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OUR VIEW

Move forward, not backward

No one seems pleased with where the Blue Mountains Forest Plan is headed, but back to square one seems like an even worse direction.

It is admirable that the U.S. Forest Service realizes the gulf remains wide and that they are considering restarting the process and creating a new preferred alternative. Yet that moves us backward, not forward, in what has already been a decade-long slog toward creating a workable plan.

We're usually reticent to move backward, especially when so much time and energy has already been expended. And it is hard not to stay principled in this instance, despite the pushback the USFS has received to all of their proposed alternatives.

At the pace the process was moving, the Forest Service was hoping to have a plan in place by late 2016. Going backward would postpone that by at least a year, probably more.

Therefore, we recommend staying

engaged with the public, tweaking alternatives but pushing forward toward completion.

Not one of the current alternatives makes everyone happy, and we doubt that a new one will bring a different conclusion. There will still be a burr under the saddle of many fighting the Forest Service's range of proposals — everyone from county commissioners to motorized use groups to environmentalists and the timber industry.

All of the above squeaky wheels have competing priorities and legitimate concerns, and there is no magic plan that will appease them all.

The Forest Service should trust their work, tune out the haters and try to satisfy as many demands as they can without sacrificing the health of the forest.

And strangely, that is one truth that some interested parties just can't seem to grasp: the forest plan must put the forest first.

There should be no debate: the Blue Mountains Forest Plan must put the forest first.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

OTHER VIEWS

Edible marijuana needs strict and specific limits

(Medford) Mail-Tribune

A Washington state woman who suffered an apparent overdose after eating candy containing marijuana has police concerned, and a state legislator who heads the committee charged with implementing legal marijuana in Oregon has vowed to move slowly when it comes to approving edible marijuana products. Moving slowly may not be enough — legislators should take steps to put strict and specific limits on the types of marijuana "candies" allowed to be sold in the state.

Edible forms of marijuana can contain extremely high concentrations of the active ingredient in marijuana, posing a hazard to users inexperienced with ingesting marijuana and unfamiliar with its effects. Several incidents of overdoses have been reported in Colorado, where voters legalized recreational marijuana a year ago.

Most concerning is the increase in cases of children treated after ingesting edible marijuana products, which are indistinguishable from ordinary candy and cookies. In Colorado, at least 14 children ages 3 to 7 were sent to hospitals in the first half of 2014 for accidentally ingesting marijuana

products, compared with eight in all of 2013 and four between 2008 and 2011.

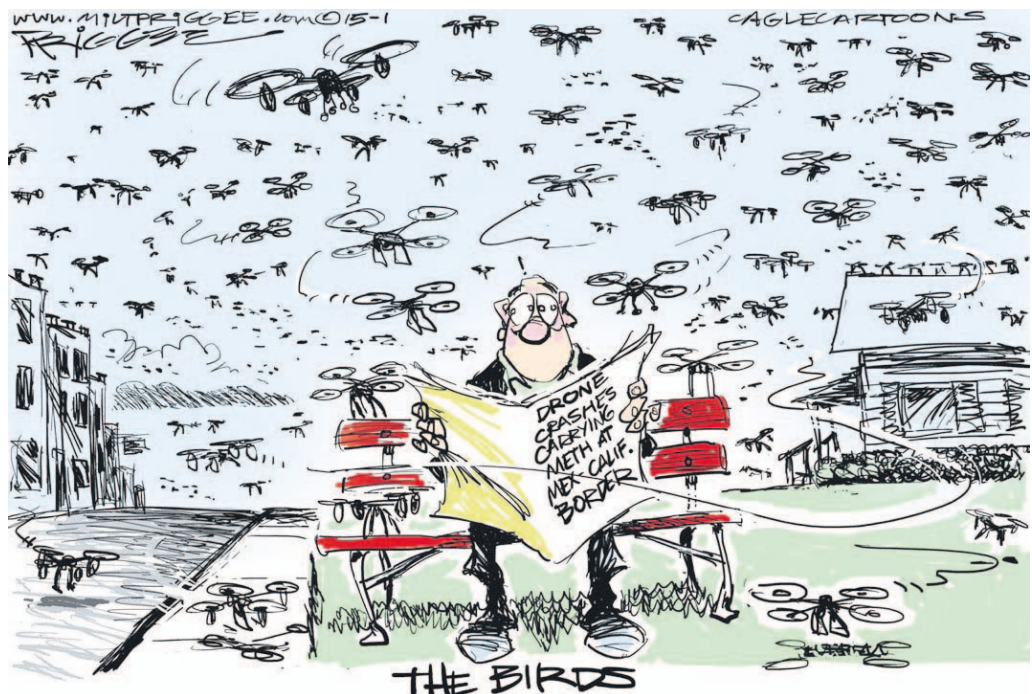
In the Oregon incident, a 37-year-old Washington state woman ate three small gummie candies provided by a friend who had purchased them in Washington. The woman was slumped over, pale and lethargic and having difficulty breathing. She refused transport to a hospital and apparently suffered no lasting effects.

Drug specialists warn that, while the effects of smoking marijuana are quickly apparent, it takes much longer for the effects to be felt when the drug is swallowed, so users may eat more while waiting.

This is an example of the advantage Oregon has by being the third state to legalize recreational marijuana. The drug does not become legal to possess here until July, and won't be available for retail purchase until January 2016. That leaves plenty of time to craft limits and regulations to protect consumers.

In the case of "edibles," lawmakers should adopt strict rules for appearance and packaging to keep the products out of children's hands, and require detailed warnings for adults on how to avoid ingesting too much. There is no need to allow more than a bare minimum of the edibles to be sold; the risks far outweigh any benefit to consumers or retailers.

Most concerning is the increase in cases of children treated after ingesting marijuana products.



OTHER VIEWS

Czar Putin's next moves

ZURICH — Last March, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was quoted as saying that Russian President Vladimir Putin's attack on Ukraine, supposedly in defense of Russian-speakers there, was just like "what Hitler did back in the '30s" — using ethnic Germans to justify his invasion of neighboring lands. At the time, I thought such a comparison was over the top. I don't think so anymore. I'd endorse Clinton's comparison purely for the shock value: It draws attention to the awful things Putin is doing to Ukraine, not to mention his own country, whose credit rating was just reduced to junk status.

Putin's use of Russian troops wearing uniforms without insignia to invade Ukraine and to covertly buttress Ukrainian rebels bought and paid for by Moscow — all disguised by a web of lies that would have made Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels blush and all for the purpose of destroying Ukraine's reform movement before it can create a democratic model that might appeal to Russians more than Putin's kleptocracy — is the ugliest geopolitical mugging happening in the world today.

Ukraine matters — more than the war in Iraq against the Islamic State, aka ISIS. It is still not clear that most of our allies in the war against ISIS share our values. That conflict has a big tribal and sectarian element. It is unmistakably clear, though, that Ukraine's reformers in its newly elected government and Parliament — who are struggling to get free of Russia's orbit and become part of the European Union's market and democratic community — do share our values. If Putin the Thug gets away with crushing Ukraine's new democratic experiment and unilaterally redrawing the borders of Europe, every pro-Western country around Russia will be in danger.

"Putin fears a Ukraine that demands to live and wants to live and insists on living on European values — with a robust civil society and freedom of speech and religion (and) with a system of values the Ukrainian people have chosen and laid down their lives for," Natalie Jaresko, Ukraine's finance minister, told a Ukraine seminar at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last week.

The U.S. and Germany have done a good job organizing the sanctions on Russia. While the Obama administration recently decided to deploy some U.S. soldiers to Ukraine in the spring to train the Ukrainian National Guard, I'd support increasing our military aid to Ukraine's army now so it can better defend itself from the estimated 9,000 troops Putin has infiltrated into Ukraine.

Ukraine also needs \$15 billion in loans and grants in the next year to stabilize its economy, in addition to its bailout from the International

Monetary Fund. Ukrainians had dug themselves into a deep, deep hole with their 20-plus years of industrial levels of corruption from a series of bad governments after Kiev became independent of the Soviet Union. The reason for hope is that the revolution and latest elections in Ukraine have brought in a new generation of reformers, who are rapidly transforming ministries and passing tax and transparency regulations. They are actually welcoming hardheaded, good-governance benchmarks as a condition for Western aid. But if they deliver, we must deliver.

Treasury Secretary Jack Lew has been traveling across Europe this week in part to lock in the aid package for Kiev. The U.S. has committed its share, but the European Union is still balking a bit. Putin's aim is to sow enough instability that the West will hold back aid so the Ukraine reformers will fail to deliver and be discredited. That would be a shame.

Global financier George Soros, who's been helping foster Ukrainian reform, told the Davos gathering that "there is a new Ukraine that is determined to be different from the old Ukraine. ... What makes it unique is that it is not only willing to fight but engage in executing a set of radical reforms. It is up against the old Ukraine that has not disappeared ... and up against a very determined design by President Putin to destabilize it and destroy it. But it is determined to assert the independence and European orientation of the new Ukraine."

Ukraine could also affect the price of oil. The two biggest actors who can shape that price today are Saudi Arabia's new king, Salman, and Russia's czar, Putin. If the Saudis decide to cut back production significantly, the price of oil will go up. And if Putin decides to fully invade Ukraine, or worse, one of the Baltic states, and test whether NATO will really fight to defend either, the price of oil will go up. With his economy in shambles, Putin's government is now almost entirely dependent on oil and gas exports, so he's really hurting with the oil price collapse. The odds of Putin fully invading Ukraine or the Baltics are low, but do not rule out either.

Triggering a big geopolitical crisis with NATO is an easy way for Putin to shock the oil price back up. Putin's covert Ukraine interventions up to now have not succeeded in that. In sum: Today's oil price will be most affected by two men — King Salman and how he uses his spare capacity to produce oil and Czar Putin and how he uses his spare capacity to produce trouble.

Thomas L. Friedman won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, his third Pulitzer for *The New York Times*. He became the paper's foreign-affairs Op-Ed columnist in 1995.



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

Ukraine matters — more than the war in Iraq against the Islamic State, aka ISIS.

YOUR VIEWS

Tear down Tamastlikt, it's a drain on tribal resources

So Tamastlikt will be installing solar carports, which will allegedly save lots of money. I have a money-saving and waste prevention recommendation: Let's shut the place down and raze it. It should not have been put up in the first place.

The times I visited the place, it was about 80 percent devoted to the Pendleton Round-Up. What connection does the rodeo have with our culture and history? We've been here for a few thousand years, the rodeo 105 years.

The museum is a tremendous drain on our resources with nothing in return. Whenever I choose to direct my daily walks in that area, I see maybe three or four cars in the visitors' parking lot! Our endeavors should have a positive effect on the lives of our tribal members.

John Shippentower
Pendleton

City council made mistake in approving Brownfield bronze

The question concerning bronzes placed on Main Street should be what really represents Pendleton's unique and colorful past and what bronzes will attract and be more apt to hold visitors and tourists in downtown Pendleton for the betterment of our economic health. The Requa bronze is well deserved but it belongs at the high school.

I believe the city council has made a mistake in approving the placement of the Requa bronze on the most historic site in Pendleton, the Oregon Trail crossing the Umatilla River at the present site of the Main Street Bridge.

If I were on the city council I would rather admit a mistake and correct it now instead of trying to justify it over and over and over again in the future as with the rusty stirrup now sitting at Main and Dorion.

Fritz Hill
Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

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