LWCF: Congress also strengthened wildfire funding

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to see the fund written back into the federal budget.

"The goal is to preserve the property and put it into county ownership so it can be a community-owned forest," Ackley said. "The LWCF will help us ensure this icon of northeast Oregon remains undeveloped and locally owned."

The Wallowa Land Trust is part of a five-pronged coalition dedicated to preserving East Moraine Wallowa Lake, along with Wallowa County, Wallowa Resources, the Trust for Public Land and Oregon State Parks.

According to their application, the East Moraine is one of the country's most perfectly formed glacial landscapes and arguably one of the most iconic unprotected areas in Eastern Oregon. Ackley said the wildlife and scenery are a major draw for 700,000 visitors to Wallowa County each year.

Yet 3,000 acres of the East Moraine are under private ownership, with 60 percent owned by the Ronald C. Yanke Family Trust of Boise. The family trust had expressed a desire to either sell or develop the property, which is when the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership stepped in.

The partnership is still negotiating a final price with the family trust. Ackley said $3 million will only cover a portion of the bill. The rest, she said, must come from non-federal sources.

"This, for us, is a community treasure we want to see continued under local ownership and contributing to the local economy," Ackley said.

As a working landscape, Ackley said the land would continue to include open access, as well as grazing and timber harvest, to contribute back to the local economy.

Meanwhile, the Kimball family of Washington — brothers Fred, Frank and Steve — recently donated nine acres of their own moraine property to the land trust for preservation.

Kelley Beamer, executive director of the Portland-based Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, said she was happy to see the LWCF extended, calling it the single-most important land acquisition fund in the country.

However, Beamer said the organization will continue to strive toward a permanent fix for the fund, rather than punting it three years down the road.

"It doesn't solve the long-term issue," Beamer said.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, said he will continue to fight to make LWCF funding permanent.

"These protections are especially important in our state where hunting, fishing and camping are in our DNA as Oregonians, and where so many local recreation jobs are supported by all those activities," Wyden said.

In other developments from the federal omnibus spending bill:

• Wildfire funding has been bolstered for 2016, including a $600 million reserve account that can be rolled over in case of another devastating fire season. The additional fund is meant to limit the practice of "fire-borrowing," where the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management are forced to shift money from other programs to cover the cost of firefighting.

Both Sen. Wyden and Rep. Greg Walden, R-Oregon, have promoted bills that would end fire-borrowing in the long term by creating special disaster relief funds for firefighting. Walden's favored legislation also called for fast-tracking forest thinning projects under certain criteria. That bill, known as the Resilient Federal Forests Act, passed the House in July but stalled in the Senate.

• Funding has also been maintained at the Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center north of Pendleton, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service.

Earlier this year, it appeared the local ARS station would lose $911,000, roughly half its annual funding, as the current administration proposed shifting dollars to what they deemed higher priority projects within the agency.

Had that happened, the Columbia Plateau research station would have been forced to lay off three of five staff scientists and end its research project for no-till farming of winter wheat. Instead, Sens. Wyden, Jeff Merkley and Rep. Walden all pushed back against the cuts and funding was ultimately saved.

Merkley, the top Democrat on the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, drafted a bill including language to fund the ARS.

"Supporting local agricultural research that can respond directly to the challenges and opportunities our farmers and ranchers face is essential to strengthening our economy," Merkley said.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

LWCF funds local work

Since it was established in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has invested nearly $1 billion into Oregon and Washington and impacted some of Umatilla County's favorite parks. The following is a short list of local grants funded over the years:

- **Roy Raley Park Development, Pendleton $13,468 (1973)**
- **Pendleton River Parkway $107,485 (1984-1990, two phases)**
- **Orchard Park Rehab, Hermiston $190,839 (2011)**
- **McKenzie Park Development, Hermiston $21,314 (1970-1972, three phases)**
- **Marie Dorion Park Development, Milton-Freewater $25,755 (1983)**
- **Kiwanis Park Development, Umatilla $11,885 (1991)**
- **Pilot Rock Tennis Courts $6,278 (1975)**
- **Athena Swimming Pool Rehab $12,623 (1987)**
- **Elliott Memorial Park Development, Weston $2,275 (1973)**
- **Little League Field Redevelopment, Stanfield $1,080 (1983)**

Source: InvestigateWest database

EOTEC: County could sign off on using something other than land as collateral

Continued from 1A

committee planned to take out a loan equal to the amount of promised contributions, using the EOTEC property as collateral. The loan would then be paid back using the promised donations as they came in.

The plan hit a snag earlier Wednesday during the Umatilla County Commissioners meeting, however. The intergovernmental agreement forming EOTEC requires the board to get permission from the county and the city of Hermiston before entering into any finance agreements. The city approved the plan on Monday, but on Wednesday county attorney Doug Olsen informed the commissioners that Oregon's constitution makes it illegal for a county to use land as collateral for a loan of that size.

"EOTEC only has the authority that both the county and the city have," he said in response to a comment by EOTEC board chair Ed Brookshier that the land was in EOTEC's name and not the county's. "So if the county does not have the authority, then EOTEC doesn't have the authority."

After the meeting Olsen said the county could sign off on using something other than land as collateral, and that more research would be done before the next county commission meeting to see what solutions could be offered.

After the EOTEC meeting in Hermiston, Rivera said Olsen's news was a surprise, but the committee was confident that they could find a way to finance donors' long-term contributions.

During Wednesday's evening meeting, board members also took questions from the audience.

In response to a question about what would happen to a program that had allowed people to purchase engraved bricks to support the project, Dan Dorran said the bricks that had already been purchased would be displayed, but the program was being pushed to the back burner to focus on the new fundraising effort.

In answer to a question about the opportunity for concerts, Dorran said EOTEC could host them in several spots. The Umatilla County Fair's outdoor stage would be moved over to the new fairgrounds, the indoor event center would feature a stage and room for 800 seats, the rodeo arena could seat up to 10,000 people if enough bleachers were brought in and the acres of green space that will be used for parking during the fair could accommodate outdoor concerts as well.

In answer to a question about irrigation, Brookshier said EOTEC currently has one well completed and has identified the location of a second well. Those two wells won't be enough to support the entire project, he said, but the board is in talks with the Stanfield and Hermiston irrigation districts about the possibility of leasing additional water rights.

Questions offered up by the community on Wednesday night will be added to an already-compiled list of Frequently Asked Questions found on www.eotechermiston.com. Rivera said as community members continue to submit questions during the fundraising process they will be added to the website, which also includes the full list of sponsorship information and a PayPal link where people can donate directly.

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DEATH: 1,327 prescriptions written as of January 2015

Continued from 1A

about why she wanted to end her life early. The newlywed said she didn't want her family to watch as she endured stabbing pain and seizures and while cancer destroyed her mind. Maynard steadfastly insisted that she wasn't committing suicide.

"I've had the medication for weeks," Maynard wrote in a column published by CNN. "I am not suicidal. If I were, I would have consumed that medication long ago. I do not want to die. But I am dying. And I want to die on my own terms."

Maynard passed away last November surrounded by family. Her celebrity spiked interest in Oregon's death with dignity law. Compassion & Choices Oregon got an avalanche of calls from people in other states with questions about the law.

"Brittany Maynard shot the movement forward incredibly quickly," said Matt Whitaker, director of Compassion & Choices Oregon. "Her story resonated with a lot of people. She was articulate, brave and people connected with her."

Moss has attended dozens of deaths in the several years she has volunteered. Two volunteers team to prepare the lethal medication, which involves taking powder from 90 capsules and mixing it with water. Dying persons must administer to themselves. Not one of her clients, Moss said, has ever backed away at the last moment.

"People drink it down with such determination," she said.

One might think this is depressing duty, but Moss said she has witnessed inspiring, joyful and even humorous moments as a Compassion & Choices volunteer. She shared a few stories from clients whose families didn't mind her sharing.

One client chose to end her life in her Japanese garden next to the koi pond.

"She wanted to take her medication wrapped in a blanket in the beautiful space she had created and with her family around her," Moss said.

A client with Lou Gehrig's disease sent invitations to his death and about 30 people attended. Two friends played background music while friends and family shared memories. The man's minister served as emcee. At the end, the man requested that everyone lay hands on him until he was gone.

> "I am not suicidal. If I were, I would have consumed that medication long ago. I do not want to die. But I am dying. And I want to die on my own terms."
>
> — **Brittany Maynard,** in a column published by CNN

"There were lots of laughs and lots of tears," Moss said.

Another time, an elderly woman dressed in white linen and a black headband and said she was ready to go. Moss warned her the liquid would be bitter and suggested a chaser, maybe sherry, which she knew the client enjoyed. The woman agreed and accepted both the medication and a small glass of sherry. With her children and grandchildren surrounding her, she said goodbye.

"She lay back on the bed," Moss said. "Suddenly, she opened her eyes and said, 'May I have a little more sherry?' She was gone a few moments later."

One client had been a strapping athletic man before he got sick and became wheelchair-bound. His wife Joyce (she didn't want to share her last name because some of their friends still don't know of his choice to end his life early) said knowing he had the option gave Bob peace of mind.

"Being an invalid was not easy for him," Joyce said. "This gave him choice and control."

The Portland-area man set a date. Since he had trouble swallowing liquids, Moss mixed the powder into chocolate pudding and he shoveled it in with shaky hands.

"He was in very good spirits," Joyce said. "He told us goodbye and closed his eyes. It was a simple and peaceful death."

Just about anything goes, Moss said — "They drive the bus."

Before the lethal dose, most people take an earlier dose of an anti-nausea medication. The Seconal costs about $3,000, which might be the reason Washington physicians prescribe a cheaper mixture of phenobarbital, chloral hydrate and morphine.

There are strict parameters for accessing Oregon's death with dignity law. You must be a state resident, 18 or older, who has a terminal illness that will likely kill you within six months. You must be mentally competent. Two different physicians must grant permission after the patient makes two oral requests and a written request, with at least 15 days between the two oral requests.

"The process takes a minimum of 18 days and more typically takes three months," Moss said.

Finding a doctor to grant the request is easier in the Willamette Valley than in rural Eastern Oregon. Some physicians have qualms or their employer won't allow it. Compassion & Choices sometimes helps people find clinics or healthcare systems willing to consider requests.

"As of January of 2015, there have been 1,327 prescriptions written," Whitaker said. "Of those, 859 people have taken the prescription."

Compassion & Choice volunteers are available in some Eastern Oregon locations. Moss hopes Umatilla County will eventually embrace the idea.

Despite being the wife of a minister, Moss has no reservations about a terminally ill person deciding to hasten their death.

"People say, 'We should let nature take its course,'" Moss said. "But we haven't let nature take its course in decades. If you're part of the medical system, nature is not taking its course."

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.

2015
Living Nativity
Sun., Dec. 20th
@ Roy Raley Park
Walk Thru 6-7 PM
Drive Thru 7-9 PM

Thank you Dr. Berecz for serving our community!

ROBERT BERECZ, M.D.

After nine years of continued service to our community, it is with deep respect and gratitude that we announce the retirement of Robert Berecz, M.D., General Surgeon. As of December 18, 2015, Dr. Berecz will no longer be seeing patients in the clinic.

We wish Dr. Berecz and his family best of luck and the best retirement as they embark on their new journey.

GOOD SHEPHERD HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

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