

Quick takes

Wind storm blows in

Scanner traffic: Trampoline missing from Umatilla County back yard. Wind is prime suspect at this time.

— Tim Trainor EO

Fatal train collision

We really need a crossing arm put in there. It is a blind corner from the west. More than once we stop, look both ways look back and there's a train.

— Gail Gorbett Wilson

Please be safe around trains. I pray the family finds peace.

— Chelci Collins

Pendleton to market land near prison for housing

I can't imagine living across from a well-lit area like the prison and get any dark nights to sleep.

— Jovanna Centre

Scenic view.

— Beandob Gatsby

Secure place to live, though.

— Triple Dubya

Mud Wars memories

Duct tape and plastic bags. The first layer of muddy clothes were shed in the parking lot, wrapped in a sheet, sitting in a plastic bag, and taken home to a long hot shower!

— LoriAnne Dunagan

These girls aren't afraid of a little mud! Go Bucks!

— Sue Ruth

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.

Forest management better than doing nothing

By NICK SMITH AND LINDSAY WARNES

In response to George Wuerthner's Oct. 7 column, there are good reasons why there is broad support for active and collaborative management of our forests. It all comes down to a choice, and Mr. Wuerthner made his choice clear.

We can choose to manage our forests to protect and enhance the economic, social and environmental benefits they provide. We can choose to proactively help our forests adapt to drought, insect infestations and changing climate conditions, and use forest management tools such as timber harvest, thinning and prescribed fires to mitigate the impacts of catastrophic wildfire. Or, we can choose to do nothing and suffer the consequences of inaction.

Fortunately, more Americans are choosing active, science-based forest management over passive, "hands-off" management. Alarmed by conditions on the ground, more diverse stakeholders are coming together through local collaboratives to find consensus and develop solutions for forests in need of restoration.

Mr. Wuerthner lays out multiple "myths" he claims support his view that we should continue our hands-off approach to national forest management, despite the abundance of scientific evidence available that supports active management in the appropriate places. However, we can provide studies that describe the need for active management.

The Nature Conservancy has strongly advocated for increasing the pace and scale of thinning and fuels reduction projects that create jobs while reducing the risk of wildfire. In 2013, they published a field guide for dry forest restoration that cites more than 150 scientific sources outlining the need for active forest management on this forest type.

In many pine forests east of the Cascades, forests have become unnaturally dense and overcrowded, and in some cases

have been overtaken by tree species that are less resilient to wildfire. Exacerbating the situation are the impacts of drought and warmer temperatures that promote tree stress and widespread beetle and disease epidemics.

There is broader support for active forest management because more people are recognizing that conditions on many forest landscapes are not normal or sustainable. While fire is a natural disturbance, many are concerned with the size, scale and intensity of today's mega-fires that threaten watersheds, wildlife habitat and recreational amenities, not to mention human lives, public health and property.

According to the Oregon Society of American Foresters, passive management that relies primarily on natural disturbance in areas that differ greatly from the original forests formed by historic natural events poses serious risks to the wide range of benefits we all expect from our forests.

According to a recently published article (Haugo et al 2015) there are currently over 6,720 square miles outside of wilderness and inventoried roadless areas that have missed a disturbance cycle such as from fire, insects and disease. Our forests are ripe for catastrophic disturbance, and at our current pace it will take over 50 years to restore just the acres currently at risk.

Federally owned forests are in critical need of active management. To increase the pace and scale of forest projects the U.S. Forest Service needs the resources, tools and administrative flexibility to get more work done on the ground. It also needs viable forest products infrastructure to offset the costs of projects and efficiently and effectively restore the forests.

Forest products continues to be a major economic driver in Northeastern Oregon. Increasing active forest management will help support local family-wage jobs and contribute to the social and economic well-being of our communities. Hands-off forest management does not provide this benefit.

Congress can help increase the pace and scale of forest restoration by ending the nonsensical practice of "fire borrowing" that forces the Forest Service to raid other programs when its fire suppression budget is exhausted.

It can provide greater flexibility by eliminating arbitrary, non-scientific regulations such as the "eastside screen," which prevents land managers from making site specific decisions based on the ecosystem.

It can also empower local collaboratives by giving them the ability to develop landscape scale projects, and Congress can help protect those collaborative projects by making it harder for outside fringe groups to tie them up in court.

When it comes to protecting our national forests and the social, economic and environmental benefits they provide, the choice for active, science-based forest management is clear to us. Mr. Wuerthner is entitled to his opinion, but he can't claim there is overwhelming evidence to support a view that's increasingly in the minority.

Nick Smith is a member of the Oregon Society of American Foresters and Executive Director of Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities, a nonprofit, organization supporting active forest management on federally-owned forests. Lindsay Warnes is the Forest Policy Analyst with Boise Cascade located in La Grande.

People are recognizing that conditions on many forest landscapes are not normal or sustainable.

YOUR VIEWS

To improve hunting, purge predators

This is in regards to the management of deer and or predators in the Ukiah Unit. I have hunted the unit for 48 years and the decline of the deer herd is at an all-time high. I would bet 75 percent. We are thinking about hunting in pairs for safety.

The cougar population has exploded. Everywhere you go there are cougar kills. I ran into a female hunter who had a cougar jump out of a tree onto the trail she was on. Thank God she killed it.

I think it's time for us all to chime in on this. I would suggest maybe having two or three weekends designated to killing predators in the unit, and if you are a licensed hunter you can have at it.

ODFW, I am talking to you; if you want a fee for it, then name it.

We are a big hunting group and we are ready to spend our money elsewhere. I personally spent \$1,200 this deer season and it was a joke.

Michael Beers
Pilot Rock

Re-elect Terry Rowan Umatilla Co. sheriff

Sheriff Rowan has done a great job and he has our vote. From the day he took over as sheriff, the department has improved. They're holding more criminals in the jail, dispatching for more agencies and answering more 9-1-1 and other calls from citizens, they have more patrols on the roads than ever before, and they're earning nearly all the money to do it. On top of that, they just gave out over a hundred backpacks with school supplies to our elementary school kids.

A couple years ago, I unknowingly set off the alarm at my house with my key fob. Within a few minutes, there were deputies at my house to make sure my family was OK. Another time, my neighbors had an alarm at their house. Again, the deputies were there quickly and checked the entire property making sure it was all safe. That's great service!

Terry Rowan is a solid husband and family man. His employees support him and that says a lot! The other guy has a checkered past and has been demoted for bad conduct. He's running a negative campaign and has no experience or plans of his own.

This is a no brainer, vote to re-elect Sheriff Terry Rowan!

Michael Kreuger
Hermiston

I am responding to a letter titled "Lehnert will be a responsive and active sheriff." The subject of concealed handgun licenses was brought up, and I would like to respond to the comments made.

I recently attended a Rural Neighborhood Watch meeting at the sheriff's office and this very subject was part of the meeting program. Sheriff Rowan updated our group on the problem and asked Lieutenant Holcomb of the

Civil Division & CHL Unit to review the issues. Yes, there is a backlog; it is not due to staff not doing their jobs, it is simply the number of people who are applying for the license.

In 2013 Sheriff Rowan made a number of changes including moving the Civil Division from the courthouse to the sheriff's office, and hired a full time clerk to handle CHL applications exclusively. At around the same time the sheriff's office CHL applications had a 422 percent increase in new and 97.8 percent increase in renewals. The applications continue to grow; anyone reading the newspaper or watching the news would understand that people are concerned about being able to defend their home and family if necessary. With everything that is going on in our world today I personally would rather be trained and prepared. Sheriff Rowan and his staff are helping rural residents to do exactly that.

Positive changes have been made at the sheriff's office and will continue to be made under Sheriff Rowan's command.

Linda Ferguson
Weston

Challenger Lehnert is the better option

Elect Ryan Lehnert Umatilla County Sheriff.

We cannot agree with the three county commissioners that are coming out in support of the status quo. They essentially are endorsing a sheriff that chooses not to respond to many 9-1-1 calls for assistance to threats of life or property, day or night.

Other elected chiefs of police are choosing to support the more energetic and credible challenger Ryan Lehnert.

Give Officer Ryan Lehnert a chance to show what he will do to pick up the pace in Umatilla County.

Eric Anderson
Pendleton

Electing Trump is asking for trouble

I just wonder how it is legally possible to elect a man to the presidency of the United States of America who is already known to be involved in behavior that got a former president impeached.

Renee Lovejoy
Hermiston

Last week an audio tape was released with Donald Trump describing how he attempted to bed a married woman, while he was also married. And then he goes on to brag that when he sees beautiful women he just starts kissing them, without even asking and "when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything. Grab them by the p(private parts). You can do anything."

Mr. Trump has already shown that he has no business ethics by bilking thousands of dollars from contractors he defaulted on with his failed Trump Casino and the fake

Trump University, and now he has proved that he also has no moral character as well. Apparently he believes that half of the people on this planet, women, were created strictly to quench his lust.

I am a man, and I understand lustful thoughts, but I have always treated women with the respect that they deserve as intelligent individuals. I have never once uttered insults of the kind on Mr. Trump's tape, nor could I possibly ever respect a man who did so.

Is this really the person that you want to be our president? This sleazebag? Yes, Hillary Clinton has made some mistakes, but Donald Trump is morally unfit to be president of our great country.

Rod Dawson
Seaside

To all persons contemplating voting for Donald Trump:

Some of you will be voting for Trump because your dad and granddad were Republicans and it has just always been the proper thing to do. Some of you will be voting for Trump because he knows how to keep women in their place and teaches them they are just his plaything; he knows how to flaunt tax and business laws and maybe he will teach you how to do it; he knows that his pal is named Putin; he can make up stories about Democrats and other Republicans at the drop of a hat; he can visualize anyone who wants to walking through the streets and schools armed to the teeth, teaching people not to mess with him; he has no plans; he hires a staff of experienced campaign workers and then disregards their advice; he is a poster child for the sanctity of marriage.

I could go on but I think you get the picture.

If Trump wins, you will in the next four years change the subject on a daily basis when anyone wants to talk political affiliation. No one will know which of the above reasons you had and why you voted as you did - you just did.

John Gilson
Pendleton

Support Umatilla schools bond

I am writing in support of the Umatilla School District bond measure on the November ballot. This bond will allow the district to make needed improvements at all three schools in Umatilla — McNary Elementary, Clara Brownell Middle School and Umatilla High School. Although school district staff have a done an admirable job of maintaining the buildings, there comes a time when funds are needed for capital improvements.

The Umatilla School District's purpose is to provide students with an excellent public education so that they can become successful, contributing citizens — a goal shared by the city of Umatilla. The collaborative relationship between the district and the city is something I am proud to be a part of and work diligently to maintain. Successful

school districts contribute to the success of a city — the city of Umatilla is stronger because of the good work being done at the Umatilla School District.

The school district is asking for \$10.5 million to fund these important improvements. There are two really great things about this bond. One is that it will NOT increase taxes for Umatilla citizens; the new bonds are estimated to continue the same tax rate of the current bonds, just for a longer period.

The second great thing is that if voters approve the bond, the Umatilla School District will receive an additional \$4 million from the state of Oregon for district projects. This opportunity will not come again from the state for a long time, if ever, and is a great benefit to the district — essentially receiving a free \$4 million.

I encourage the citizens of Umatilla to vote yes on this school bond — to protect our students, to protect our educational investments and send a clear message that the city of Umatilla is dedicated to quality education.

Russ Pelleberg
Umatilla City Manager

Measure 97 must be defeated

I am writing in opposition to Measure 97, the gross receipts tax.

The measure, if passed, will tax corporations that have gross revenues over \$25 million at a rate of 2.5 percent. The supporters of the measure would have you believe that this will only impact the corporate giants. They are wrong. Basic economic principles and basic common sense tell you that the costs associated with this additional expense will be passed along to the customer. That's right — to you and I.

The supporters also want you to believe that the added revenue this thinly veiled sales tax puts in the state of Oregon's coffers will be used to fund education, emergency and senior services. Do not be fooled: The measure does not say that it will go to any of these areas. It goes into the general fund and will be discretionary funds for the legislature.

Measure 97 proponents claim that it will add \$6 billion per biennium to the state coffers. This is in addition to the existing \$18 billion budget. Does it make sense to increase by one-third the funds available for the legislature to allocate as they see fit?

The measure is yet another example of solving fiscal problems by piling more taxes on the citizens and businesses of Oregon. If approved by voters Measure 97 would have the heaviest impact on those who can least afford it.

Measure 97 will limit economic growth opportunities within

Oregon. Why would a company that is looking to expand operations and add jobs to a region come to Oregon, when their costs will be at least 2.5 percent higher than locating in Washington or Idaho? They won't. More critically, given the choice, what will keep existing corporations from leaving Oregon in favor of a more business-friendly state?

No matter how frustrated you are with the political landscape of Oregon and our great nation, no matter how tired you are of picking between candidates that don't reflect your own principles or ideals, please do not simply ignore your ballot. The fight against Measure 97 cannot be "someone else's" issue. It is an issue for every Oregonian. Please do not be complacent. You must vote, and I strongly urge you to join me in voting no on Measure 97. It is bad policy, a bad idea, bad for business and bad for Oregon.

Jeff Bailey
Heppner

Gomolski for Hermiston city council

Last year Commissioner Bill Elfering came to my home asking for my support for his re-election.

Along with came a young man named Mark Gomolski, his new campaign manager. I have known Bill for years, but I did not know Mark.

During the past year I have come to know Mark Gomolski and am impressed by not just his words but by his deeds. He has helped our local church through his work on the finance council, his hosting of special dinners at the church to raise funds for the building fund, his volunteering on Fridays as a cook at the church soup kitchen, his support for the Knights of Columbus and his devotion to help others. He believes in God, country and his community.

His past 30 years of service in city and county departments in Chicago brings to Hermiston a wealth of knowledge. He would be an asset to Hermiston. He has been attending city council meetings to see how the city works. He serves on an advisory council now at city hall He has been involved with the community since he came to Hermiston. That's why my wife and I support Mark Gomolski for city council and although I live in Umatilla, I am telling all my friends in Hermiston to vote for Mark.

He is going door to door in Hermiston asking for votes, some of you have met him. Some of you have seen his signs. If Commissioner Bill Elfering trusted him, I believe Mark deserves your vote. Hermiston could use a good man like him.

Jack Mc Whinnie
Umatilla

LETTERS POLICY

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