

Climate coalition gains momentum as nonprofit

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
EO Media Group

One year after becoming a formal nonprofit organization, the Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition is ready to broaden its outreach on climate change issues affecting farms, forests, businesses and communities across the region.

The group, which goes by the shorthand EOC3, originally formed in 2006 as the Umatilla County Climate Change Focus Group, an ad hoc citizen's committee to discuss local climate impacts and how to adapt moving forward.

EOC3 filed for nonprofit status in January 2017, and its nine-member board of directors has produced a strategic action plan outlining goals and programs. That plan will be unveiled at the group's 2018 annual meeting Saturday, Jan. 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Oregon State University Extension Service conference room at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton. The meeting is open to the public.

Colleen Sanders, EOC3 board chairwoman and the newly hired climate adaptation planner for the Confederated Tribes of the



Photo contributed by Colleen Sanders

The Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition, or EOC3, participated in a clean energy jobs rally Nov. 4 in Pendleton, organized by Don Sampson and Renew Oregon to raise support for a proposed Oregon cap-and-invest energy policy.

Umatilla Indian Reservation, said their primary mission is to provide education and understanding about climate change, especially as it influences rural Eastern Oregon.

"So much of our human society has been built on the predictability of our climate and the seasonal weather patterns," Sanders said. "What climate change is doing is completely throwing a wrench in those."

Looking ahead to 2018, Sanders said EOC3 plans host monthly luncheons and build a network of speakers versed in different aspects of

climate change to promote a greater knowledge of the issues.

"The idea is to create a conversation space for climate change issues," she said.

Dave Powell, vice chairman of the EOC3 board and a retired silviculturist with the Umatilla National Forest, gave a climate presentation Tuesday for students at Weston-McEwen High School in Athena. Though his main topic was forestry, Powell said the impacts kept coming back to one crucial element: water.

"When you think about all of the benefits and ecosystem services that a forest provides, it's becoming more and more clear to me that water is the most valuable," Powell said. "The webs that reach out from that are huge."

According to one climate model from OSU, average temperatures in the Blue Mountains could increase anywhere from 1 to 3 degrees Celsius over the next 75 years. The most obvious impact, Powell said, will be more moisture falling in the form of rain instead of snow.

Lower snowpack, which is needed to replenish streams for farms and fish into summer, means faster runoff at higher elevations.

Bruce Barnes, EOC3 board member and executive director of the Pendleton-based nonprofit Flora ID, said studies show that peak water flow in the Umatilla River has come 30 days earlier than it did in the 1980s. "There are so many different factors to consider," Barnes said. "They're interwoven. Each one may affect several different factors, or vice-versa."

Less snow and more rain has already affected the timing of timber harvest, Barnes said, since loggers prefer to work when the ground is still frozen.

Don Wysocki, fellow EOC3 member and extension soil scientist for OSU in Umatilla County, said changes in snowpack and water availability will drive changes in local agriculture, pushing back irrigation seasons and ripening dryland crops earlier than usual.

"Harvest will occur earlier. Winters will probably get more heat units, so that changes the growth cycle of wheat," Wysocki said. "We'll probably favor wheat

varieties that mature earlier to try to escape drought or water shortages."

There is some debate, Wysocki said, on how climate change may affect precipitation during the growing season, which could have a positive or negative effect on regional production.

"I've seen projections going both ways on that," he said. "But I suspect there's some evidence that we may have a little better growing season precipitation."

Sanders said she worries that changes in water availability may exacerbate existing conflicts between industries, such as irrigation and fisheries. The public has to start thinking about adaptation to ensure the long-term health of those resources, she said.

Registering EOC3 as a nonprofit has helped to give the group a new energy, Sanders said, and they hope to give rural Oregonians a voice on climate issues and policies.

"We want Eastern Oregon residents and industries to be informed and empowered around climate change," Sanders said. "Climate change is going to impact everything, and everybody needs to be involved."

HERMISTON



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Jose Muniz, a seventh grader at Sandstone Middle School, was accompanied by his parents as Lions Club acting president Charlie Clupny congratulated him for his entry into the Peace Poster contest.

Students envision a future of peace

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Four students were honored Wednesday for their thoughts on peace, and the way they encourage others to think about it, too. The Hermiston Lions Club recognized the local entrants of the Lions Club Peace Poster contest: four students from Armand Larive and Sandstone middle schools. Students were asked to depict the theme "the future of peace."

Jose Muniz, Moises Reyes Purcell, Robby Shea and Amy Wooster were invited, along with their families, to the Lions' meeting where they were treated to lunch and got to display their posters for the club members. Each student received a certificate for their participation.

Wooster's poster was the winning piece, and will now be submitted to the multi-district competition. She received \$25 for her win.

Lions President Pro Tempore Charlie Clupny said the contest has local, state, national and international levels. The winner of the international contest is invited with their family to accept the award with the United Nations.

"Our dream is that one day we hear that one of our entries had made it to the international competition," Clupny said.

Wooster's drawing, done in colored pencil, depicted a missile turning into a dove.

Wooster, a seventh-grader at Sandstone Middle School, said the piece took her a few



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

A drawing of a missile turning into a dove was the winner of the local Lions Club Peace Poster Contest. The piece was drawn by Amy Wooster of Sandstone Middle School.

weekends of work. This is her second year entering the contest.

She said she was happy to move on to the next round. "I don't know if I'll win, but it's fun," she said.

Wooster's parents, Sandy DeBano and David Wooster, said the whole family enjoyed thinking up potential ideas for posters, but this one was Amy's.

"We wish there was an adult contest," DeBano said.

The Lions Club also honored two community organizations and awarded them with donations from a recent auction. The Blue Mountain Community College Foundation received \$11,068 from the Lions Club to be used for the Precision Irrigated Agricultural Center.

The Lions also donated \$500 to Made to Thrive, a local organization that funds activities for students whose

families can't afford them, such as sports and music. The program is tailored to each student and more than 300 kids in the community have participated in the program.

The donation was from the Don Horneck Memorial Fund. Horneck was an agronomist who worked at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center. He passed away unexpectedly in 2014 at age 56.

Phil Hamm, a Lion's Club member, said a scholarship to help an Oregon State University agronomy student was set up in Horneck's name after his passing. The scholarship is now worth more than \$100,000, Hamm said.

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PENDLETON

Humane society chases taxing district model

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

The Pioneer Humane Society wants Umatilla County voters to support a taxing district for animal control.

Ben DeCarlow of Hermiston, Pioneer Humane Society board treasurer, made the pitch Wednesday morning to the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners. He said a special taxing district with a rate of 10 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value would generate around \$500,000 for the organization to cover the cost of services.

Pioneer Humane Society operates the no-kill Pendleton Animal Welfare Shelter, which took in 860 dogs and 1,430 cats in 2015 and 2016. DeCarlow said the society also operates programs to provide pet food for lower income pet owners and transportation for pets that need to be spayed or neutered.

He also told the board the nationwide animal control model is for counties to support humane societies. Without the steady stream of tax revenue, he said Pioneer Humane Society "would not be headed in a positive direction."

Marjorie Iburg, former



EO file photo

In this January 2016 file photo, Cuttie and Cuddles share a pen at PAWS animal shelter in Pendleton.

Pendleton city councilor and former PAWS board member, told commissioners the population of unwanted animals "could be overwhelming" for the county if not for the Pioneer Humane Society. She said that a taxing district would include Hermiston, and the animal shelter there would receive tax revenue, possibly through a contract with Pioneer Humane Society.

Commissioners Bill Elfering and George Murdock voted to allow the group to proceed and seek the approval of local city councils. The commissioners noted that was how the Oregon State University Extension

Service District had to get a resolution on the May 2018 ballot to consider forming a new taxing district.

On that note, the board held the first of two public meetings on the Extension Service District.

Dan Dorran of Hermiston, former Umatilla County Fair Board member, was among the handful of people who spoke in favor of the extension service district, along with local wheat producer Greg Goad. No one spoke against.

The board of commissioners approved a county-wide boundary for the extension district and set the second public hearing on the matter for Jan. 3.

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