which oversees the BLM, declined comment, citing pending litigation over the monument. Officials referred inquiries to the U.S. Department of Justice. The Department of Justice did not respond to requests for comment.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden,

an Oregon Republican who opposed the monument expansion, did not respond to a request for comment.

The latest documents include a draft memo that is entirely blacked out, veiling who reviewed it and what input they gave. The administration also blacked out its examinations of land management trade-offs, which include the government's estimate of how the land would be used today had the monument not been designated, particularly for timber and ranching. Those are the portions of the documents watchers of the monument debate say are likely to have the most impact on the administration's decision-making.

"Regardless of whether you support it or don't support the expansion and the process. I think it reveals that there really is a lack of information flow from the government to the public. And that should be a concern," said Travis Joseph, president of the American Forest Resource Council.

Joseph took issue with the economic estimates in the documents. He said recreation in the area was likely to be high regardless of whether the land was officially designated a monument or not. He also said the agency is lowballing the potential for timber production.

Oregon attorney general considers investigation into election fraud

Questions over IP 31

By **LAUREN DAKE**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum is considering whether to investigate if a crime was committed during the process of putting one of the more controversial initiatives on the November ballot.

At issue is a tax-related measure that could make it harder for Democrats to raise money in the future. The measure, Initiative Petition 31, would require a three-fifths vote of the Legislature for all taxes and fee increases, meaning Democrats without a supermajority would need Republican votes to raise revenue.

The governor is in the midst of working with business and labor groups to keep the measure off the ballot.

Despite calls from some Democratic lawmakers to halt the measure verification process while an investigation is underway, the secretary of state's office is moving forward with the certification process.

The complaint and investigation could, however, jeopardize the measure's chance of making it to the ballot.

Stephen Trout, the state's election director, said the secretary of state's office will continue to certify the signatures and wait to hear back from the attorney general's office. After hearing from the attorney general's office, the secretary of state could consider whether to levy civil penalties.

Trout said his office has until the first week of August to certify the signatures.

"We often get complaints at the last minute,"

Trout said, adding that, to his knowledge, it's never halted the certification process.

The complaint filed by Connea Derber outlines a litany of issues. Derber said she was collecting signatures when she wasn't certified to do so, she alleges someone else hired by the signature-gathering firm signed the sheets of signatures she collected, and she suggests she was paid based on the number of signatures she was able to collect, which is against the law.

Lee Vasche, who owns Ballot Access — the firm who hired Derber and oversees the signature gathering process — said Derber was being used by Our Oregon, a union-backed group, to stymie the measure.

Vasche, whose business tends to support more conservative measures, and the more liberal Our Oregon have a history of filing election complaints against each other.

"They want to stop this measure," Vasche said of Our Oregon. "The politicians are passing fee increases. Everything is a fee increase instead of a tax increase and they are skirting the three-fifths requirement. This petition tightens this down ... Our Oregon is strongly against that and that's fine, that's their prerogative, of course, but they are using the complaint process to score political points."

Realtors have been pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into the campaign, in part to ward off the future possibility that lawmakers could curb the mortgage interest and property tax deductions.

In a statement Tuesday, the director of Our Oregon called the incident one of the state's more significant cases of voter fraud.

Walters sworn in as chief justice of state Supreme Court

Associated Press

Martha Walters has been sworn in as chief justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, the first woman to lead the state's highest court.

Walters, 67, was elected by her fellow justices to succeed Thomas Balmer, who has served on the court since 2001 and will remain on the bench, The Oregonian reported. Walters, sworn in Monday, will preside over the seven-member court for the next six years.

Walters said she plans to use her new role to ensure Oregonians have access to a fair and impartial justice system.

"We are at the forefront of the problems the people in our society face," Walters said.

Walters graduated from the University of Oregon School of Law in 1977, and then worked as a lawyer in Eugene.

She was part of the legal team that won a 2001 U.S. Supreme Court case on behalf of professional golfer Casey Martin, who sued the PGA Tour over its requirement that players must walk during tourna-

ment play. The court ruled that Martin, whose circulatory disorder made it difficult for him to walk, was protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act and must be allowed to use a golf cart.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski appointed Walters to the Oregon Supreme Court in 2006.

She has since won two elections.

Balmer described his replacement as enthusiastic, smart and hardworking. He noted that there were no women justices when Walters joined the court in 2006. Now there are five.

"She will set a high bar for the next chief justice, whether it's a man or woman, because she will do a great job."

The year Walters graduated law school, Betty Roberts became the first woman appointed to the Oregon Court of Appeals. Roberts went on to become the first woman on the Oregon Supreme Court in 1982.

Walters said she looked up to Roberts and knows she might inspire other women who wish to follow in her career path.



Martha Walters

Widow of Longview dockworker files wrongful death lawsuit

Associated Press

The widow of a Longview, Washington, dockworker killed when a mooring line snapped on a cargo ship has filed a \$15 million wrongful death lawsuit against the ship's owner and operators.

Byron Jacobs was killed June 28 while he was attending the vessel at the Port of Longview.

The Oregonian says Megan Jacobs filed a lawsuit on behalf of her husband. The lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Portland, names SE Harmony Corp., the Taiwan-based vessel owner, and Bright Charter Shipping Ltd., which managed and oper-

ated the ship.

The lawsuit alleges they repositioned the ship without checking if the crew was in danger and did not provide safe lines to shift the ship.

The vessel owner and operators couldn't be immediately reached for comment.

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