

LOSTINE: Local residents were generally supportive of thinning the corridor

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Scenic Lostine River until it dead ends at Two Pan Trailhead, encompassing some private land along with seven campgrounds and three trailheads for visitors to access the surrounding wilderness.

For decades, the corridor was managed lightly to avoid disturbing natural resources including habitat for fish, wildlife and sensitive plant species. Now Stein says there is so much dense and overgrown vegetation that it poses a safety risk for the nearby community.

"A lot of people were really concerned about the condition out there," Stein said. "We needed to do something about this."

But Rob Klavins, northeast Oregon field coordinator for Oregon Wild, said the project goes well beyond mere public safety. According to the lawsuit, the Lostine Corridor project would harvest an estimated 4 million board feet of wood, with just 7 percent of tree removal designed to protect people.

"The vast majority of the project is not about that," Klavins said. "It's an industrial timber sale."

Klavins said the project was shielded from NEPA review thanks to what he described as a loophole in the 2014 Farm Bill. That year, Congress amended the Healthy Forests Restoration Act to help expedite small logging projects "in an area in which the risk of hazard trees poses an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health or safety." The amended was based largely as a response to the outbreak of pine bark beetles across the West.

By designating the Lostine Corridor as a so-called categorical exclusion, Klavins said the Forest Service was able to push the project forward without an environmental impact statement to address how resources would be affected by logging.

"This is a very special place," Klavins said of the Lostine River Canyon. "We do think the Forest Service has the responsibility to conduct an environmental analysis, and to consult with landowners in a meaningful way."

The lawsuit, which was filed in U.S. District Court in Portland, also alleges that even after the Forest Service proceeded with a

categorical exclusion under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, it still did not develop the project in collaboration with stakeholders as required by the law.

While Klavins emphasized there are parts of the project the groups would support, the conservation community was not included in any collaborative process.

"We would love to come to the table, but there's been no table for us," he said.

The Forest Service does have a timeline of public outreach that dates back to meetings in late 2015. A 30-day scoping period began on Feb. 2, 2016, and forest officials also hosted field trips to the project area last summer.

Comments from local residents were generally supportive of thinning the corridor in order to reduce the fuel load for forest fires.

"We've been having a very positive interaction with the majority of the public," said Stein, the forest district ranger.

Bruce Dunn, chairman of the Wallowa County Natural Resource Advisory Committee, said the project needs to move forward as conditions in the corridor deteriorate.

"It's a bad situation," Dunn said. "If we got the right type of conditions and a fire started, it's going to take off like a tinderbox."

Dunn said the corridor is a heavily used recreation area with only one unpaved road. If fire breaks out, he said people could become trapped, putting lives at risk.

Dunn, who manages RY Timber in Enterprise, also said the project is now what he would describe as a big timber sale.

"Yes, there would be some commercial product moved," he said. "But it's about public safety."

Brian Kelly, restoration director for the Hells Canyon Preservation Council, said the groups adamantly supports improving public safety in the Lostine Corridor but deserves the best management they can provide.

"This is a really important part of the wild country of northeast Oregon," Kelly said. "We will continue to advocate for reasonable public safety measures and for the protections that the Lostine Canyon deserves".

First prison sentence given in Bundy armed standoff in Nevada

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A judge called a New Hampshire man a "bully vigilante" and sentenced him Wednesday to more than seven years in prison for his role organizing armed backers of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy after a standoff with U.S. agents in 2014.

Gerald "Jerry" DeLemus became the first person sentenced for his ties to the confrontation that became a rallying cry for those who want vast stretches of federal land in the U.S. West put under local control. Eighteen others are in custody.

DeLemus has been jailed for

almost 16 months, so the sentence means the 62-year-old former U.S. Marine will spend about six more years behind bars. His attorney, Dustin Marcello, said he will appeal.

DeLemus arrived at the Bundy ranch hours after the tense armed standoff that led to the release of the rancher's cattle and was hailed as a victory in a decades-long fight over government-owned land.

He then spent more than a month in an encampment organizing armed patrols and serving as an intermediary between a self-styled militia and local authorities.

He had been expected to get a six-year sentence after pleading guilty last August to conspiracy to commit an offense against the U.S. and interstate travel in aid of extortion.

But Chief U.S. District Judge Gloria Navarro in Las Vegas added time after faulting DeLemus for trying to withdraw his pleas. She said she didn't think he accepted responsibility for his actions.

"I have to say, Mr. DeLemus, that you unfortunately are blinded by the information you choose to believe," she said.

TRANSPORTATION: Gas tax would increase from 30 cents to 42 cents by 2025

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The money for the plan would come from a combination of hikes in the gas tax and registration and license fees, tolls, new taxes on payroll, vehicle dealers and adult bicycle purchases.

The plan identifies a few specific projects to ease congestion, but other projects would be prioritized by the Oregon Transportation Commission. Specific projects would:

- Add lanes on Interstate 5 near Portland's Rose Quarter from Interstate 84 to Interstate 405.
- Add northbound and southbound lanes on Highway 217 through the Portland metro area.
- Widen Interstate 205 to six lanes from Oregon City to Stafford Road.

- Widen and seismically reinforce Interstate 205's Abernethy Bridge.

The plan raises an average of about \$800 million per year in additional transportation funding.

The money would come from increases in the gas tax and vehicle fees and a set of new taxes over the next 10 years, including:

- Gradual gas tax increase from 30 cents to 42 cents by 2025.
- Tiered increases in title and registration fees, depending on type of vehicle.
- A surcharge of \$100 for electric vehicles, and \$15 for other vehicles.
- Statewide payroll tax of one-tenth of 1 percent to pay for mass transit.
- Tolls to be determined.
- Bicycle excise tax of 5 percent.

- Dealer privilege tax of 0.75 percent on new and used vehicle purchases.

The bill also includes several accountability measures, including:

- Giving authority to appoint the director of the Oregon Department of Transportation to the Oregon Transportation Commission.
 - Requiring a website where taxpayers could follow the progress and budgets of projects in their area.
 - Providing an independent staff for the OTC, which sets policy for ODOT.
- The state's December and January snowstorms also shaped the package. One provision requires ODOT and cities with a population greater than 160,000 to salt roads when there is more than 2 inches of snow on the ground.

FIRE: Humans caused 51 of 67 large fires in 2016

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acres in grass and brush. Oregon and Washington had 67 large fires in 2016 that burned almost 499,999 acres at a cost of \$106.5 million.

The Range 12 fire north of Sunnyside, Washington, began July 30 and grew to 176,600 acres, the largest fire in the Northwest. Firefighting efforts contained the blaze on Aug. 8 and doing so cost \$1.7 million.

Oregon's largest fire was the Rail fire that started July 31 five miles west of Unity. The burn rolled over 41,706 acres, but it

took a large number of resources two months to contain and cost \$34.9 million, making it the most expensive in the Northwest.

Humans caused 51 of the large fires, and lightning the rest.

Fire season typically starts in early July, Saltenberger said, and there should be a similar timeframe in 2017. Cold, wet winters have an unclear relationship with fire season, he said, but the weather during fire season delivers a clear, direct affect. He recalled 1996 as having a wet spring that still produced plenty of serious fires once August rolled around.

And this August, Saltenberger said, comes with its own unique situation — the total solar eclipse. A large swath of Oregon is prime viewing for the Aug. 21 astronomical event, which some estimate will draw more than a million people. The eclipse, he said, coincides with the height of fire season.

Fourth of July and Labor Day Weekend correspond to spikes in wildland fire starts, Saltenberger said. And extrapolating from that, the unprecedented number of campers and visitors to Oregon will likely cause additional fires as well.

Car Show Free Event to the Public

FRIDAY, JUNE 2ND 2017
 Corvettes arrive at Columbia Park throughout the day
 Over \$12,000,000 in Corvettes on display from 1953 to 2017.
 Corvettes coming from 7 States and Canada to celebrate and help make "Wishes" come true.

11:30 - 3:00 Wine Walk for Wishes - Outside Bin 20, Pasco Red Lion
 All proceeds go toward our Make-A-Wish Goal
 6 Local Wineries and a Micro-brewery

1:30 - Corvette Caravan Cruise
 8:00p.m. - Pasco Red Lion - Dueling Pianos Jeff & Rhiannon

SATURDAY, JUNE 3RD 2017
 8 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Corvette Show - Columbia Park, Kennewick
 Come meet "Wish" Families, donations accepted
 Food Vendors - Free Coca-Cola
 7:30p.m - Red Lion Concert Courtyard - The Hodad's
Tickets Available At: brownpapertickets.com

Live Entertainment at The Red Lion Pasco

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DUELING PIANOS WITH JEFF & RHIANNON

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