

Judge restricts wildlife employees' testimony on refuge standoff fear

PORTLAND (AP) — Federal wildlife employees will again be barred from testifying about any fear they felt during last winter's armed occupation of a national bird sanctuary in southeastern Oregon.

U.S. District Judge Anna Brown prevented such testimony during a trial last fall in which occupation leader Ammon Bundy and six co-defendants were acquitted of conspiring to impede workers from doing their jobs at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge during the 41-day protest.

Four Bundy followers are being tried on the same felony charge this month. Assistant U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Barrow asked the judge Tuesday to reconsider and allow the workers to testify about their fears. Brown declined.

"I don't for a minute doubt there was fear and negative emotions by these employees, but the charge is not 'did defendants intend to raise distress,' but intend to impede," Brown said, according to The Oregonian newspaper/OregonLive.

At the first trial, refuge employees testified about how their supervisors told them not to return to work in January 2016 once Bundy and his armed supporters seized the refuge to oppose federal control of lands in the West and the imprisonment of two Oregon ranchers convicted of



In this Jan. 9, 2016 file photo, a man stands guard after members of the "3% of Idaho" group along with several other organizations arrived at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns. Federal wildlife employees will again be barred from testifying about any fear they felt during last winter's armed occupation of the national bird sanctuary.

setting fires. The workers also described the disheveled state of their offices when they returned after the occupation. But they could not talk about their emotional state.

In contrast, Bundy and several defendants testified at length about their state of mind and why they took

over the refuge. Jury selection begins Feb. 14, and opening statements are tentatively scheduled to begin a week later.

The four defendants are Duane Ehmer of Irrigon, Oregon; Jason Patrick of Bonaire, Georgia; Darryl Thorn of Marysville, Washington; and Jake Ryan of Plains, Montana.

Bill seeks reversal of Oregon GMO preemption

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Biotech critics are calling on Oregon lawmakers to overturn a prohibition against local government restrictions on genetically engineered crops because statewide regulations haven't been enacted.

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed a law that preempted cities and counties from setting their own rules over seeds, which blocked most local ordinances banning genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

Groups that opposed the preemption bill say state inaction since then has justified the passage of House Bill 2469, which would carve out an exemption allowing local GMO regulations.

"Oregon farmers can't wait another four years to protect themselves from this harm," said Amy van Saun, a legal fellow at the Center for Food Safety nonprofit group.

Van Saun said measures are needed to prevent cross-pollination

of conventional and organic crops with biotech genes, which threatens markets for those farmers. The federal government doesn't regulate GMO crops once they've been approved for commercial use.

"We're probably going to see even more lax regulation," van Saun said.

Oregon's seed preemption law doesn't apply to Jackson County, which was already set to vote on a GMO ban ballot initiative when the state legislation passed.

Voters approved the Jackson County ordinance, creating a "GMO-free seed sanctuary" where seed crops can be produced without the threat of cross-pollination from biotech varieties, said Elise Higley, director of the Our Family Farms Coalition, which supported the GMO ban.

"We're in this unique economic opportunity," she said.

Supporters of HB 2469 haven't given up on statewide GMO regulations but they hope the bill will provide local control over biotech crops until the Oregon Department of

Agriculture or lawmakers decide to take action, said Ivan Maluski, policy director of the Friends of Family Farmers nonprofit.

"We have no expectation the state of Oregon will move forward on these types of policies," he said.

Oregonians for Food and Shelter, an agribusiness group that supported the preemption bill, is disappointed that biotech critics are still trying to regulate what crops farmers are allowed to plant, said Scott Dahlman, its policy director.

Cities and counties aren't equipped to regulate crop production, which is the province of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, he said.

The ODA hasn't determined specific rules are necessary for GMOs, which the federal government deregulates after determining they pose no greater risk than conventional crops, Dahlman said.

Lawmakers never committed to statewide regulations when passing the pre-emption bill, he said. "There were no promises I was aware of at the time."

BRIEFLY

Dam opponents send letter to Trump seeking dam removal

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — More than 50 fishing companies and environmental groups are asking President Donald Trump to take a fresh look at removing four dams on the lower Snake River to help restore wild salmon runs.

The group sent a letter to the White House this week saying the dams must be removed to save wild salmon and steelhead runs.

Supporters of the dams say they produce many benefits for the region, including electricity and barge shipping for commodities like wheat.

But fish advocates blame the dams for decimating salmon runs and have called for years for removal of Ice Harbor, Lower Granite, Little Goose and Lower Monumental dams.

Bill in Oregon Legislature focuses on free recreation sites

SALEM (AP) — A bill in the Oregon Senate would expand protections from lawsuits stemming from mishaps on properties that are popular with outdoors enthusiasts.

In 2016, the Oregon Supreme Court noted that a law shields owners of free recreation sites from lawsuits if someone gets hurt, but not employees.

A bill that is backed by the League Of Oregon Cities would extend that protection to such agents.

The 2016 court ruling has resulted in the closing of a motocross track in Pilot Rock and climbing wall outside Redmond.

15 men arrested in sex trafficking sting

PORTLAND (AP) — Police arrested 15 men from Oregon, Washington and Canada during a one-week undercover sex trafficking operation.

The Portland Police Bureau said Wednesday that investigators posted ads on sex trafficking websites from Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 and that the men contacted undercover officers to arrange payment for sexual acts.

Police say the men who responded and came to a Portland hotel were arrested on a misdemeanor charge of commercial sexual solicitation.

Those arrested in Oregon include: Gregory Laubsch, Juan Lopez and Kurt Parker of Portland; Matthew Schrader of Johnson City; Ravikummar Dojad of Beaverton; and Jeremy Tanner of Dayton.

Men arrested in Washington include: Danil Nyukeyev, Gilberto Ramirez, Darrin Maxey, Joel Garcia-Cruz and Charles Wilson II of Vancouver; Chad Andrews of Ridgefield; Cory Ryan of Everett; and Vishwambhara Adiga of Kirkland.

Gilles Barjon of Montreal, Quebec, Canada was also arrested.

Pot growing gets approval at Corvallis industrial park

CORVALLIS (AP) — Commissioners in a county in Oregon have approved a zoning code amendment that will help a Colorado company looking to expand further into the Oregon pot market.

The *Corvallis Gazette-Times* reports the Benton County Board of Commissioners approved the amendment Tuesday, allowing businesses with a valid state license to grow, process and sell marijuana wholesale at an industrial park in Corvallis.

The decision allows 1749 Airport Road LLC, a limited liability company headquartered in Broomfield, Colorado, to purchase a building in the park and lease space to another Colorado business, Doctor's Orders Group.

Doctor's Orders has dispensaries and growing space in Colorado. In Oregon, the company owns a marijuana dispensary in Portland and land for an outdoor growing operation in Cave Junction.

Corrections

An article in Wednesday's East Oregonian provided incorrect information about the election of Kat Brigham to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Board of Trustees. Brigham won the election with 150 out of 455 total votes. The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Cloudy, a little rain; milder	Mostly cloudy with a shower	Mostly sunny and chilly	Some sun, then clouds and chilly	Mostly sunny and chilly

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

50°	36°	48°	30°	44°	29°	45°	29°	40°	28°
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HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

43°	35°	47°	30°	45°	26°	43°	28°	40°	32°
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ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	30°	25°
Normals	45°	29°
Records	75° (1996)	-21° (1929)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.05"
Month to date 0.29"
Normal month to date 0.36"
Year to date 1.94"
Last year to date 1.73"
Normal year to date 1.74"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	30°	26°
Normals	46°	29°
Records	66° (1945)	-26° (1929)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. Trace
Month to date 0.04"
Normal month to date 0.27"
Year to date 1.73"
Last year to date 1.15"
Normal year to date 1.55"

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Windy today with rain. Mostly cloudy tonight with showers. Occasional rain tomorrow.	Eastern Washington: A wintry mix, 1-3 inches in the north and little or none in the south, and toward the Cascades today.
Eastern and Central Oregon: A couple of showers today, except dry in the south.	Cascades: Windy today with periods of rain.
Western Washington: Periods of rain today. A couple of showers tonight. A couple of showers tomorrow.	Northern California: Rain, some heavy today; windy. A few showers tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	54	43	r	47	39	r
Baker City	43	28	r	41	22	c
Bend	49	32	sh	43	25	sh
Brookings	56	44	r	49	38	r
Burns	43	26	c	37	17	pc
Enterprise	45	34	r	42	25	r
Eugene	58	43	r	47	35	r
Heppner	47	32	r	45	28	pc
Hermiston	43	35	r	47	30	c
John Day	50	36	r	44	24	sh
Klamath Falls	50	32	r	42	21	r
La Grande	48	39	r	44	30	sh
Meacham	47	31	r	40	27	sh
Medford	59	39	r	51	33	r
Newport	55	45	r	48	38	r
North Bend	57	46	r	50	40	r
Ontario	46	35	sh	46	28	c
Pasco	40	32	i	45	31	c
Pendleton	50	36	r	48	30	c
Portland	54	41	r	46	37	sh
Redmond	53	33	sh	46	25	sh
Salem	57	44	r	47	37	sh
Spokane	44	33	r	41	26	r
Ukiah	49	32	r	43	26	pc
Vancouver	56	42	r	47	35	sh
Walla Walla	47	36	r	46	30	r
Yakima	41	33	i	45	26	pc

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	37	20	s	42	20	s
Hong Kong	63	50	s	63	53	pc
Jerusalem	56	42	pc	58	41	c
London	40	31	sh	37	31	c
Mexico City	75	42	s	75	46	s
Moscow	24	21	c	26	23	c
Paris	44	30	pc	38	28	s
Rome	57	45	c	59	44	sh
Seoul	29	15	pc	26	17	pc
Sydney	84	72	s	95	75	s
Tokyo	41	38	r	48	35	pc

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Friday
Boardman	SSW 3-6	SW 7-14
Pendleton	S 8-16	SSW 7-14

UV INDEX TODAY

0 1 1 1 0 0

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.

0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

National Summary: A snowstorm will hit areas from the upper part of the mid-Atlantic to central and southeastern New England today. A storm will bring heavy rain and gusty winds with rising snow levels in the Northwest.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 96° in Cotulla, Texas Low -29° in Hallock, Minn.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	68	42	s	73	45	pc
Atlanta	52	31	pc	59	42	pc
Atlanta City	38	19	r	33	26	s
Baltimore	36	18	sn	38	29	pc
Billings	47	38	c	47	25	c
Birmingham	51	30	pc	63	48	s
Boise	54	39	sh	52	30	pc
Boston	30	10	sn	24	15	s
Charleston, SC	64	33	pc	57	43	s
Chicago, IL	33	17	sf	45	30	c
Chicago	25	18	s	42	34	c
Cleveland	26	17	sf	35	33	sf
Dallas	62	45	pc	73	61	pc
Denver	68	45	pc	73	45	pc
Detroit	24	15	sf	33	31	sn
El Paso	78	49	pc	83	53	pc
Fairbanks	-3	-20	pc	-13	-41	c
Fargo	18	16	pc	44	26	c
Honolulu	78	63	s	79	69	sh
Houston	70	50	s	75	67	pc
Indianapolis	23	17	s	44	39	pc
Jacksonville	69	38	pc	64	46	s
Kansas City	35	29	pc	63	45	pc
Las Vegas	77	58	pc	73	56	c
Little Rock	50	32	s	67	54	pc
Los Angeles	76	60	pc	65	56	r

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Fri.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Louisville	35	22	pc	54	47	pc
Memphis	46	33	s	65	55	s
Miami	84	64	t	78	64	s
Millwaukee	21	16	s	42	35	c
Minneapolis	18	15	s	44	31	pc
Nashville	40	24	pc	61	49	pc
New Orleans	64	49	pc	71	59	s
New York City	31	17	sn			