

A solid foundation to move forward with forest plan revision



SUSAN ROBERTS

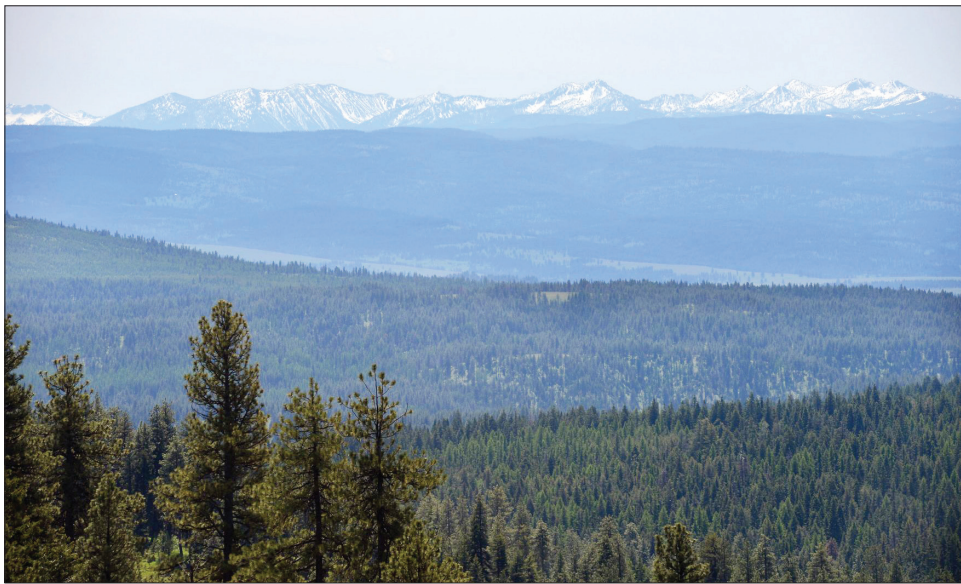
OTHER VIEWS

The Blues Intergovernmental Council supports the U.S. Forest Service's moves to reinstate forest plan revision for the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests.

The work completed by the BIC during the past two years has established key foundations that will be crucial components of an improved forest plan revision process by reflecting local values, incorporating input and providing robust opportunities for meaningful engagement.

On March 14, 2019, the Forest Service's deputy chief issued instruction to the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Regional Forester to withdraw the Blue Mountains Revised Land Management Plans, Final Environmental Impact Statement and draft Record of Decision. This decision came after nearly 15 years of a highly contentious public planning process in which numerous community members and leaders felt frustrated, misunderstood and ignored. The objection process yielded more than 350 objections to the forest plans, which made clear that the public did not see how input provided had been incorporated nor did the plans fully account for the unique social and economic needs of the affected communities.

Following the withdrawal of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan, leadership from the Pacific Northwest Regional Office and the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests met with the Eastern Oregon Counties Association in April 2019 to coordinate, better understand concerns and identify opportunities to approach forest planning and management in a new way. The partic-



EO Media Group, File

The U.S. Forest Service's move to reinstate forest plan revision for the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests has the support of the Blues Intergovernmental Council.

ipants recognized the need to explore unique approaches and work together at a larger scale, which included other government entities within and surrounding the Blue Mountains geographic area.

The various government entities officially formed the Blues Intergovernmental Council in November 2019 to serve as an overarching entity and develop joint recommendations on the most contentious issues identified in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan revision process. The BIC members include leaders from all 14 local counties as well as federal, state and tribal government entities. The diverse membership of the BIC ensures numerous perspectives and interests are represented.

Since the BIC formed, members have worked together to develop desired conditions for Forest Service consideration on several key and previously polarizing issues in the withdrawn Blue Mountains Forest Plan, including riparian livestock grazing, fisheries, hydrology, forest

health and access. The BIC also commissioned and oversaw the completion of a socioeconomic analysis that will offer data to help consider impacts of forest management decisions on local communities.

The BIC-endorsed desired conditions serve as recommendations to the Forest Service to inform the forest plan revision process (with a minority report included for the access issue). The collective work over the past two years has fostered trust and strengthened relationships between the key intergovernmental groups within the BIC and the Forest Service.

The BIC members and leadership from the Blue Mountains national forests feel this unique approach will provide a crucial foundation for success in accomplishing a revision of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan in a timely manner. By building off the past plan revision analysis, the BIC's endorsed desired conditions products and connections that each member has with various community perspec-

tives, we have an exceptional opportunity to develop updated forest plans for these national forests that provide for the sustainable needs of the landscape and the needs of current and future generations.

Building off these accomplishments, the BIC believes the Forest Service should move forward with the plan revision process under the 2012 Planning Rule, with the goal of working together to develop sustainable forest plans that reflect local values, incorporate input and provide robust opportunities for meaningful engagement. We support the Forest Service's plan to establish a local team and would urge this be done as quickly as possible to maintain the forward momentum the BIC has achieved in these last two years. By working together through this intergovernmental forum, the BIC can serve as a bridge between the Forest Service and communities surrounding the Blue Mountains to help repair and build trust, provide clarity about the planning process and plan components, complement Forest Service public outreach efforts and bring continual feedback to the Forest Service regarding ways to improve the process or products.

While there will still be passion around important issues, we feel that through the joint efforts between the BIC and the Forest Service we have built important relationships and developed key recommendations that address much of the previous controversy. This has built a solid foundation to move forward now with forest plan revision.

Vast progress has been made in the Blue Mountains. We look forward to working together with the Forest Service to steward these national forest lands in a way that provides for sustainable land management while considering the communities' economic and social-cultural health.

Susan Roberts is a Wallowa County commissioner and a co-convenor of the Blues Intergovernmental Council.



JIM CRITCHLEY

OTHER VIEWS

Stay safe this wildfire season

The front page of the East Oregonian on July 14 had a photo of a fire in Hermiston. A few hours before that photo was taken, a fire that started in a field extended to a barn.

The wet spring and buildup of grasses means we have a lot of fuel for fires, so as we move into the hot season and the winds begin to blow, we will be facing a very dangerous season.

During this season, you can help your firefighters by keeping up with your property maintenance and being aware of how fire travels. When the wind is calm, fire travels by directly coming in contact with more flammable material. When the wind is blowing, fire travels by direct contact and burning embers.

To limit fire travel by direct contact we should:

- Move any flammable material away from buildings. This includes mulch, flammable plants, firewood piles and anything else that can burn.
- Keep lawns mowed and plants watered. "Lean and green" should be motto during this season.
- Trim trees and bushes to limit the chances of fire traveling into the tree.
- Look to replace plants close to buildings with less flammable plants.
- Keep at least 30 feet of defensible space (lean and green) around structures

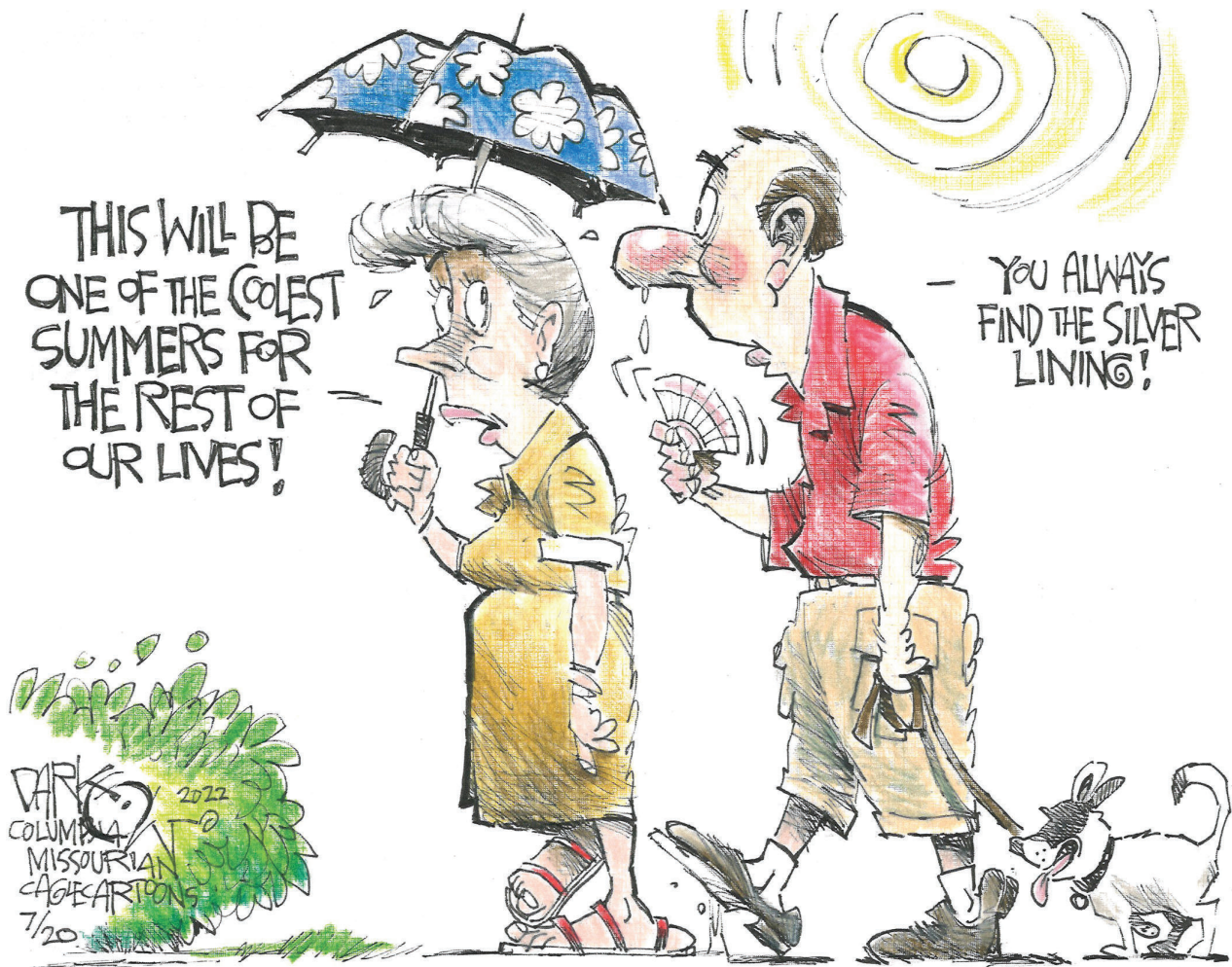
To limit fire travel by burning embers we should:

- Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves and debris that could catch fire.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal mesh wire no larger than 1/8th inch.
- Remove anything flammable stored underneath decks and porches.

Together we can make our community safer. If everyone does a little, no one needs to be overwhelmed by doing a lot. Whether you live in the urban area or the rural, a little effort today may save a lot of trouble later.

You can reach us at 541-276-1442 and schedule a meeting if you desire more info. Stay safe.

Jim Critchley is the chief of the Pendleton Fire Department.



A closer look at Initiative Petition 17



ANDREW CLARK

A SLICE OF LIFE

Well, it looks like we are going to have gun control on the ballot in November as Initiative Petition 17 — and I say, "good for us."

It has been well thought out. It does not ban assault weapons or take away the right to own guns, but it does ban high-capacity magazines, which are at the heart of mass slaughter. (Note — the magazine is the place where the cartridges are held before being detonated in the firing chamber.)

Let's take a closer look at how this could make a difference.

First, by not banning assault weapons it dodges the divisive issue of the Second Amendment to "keep and bear arms." It also eliminates the problem of defining an "assault weapon" and the potential for manufacturers to simply make small modifications to the weapon so the definition does not fit it anymore, which defeats the ban.

Second, the normal magazine capacity of most hunting rifles is five rounds — there are no high-capacity magazines for standard hunting rifles — and what is now called an "assault weapon" could be limited to five rounds, too. The design of the rifle would change so that no external magazine could be used — just the five

cartridges inside the weapon itself like hunting rifles. Thereby, an assault rifle is simply the way the weapon looks but not how it functions. The assault weapon is the same as a standard hunting rifle except that it looks different, which is a very important factor for many owners of these weapons, and the Second Amendment is not violated.

Third, by disallowing high-capacity magazines, the assault weapon becomes no different from a normal hunting rifle. Five cartridges only — no more 50 shot magazines when the trigger is simply pulled 50 times in 50 seconds for mass slaughter of human targets. If someone claims they "need" high-capacity magazines for hunting, the response is that they instead need instruction on how to hunt. In "hunting," you do not simply spray the woods with 50 shots in case there might be a deer somewhere out there.

Fourth, for making this law work well, there should be a buy-back program for current assault weapons that can use high-capacity magazines and for the magazines themselves. Give the people who have them a chance to voluntarily comply with the law and the cash to buy the new five-cartridge capacity assault rifle.

Fifth, the law. The statute — not the administrative rules — must have real teeth, and here are some suggestions. 1. Possession of an assault weapon that can use a high-capacity magazine, as is now the case, is an automatic five years in prison, no questions asked. There was a chance to return it in the buy-back

program. 2. Possession of a high-capacity magazine is an automatic one year in prison for each cartridge capacity — 10 cartridges equal 10 years in prison. Fifty cartridges equal 50 years in prison, which could be a life sentence. Note that these ideas are for possession, not necessarily use. The goal is prevention of possible usage. This may be harsh, but isn't the slaughter of a classroom of school kids in Uvalde rather harsh too?

Am I anti-gun? No, I grew up with guns and hunted deer and squirrels in Michigan — but I did not hunt people. We sighted-in our rifles very carefully and my dad had a rule — one shot only, to the head, so there is no suffering by the animal.

The Supreme Court recently banned abortion because it was not mentioned in the Constitution, which was written in the time of muskets. Assault weapons are not mentioned in the Constitution either and it is reasonable to assume that what was being dealt with was the right to keep and bear muskets.

So perhaps we should, in Oregon, begin a new industry manufacturing muskets and then as an alternative to the buy-back program, trade them for the assault weapons. I'm sure the current Supreme Court, in all their ignorant wisdom, would then jump at the chance to be right in line with when the Constitution was composed.

Dr. Andrew Clark is a livestock veterinarian with both domestic and international work experience who lives in Pendleton.