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OUR VIEW



Who knows what Kate Brown thinks about Owyhee?

A group of ranchers, local business owners and natural resource users came to Salem last week in an attempt to get legislators to weigh in against the creation of a national monument in Malheur County.

While they have the support of Republicans from the state's east side, they didn't get much from Gov. Kate Brown, the person whose voice might carry the most weight.

That's a shame. Backed by the Oregon Natural Desert Association and the owner of Portland's Keen Footwear, the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness and conservation area would cover about 2.5 million acres of what is now controlled by the Bureau of Land Management.

Critics say the area is bigger than the Yellowstone, Yosemite or Grand Canyon national parks and would include 40 percent of Malheur County.

Opponents in the region have objected to the proposal, fearing the establishment of a national monument will entail new regulations severely complicating grazing, mining, hunting and recreation on the land while inviting additional environmental lawsuits.

The people of Malheur County believe they've been good stewards of the public lands in their corner of the state since they began caring for it more than a century ago. It's their home. Beyond it being the right thing to do, their economic self-interest depends that they do so.

Last March, Malheur County residents voted 9-to-1 against the proposal.

No matter. Supporters hold the edge. State legislators and Congress have no say in the process.

While the administration has previously said it would work

collaboratively with Congress, local interests and elected officials in making such designations, because the land in question is already owned by the federal government. The Antiquities Act of 1906 requires only that President Obama pick up his pen and proclaim it so.

The administration points out that there is no proposal before the president, and won't say how he would act if one lands on his desk.

It's no easier getting a straight answer in Salem.

We asked Brown's office whether the governor supported the proposal, or stood with the people of Malheur County who are against it. Here's what her people said she said:

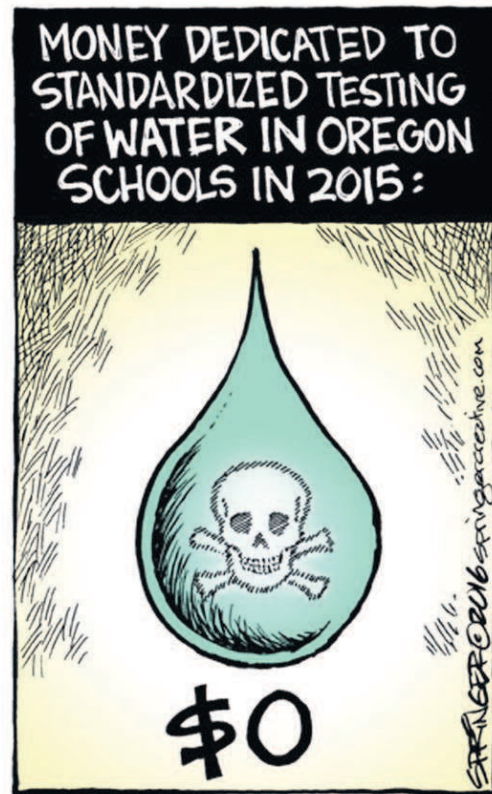
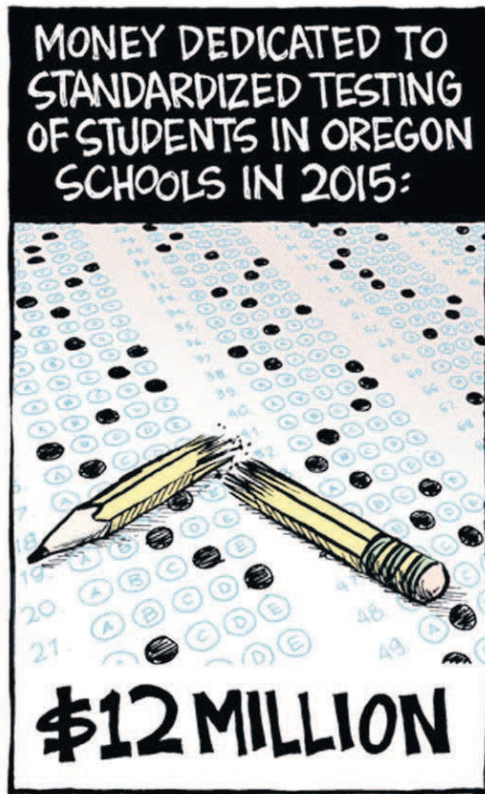
"While this is ultimately a federal decision, I have heard from many Oregonians with strong views about the Owyhee. There's agreement as to the beauty and uniqueness of the Canyonlands and disagreement over whether a monument designation can best ensure those characteristics will be enjoyed for future generations. I have communicated those viewpoints to federal administration officials and will be closely following this issue in the months ahead."

Got that? Brown — elevated to office and seeking election in her own right in November — has often proven unwilling to make declarative statements on controversial issues.

If the Democrat governor opposed the plan she might help convince Obama to maintain the status quo. If she's for it, the fix is in.

But we aren't likely to know until after the election — about the time the president could make his controversial proclamation.

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

Sanders helping Trump?

Bernie Sanders has had a stunning impact this year, helping set the political agenda and winning the passionate embrace of a demographic a quarter his age. A socialist, Jewish, non-pandering candidate who didn't kiss babies but lectured their parents on social justice won 22 states. But now he has lost. It's time for him and his followers to stop sniping and start uniting.

Sanders has said he will ultimately support the Democratic ticket, and I'm sure he intends to. But for now he's still dividing more than coalescing.

In a *New York Times*/CBS News poll last month, nearly one-fourth of Sanders supporters said that in a Hillary Clinton-Donald Trump matchup, they would either vote for Trump (which suggests bipolar disorder!) or stay home. That figure is inflated by bitterness and resentment, but if some Sandernistas sit on their hands this fall they could help elect a man antithetical to everything they stand for.

At this point, Sanders has essentially zero chance of becoming our next president. Meanwhile, there is a modest risk that continued Democratic warfare will cost Clinton the election. The upshot is that continuing to tilt at windmills is many, many times more likely to elect Trump than Sanders.

We've seen this before. In 1968, liberal disenchantment with the Democratic nominee, Hubert Humphrey, assisted in the election of Richard Nixon. In 1980, Edward Kennedy's endless challenge to Jimmy Carter undermined Carter and probably gave Ronald Reagan a lift.

And in 2000, many liberals regarded Al Gore the way some see Clinton today, as a flip-flopper short on inspiration and convictions. So a small number voted for a third-party candidate, Ralph Nader, probably helping put George W. Bush in office.

Nader, whom I admire for his transformational impact on consumer rights, disagrees: He tells me that it's absurd to blame him for Bush's election and that he wants Sanders to continue his campaign.

"Why would he want to lose his bargaining power?" Nader asks, suggesting that by staying in the race, Sanders can influence the Democratic platform and Clinton's choice of a running mate. Anyway, he says, "Trump's going to implode."

He's probably right on that count. I would bet that Trump will lose, and I'd even give 2-to-1 odds. But I remember how my mother in 1980, as a fan of Carter, was overjoyed when Reagan became the Republican nominee since she figured that assured Carter's re-election. She wasn't so happy a few months later.

Presidential campaigns are driven in part by surprises: What if there is a new wave of Central American refugees or a terror attack by a Muslim recently admitted to the U.S.? Either would bolster Trump's chances.

The success of both Trump and Sanders



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

this year should inspire humility on the part of all of us about predicting election results. I agree with Nader that it's almost unthinkable for Trump to be elected. Then again, it once was unthinkable that he would win the Republican nomination.

Sanders supporters should also remember that they agree at least in part with Clinton on Wall Street excesses, income inequality and college debt. Likewise, whatever their distaste for the Clintons, they probably

share her views on reproductive health, on Supreme Court nominees, on inclusiveness toward Muslims and Mexican-Americans, on immigration reform, on early-childhood investments, on a stronger social safety net, on women's rights around the world, on reducing mass incarceration and on a global pact to confront climate change.

"(Bernie) will do everything possible to make sure that Trump is not in the Oval Office."

— Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., who has been the only senator to back Sanders, acknowledges that now "we have a nominee."

He tells me that Sanders will continue his primary race through the Washington, D.C., vote next week but ultimately will focus on party unity.

"When I talked to Bernie when he was first thinking about running, he made it absolutely clear that he didn't

want to do anything that would result in the journey that we experienced with Ralph Nader," Merkley said. "He will do everything possible to make sure that Trump is not in the Oval Office, and to do 'everything possible' certainly means that we've got to come together not just as a formality but in an inclusive, emphatic, unified fashion."

In 2008, at about this time, Clinton stepped up and gave a powerful endorsement of Barack Obama. But she and Obama agreed on almost everything, while Sanders disagrees with Clinton on some issues and still exudes scorn for the Clinton campaign.

"Our struggle continues," Sanders said in a new fundraising email Wednesday. Speaking in California on Tuesday evening, he did little to discourage his audience as it boomed mention of Clinton.

That's just irresponsible. And now that Clinton has won a majority of pledged delegates, it's a violation of Sanders' own principles to try to get superdelegates to vote for him rather than for the people's choice.

"Defying history is what this campaign has been about," Sanders said Tuesday, but at this point he's also defying his own values — and, just maybe, bolstering the prospects of the candidate who is the anti-Sanders.

I understand the passion and heartache of his followers, but I watched such idealism help elect Nixon and George W. Bush, and I flinch at the thought of similar idealists this year helping to elect a President Trump.

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill, Oregon. A columnist for *The New York Times* since 2001, he won the Pulitzer Prize two times.

OTHER VIEWS

An encounter with Ali

Of the many aspects Muhammad Ali, a remarkable American, I loved to see his sense of humor. There was nothing very light about his public change of religion or his refusal to enter the military or his high drama title fights. But his humor, limericks and pranks helped fill out a whole and admirable — to me, anyway — man.

When Ed Bradley of "60 Minutes" interviewed Ali at his home in 1996, the boxer and his wife tricked the journalist. While Muhammad sat in a deckchair with eyes closed and head down, his wife said he was pretty hard to communicate with because he slept so much. As Bradley took notes, Ali suddenly threw a left jab that fell short of the reporter's chin. Laughter all around. Ali also seemed always to be ready with card tricks.

I had the privilege of being in on Ali humor in the late 1960s when I worked for the Associated Press in Los Angeles. My editor asked me to go to the airport to interview the heavyweight champion.



MIKE FORRESTER
Comment

He was on a plane from Las Vegas where arrangements for a fight had fallen through.

Ali suggested we talk on the way to the main terminal where he was meeting long time photographer friend Howard Bingham. Anyway, as the three of us stood in the terminal facing each other, I heard one of them say "Man, I really gotta go." The reply was "Don't go here, man, no, no!" And then I felt something dropping on my shoe. The "drops" turned out to be tiny pebbles which were part of Ali's entertainment arsenal.

The reminiscences on his life on television have moved me to read books by Ali and about him. When he spoke about the military draft and an individual's conscience, he was eloquent and powerful. His words were homespun, but he communicated with a capital C. He did not hold back a thing. I think he was great.

Mike Forrester is a member of the EO Media Group board.



Muhammad Ali and Mike Forrester chat in the Los Angeles airport in 1967.

Photo courtesy Mike Forrester