

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Forest plan offers hope, but much is uncertain

The U.S. Forest Service is taking comment from individuals and groups with legal standing to file objections on its final draft of the much-anticipated Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision.

The plans, which were last updated in 1990, will guide land management activities — including timber harvest, livestock grazing and recreation — over 5.5 million acres in the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur national forests in Eastern Oregon for the next 10-15 years.

The Forest Service has been working to replace the 1990 management plan since 2003. Four years ago it released a draft Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed replacement. Near universal backlash from timber, grazing, recreation and environmental interests prompted three years of “re-engagement” with the public.

The Forest Service says its preferred revision calls for more active management to improve forest health and reduce the risk of the large and dangerous wildfires plaguing the West.

To that end, the plan calls for doubling the annual timber harvest

across all three forests from a recent average of 101 million board-feet to 205 million board-feet. It could also add as many as 51,600 animal unit months, or AUMs, associated with vacant allotments for livestock grazing across the three forests.

Stakeholder response to the revisions have been tepid at best.

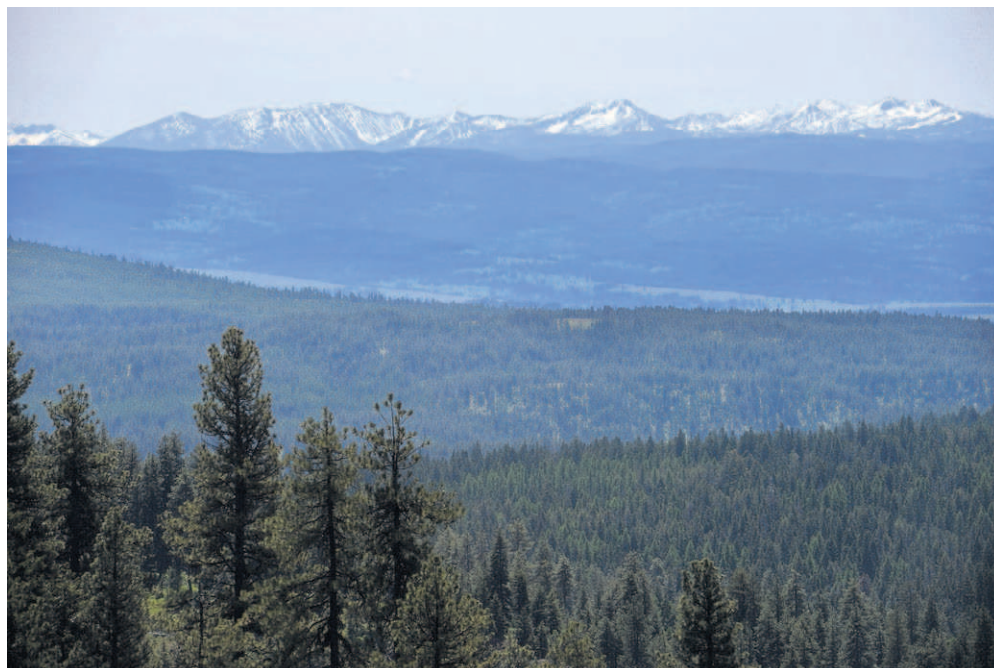
Doubling the timber harvest would be a boon to loggers and the economies of communities that once depended on the paychecks from lumber mills.

But timber interests say the proposed revision doesn't offer any guarantees the Forest Service will be able to meet those targets each year. It's impossible to maintain mills and other industry infrastructure without that certainty.

Livestock producers would like to be able to graze more cattle and sheep in the forests.

There have been many changes to the management of the forests in the last 28 years that have caused the active number of AUMs to decline from what was provided in the 1990 plan.

The 1990 plan called for 524,000 AUMs for grazing, but only 242,800 are currently available. The revised



EO file photo

The management plan for the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur national forests in Eastern Oregon will cover an area about the size of New Jersey and come under intense scrutiny from all sides.

plan calls for up to 294,400.

Ranchers are skeptical they'll actually get to graze on those additional AUMs.

Environmental groups, on the other hand, say the plan places too much emphasis on resource extraction, and does not do enough to protect old-growth trees and wildlife.

We think more logging and more grazing is a good idea. The fuel load in the forests needs to be reduced. Rural communities in Eastern Oregon could use the 1,200 extra jobs and additional

\$60 million in income the plan could generate.

Those with standing have until the end of the month to comment. The Forest Service then has 90 days to make further revisions.

Whatever plan is eventually adopted, the operational details will be as much a product of litigation as careful consideration.

Because in the end, it's the federal judiciary, not the Forest Service, that writes the working forest management plan.



OTHER VIEWS

Not the enemy

We've been complacent. We thought everybody knew how important a free press was to our world and that all this talk about us being the enemy of the people would be dismissed for the silliness it is.

But the reckless attacks have continued, instigated and encouraged by our president.

When the leader of the free world works to erode the public's trust in the media, the potential for damage is enormous, both here and abroad. We once set an example of free and open government for the world to follow. Now those who seek to suppress the free flow of information are doing so with impunity.

The time has come for us to stand up to the bullying. The role journalism plays in our free society is too crucial to allow this degradation to continue.

We aren't the enemy of the people. We are the people. We aren't fake news. We are your news and we struggle night and day to get the facts right.

On cold January nights, we're the people's eyes and ears at city council and school board meetings. We tell the stories of our communities, from the fun of a county fair to the despair a family faces when a loved one is killed.

We are always by your side. We shop the same stores, attend the same churches and hike the same trails. We struggle with daycare and worry about paying for retirement.

In our work as journalists, our first loyalty is to you. Our work is guided by a

set of principles that demand objectivity, independence, open-mindedness and the pursuit of the truth. We make mistakes, we know. There's nothing we hate more than errors but we acknowledge them, correct them and learn from them.

Our work is a labor of love because we love our country and believe we are playing a vital role in our democracy. Self-governance demands that our citizens need to be well-informed and that's what we're here to do. We go beyond the government issued press release or briefing and ask tough questions. We hold people in power accountable for their actions. Some think we're rude to question and challenge. We know it's our obligation.

People have been criticizing the press for generations. We are not perfect. But we're striving every day to be a better version of ourselves than we were the day before.

That's why we welcome criticism. But unwarranted attacks that undermine your trust in us cannot stand. The problem has become so serious that newspapers across the nation are speaking out against these attacks in one voice today on their editorial pages.

As women's rights pioneer and investigative journalist Ida B. Wells wrote in 1892: "The people must know before they can act and there is no educator to compare with the press."

A version of this editorial was circulated by the Boston Globe, and Newspapers across the country are printing a version of it in their Thursday, August 16 editions.

OTHER VIEWS

With Mueller, like Starr, beware wishful thinking

In Washington in the 1990s, it was a sure bet that whenever conservative journalists and activists got together, the conversation turned to the Clintons, Kenneth Starr and the Whitewater investigation. There was a good bit of what one editor memorably called “hush-hush and heavy breathing” when insiders discussed momentous developments that were surely on the way.

Somebody knew somebody who had heard from somebody close to Starr that big indictments were imminent — just around the corner.

The big indictments were just around the corner in 1995, in 1996, in 1997. They didn't come. Then, in 1998, the Lewinsky scandal seemed to fall into the laps of anti-Clinton types. But even as the scandal rolled toward impeachment, some on the right still looked for indictments in the matters that had raised Republican hopes over the years: Whitewater, Filegate, Travelgate, the Rose Law Firm billing records, the death of Vincent Foster and more.

But 1998 passed, and then 1999, and then 2000 without the anticipated indictments. Bill and Hillary Clinton left office bruised by impeachment but without the criminal charges their adversaries once believed were coming.

Now, it is not unusual to encounter anti-Trumpers who believe big indictments from Trump-Russia special counsel Robert Mueller are just around the corner. Recently, I had a long conversation with a smart and deeply engaged follower of Trump-Russia events who was convinced that Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign chairman currently on trial for tax evasion and bank fraud, and awaiting trial for failing to register as a foreign agent, would be indicted yet again — and this would be the big one, on charges that would finally include conspiring with Russia to fix the 2016 election.

One doesn't have to wander around the anti-Trump web to see similar sentiments, not just about Manafort but about other top figures in the Trump circle. The indictments are on the way.

Mueller has indeed indicted a lot of people. But to this point, no one around President Trump has been charged with colluding, or conspiring, with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

Mueller has charged 32 people and three companies. Four individuals are former Trump aides. One is a lawyer in

BYRON YORK
Comment

London loosely connected to the Manafort case. One is a California man charged in relation to the Russian troll farm. And the great majority of those charged, 29, are Russians or Russian companies out of Mueller's reach.

The special counsel has bagged a few big names: Manafort; Rick Gates, Manafort's right-hand man who has pleaded guilty to many of the same crimes Manafort is on trial for; Michael Flynn, Trump's former national security adviser, who has pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI; and George Papadopoulos, a short-lived campaign adviser who has also pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI.

So far, Mueller has five guilty pleas, one trial under way, and 29 cases that are probably never going to go anywhere.

People cheering Mueller on — the “It's Mueller Time!” crowd — often say that's quite an achievement.

Starr accomplished a lot, too. While best remembered for pursuing the Lewinsky affair, Starr got 15 convictions over the course of his investigation, including Jim and Susan McDougal, President Clinton's business partners in the Whitewater venture; Webster Hubbell, the Clintons' close friend and top Justice Department official; and Jim Guy Tucker, the sitting governor of the president's home state of Arkansas.

Now Mueller is conducting his first trial, and he might well win a conviction. If that happens, look for the special counsel's cheerleaders to declare that this is just the beginning.

Maybe it will be. Or maybe it won't. With the Lewinsky matter, Starr went on to write a report that served as the basis for impeaching Clinton. That is why Starr is remembered today. For his part, Mueller is undoubtedly working on a Trump-Russia report now, and it, too, could lead to impeachment, depending on which party controls the House after November.

Perhaps there will be more indictments from Mueller. Perhaps, say, Roger Stone will be charged for something related to his business affairs, or there will be other charges against other people unrelated to collusion. In the end, though, it's likely the report will be what Mueller is remembered for, while those big new indictments remain just around the corner.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

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