

## Quick takes

### Hermiston gets back to watermelon logo

Because Hermiston doesn't have bigger issues to deal with than a logo. Nice priorities guys.

— Marie Johnson

Marketing and branding done correctly brings more tax dollars to the community. A lot more than what was spent. This is chess not checkers.

— Jae Gomez

### Round-Up, Happy Canyon names Hall of Famers

Congratulations JD Yates! Awesome cowboy and an awesome lifelong friend.

— Abby Farrow-Stapleman

Congratulations to my friends Heather and Doug and a big shout out to my teacher Mr. Burke!

— Melissa Davis Joseph

### Vanilla Ice at Wildhorse

Word to your mother.

— Keith Walker

One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim\_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.

# Owyhee monument ignores local voices

My family has lived and worked in southeast Oregon since the 1800s. We are people of the land and for the land. Our businesses have worked hand-in-hand with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of State Lands to care for this land since the agencies were created.



LINDA BENTZ  
Comment

With our intimate knowledge of the lands, we assist in reporting, locating and fighting rangeland fires and helping with search and rescues missions. Our goal for our own land and the public's land is to maintain a healthy viable sagebrush ecosystem in the high desert of southeast Oregon.

Now, all of this may come to an end. An outdoor clothing corporation and special interest groups have proclaimed 2.5 million acres in southeast Oregon as "unprotected" in their campaign to pressure President Obama to turn the land into a monument.

To call this public land "unprotected" is like saying the land in downtown Portland has no zoning code.

The Owyhee Canyonlands along the Oregon-Idaho-Nevada border and the water and wildlife that run through it enjoy protections from more than seven layers of local, state and federal government and is actively managed by professional resource managers employed by the three state or

federal agencies.

The protections include at least five federal acts (Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979) and three land-use plans (Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan of 2002 and Oregon Greater Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan of 2015).

When likely Oregon voters were told in a recent poll about the existing protections and plans in place for these lands, 61 percent said the Owyhee Canyonlands has enough protection.

This monument declaration doesn't offer further protection. It's more an act of exclusion.

Once a monument is declared, public lands become less accessible — not more. It would restrict road maintenance and that would inhibit search and rescue and firefighting operations. It would also restrict ranchers' ability to care for the land under their grazing permits, limiting our ability to maintain water sources and reservoirs that benefit all wildlife.

The monument would limit access for people who are not aggressive hikers, especially the elderly, handicapped and veterans. Those who enjoy hunting, fishing, rafting and viewing birds, wildlife and wildflowers in the Canyonlands area will also be greatly restricted.

## A monument declaration doesn't offer protection. It's more an act of exclusion.

Special interest groups are urging President Obama to act alone under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to cut Congress and our community out of this decision. But their agenda runs counter to the voice of Oregonians across the state, from Malheur County to Multnomah County.

At the ballot in March, 90 percent of Malheur County voters opposed the idea. In the poll of likely Multnomah County voters, 69 percent agreed that Congress should get a voice in the decision.

Polls show the feeling is the same in urban and rural Oregon. This land belongs to everyone — not just members of select interest groups. We all deserve a voice in the future of our land. This is an extreme overreach of presidential power. The people of the Oregon need to stand and be heard from Malheur County to Multnomah County. It is our land and our voice.

Linda Bentz lives in Juntura and is a sixth-generation rancher in the Owyhee Canyonlands.



# Privatize public lands? Start with grazing fees

By ANDREW GULLIFORD  
Writers on the Range

We've all heard the refrain from those who distrust and disparage the federal government: Give the nation's public lands back to the people. With 600 million acres of public land and over 330 million Americans, that means we would all get about two acres each. And once those acres were privatized, where would ranchers run their livestock?

These self-styled "patriots" don't really believe that all Americans should have a slice of the nation's public lands. They want ranchers to gain more control without paying for it, though right now, ranchers already use our public lands at a highly subsidized rate.

This is how it works: The Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service charge fees for ranchers to run a cow-calf on public land; effective March 1 of this year, grazing fees were raised to \$2.11 per A.U.M., or animal unit month, which is equivalent to one cow and calf or five sheep. Though this is a 25 percent hike over last year's \$1.69 fee, it is still woefully below fair market value.

The fee change will affect 8,000 permits on Forest Service lands and 18,000 permits on BLM leases, covering a total of 235 million acres. Both the Public Lands Council and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association support the fee increase. But some ranchers resent paying a penny more, while some environmental groups

regard any public-lands grazing as welfare ranching and a waste of the West. Why? Because, in 2014, the BLM and Forest Service spent \$144 million on grazing programs and earned a piddling \$19 million in lease income. We've got an Old West legacy persisting in a New West economy.

**"Americans are supporting a narrow welfare program for the benefit of Western livestock operations."**

— Travis Bruner,  
Executive director,  
Western Watersheds  
Project

"Taxpayers are getting a raw deal regarding grazing," says Travis Bruner, executive director of the Western Watersheds Project. "Americans are supporting a narrow welfare program for the benefit of Western livestock operations."

Although some ranchers bellyache about having to pay any federal fees, in 16 Western states, public-land grazing is 80 percent cheaper than grazing on private land. Where do those grazing fees go? Half the dollars return to benefit stockmen, by funding cattle guards across roads, fencing, corrals, stock ponds and other improvements.

Then there's the federal agency called Wildlife Services, which slaughters native predators like bobcats, wolves, black bears and coyotes. For a century, taxpayers have footed the bill to make public lands safer for sheep and cattle.

Public-lands ranching may be a proud tradition out here, but less than 5 percent of the livestock consumed in the United States is produced on the West's public land. There's better grass in Missouri and Florida, and lots more of it.

If the federal government stopped renting out public land for grazers, the fees on private land would most likely balloon to about \$20 for every animal unit month. We'd cancel range improvements and ground the Wildlife

Services' paid killers. And if we were serious about capitalism and free enterprise, we'd open grazing allotments to public bid just as we do oil and gas leases. If environmental groups moved to outbid cattle ranchers and sheepmen to protect high country meadows, so what? Let the market decide.

Old West sentimentality and Western heritage bump up hard against 21st century economics. "Grazing on federal land accounts for less than 1 percent of total income and employment in most of the region, according to the economist Thomas Power. Meanwhile, recreation and tourism have become ever more important," writes James Surowiecki in The New Yorker. He adds, "Demonizing the federal government and trying to resuscitate the past may have its demagogic appeal. But the Old West is gone, and it isn't coming back."

I would rather see a cow than a condo on our public land. I like beef, though I prefer elk and venison, and for Christmas dinner this year, we had leg of lamb with jalapeño mint jelly. Most Americans live in cities and suburbs, and they don't know which end of a cow gets up first. But those city slickers do know about sweetheart subsidies, and they know what steak or lamb costs at the supermarket.

As a historian, I believe in tradition. I believe in the hard work that generations of ranching families have put into living in a semi-arid Western landscape. Public-lands ranching has a firm place in the American West, but ranchers might want to stop spouting anti-government rhetoric and give the revived Sagebrush Rebellion a pass. Privatize public lands? Be careful what you ask for.

Andrew Gulliford is a contributor to Writers on the Range, an opinion service of High Country News. He is a professor of history and Environmental Studies at Fort Lewis College and can be reached at gulliford\_a@fortlewis.edu.

## PHS students back Bernie, Brown, Bailor

Every election, Brian Johnson's government class for seniors at Pendleton High school holds a mock vote.

This time it was an open primary, unlike Oregon's closed process. Most of the students are old enough to vote, Johnson said, and many already have. The class used materials from the Oregon League of Women Voters and editorials from the East Oregonian to discuss the candidates and issues.

The results of the student election are as follows.

- **President:** Bernie Sanders
- **U.S. Senator:** Ron Wyden
- **Governor:** Kate Brown
- **Secretary of State:** Dennis Richardson
- **State Treasurer:** Tobias Reed
- **Attorney General:** Ellen Rosenblum
- **County Commissioner:** Tom Bailor
- **Circuit Court Judge:** Jon Lieuallen
- **Pendleton Mayor:** John Turner
- **Ward 1:** Becky Marks
- **Ward 2:** Scott Fairley
- **Ward 3:** Dale Primmer
- **At-Large:** Rick Rohde

# Serve your community as a city of Pendleton volunteer

By JOHN BRENNE  
Pendleton City Councilor

The city of Pendleton is always looking for citizens to serve on one of its various committees, or to volunteer in a city department. City committees are advisory in nature, but give citizens a chance to understand more clearly how the city operates. Listed below are several opportunities to serve:

- **Airport Commission:** Advises staff and city council on airport policy. Meets once a month.
- **Budget Committee:** Reviews new fiscal city budget and makes recommendations. Meets 5 or 6 times in April and May each year.
- **Parks & Recreation Commission:** Advises staff and city council on parks policy. Meets once a

**Giving a few hours back to your community is a great way to spend some time.**

- **Pendleton Convention Center Commission:** Advises staff and city council on convention center policies. Meets once each month.
- **Pendleton Library Board:** Advises staff and city council on policy matters related to the library. Meets once a month.
- **Sanitation Regulatory Board:** Advises staff and city council on sanitation policy. Meets as needed.

- **Transient Room Tax Committee:** Hears appeals of room tax. Meets as needed.
- **Air Quality Commission:** Recommends air quality measures to the city council. Meets as needed.
- **Arts Committee:** Recommends appropriations from arts fund for city art. Meets as needed.
- **Pendleton Development Commission subcommittee:** Advises city council on new projects to help meet goals of commission. Meets monthly or as needed.
- **Pendleton Planning Commission:** Makes interpretations and quasi-judicial decisions on implementation of city land use code. Meets monthly.
- **Restore Pendleton Committee:** Advises city on strategies to reduce blights in city neighborhoods. Meets

monthly. The city's volunteer coordinator is Tiffany Hegarty. Her office is located at city hall, phone number is 541-966-0244.

Volunteers in 2015 donated 5,028 hours for city departments, including library, parks and recreation, police, fire, airport, and community development. Volunteer positions are short and long term, and are suited for individuals or groups.

Giving a few hours back to your community while learning about your city is a great way to spend some time.

John Brenne represents Ward 1 on the Pendleton City Council. He was first elected to the seat in 1978.

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## Be heard!

Comment online at eastoregonian.com