

Wildfires

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He said such work kept the 2017 Milli fire, a lightning-caused blaze that still consumed 24,000 acres, from reaching Sisters in Central Oregon.

Oregon has more than 2 million acres ready for such work, he said, “yet we don’t have the money to actually do the treatment.”

Under questioning by Merkley, Christiansen said it boiled down to the lack of money to pay for projects. Merkley said forest land close to cities — the so-called urban-wildland interface — could be identified for priority projects.

Merkley also said he would like to see President Joe Biden consider such work as vital infrastructure under Biden’s proposed American Jobs Plan.

Merkley made two statewide swings after the 2020 Labor Day wildfires. He said he senses a change in public attitudes toward prescribed burning.

“It used to be that people said make sure there aren’t any prescribed fires burning, because we don’t like the smoke coming down here,” he said, “Now with the intensity of the fires we’ve had, the general sense has been that we are happy to tolerate a little bit



This file photo shows a wildfire burning in Central Oregon. “We know that these more aggressively destructive fire seasons are going to keep coming our way,” Sen. Jeff Merkley said Thursday.

of smoke now if that makes our town much safer and reduces the odds of smoke and bad fires come fire season.”

‘More of everything’

Asked whether he thinks federal agencies are prepared if there are similarly devastating wildfires this year — drought is prevalent in much of

Oregon and the West — Merkley said there would never be enough help available if wildfires were that widespread.

“When we are having fires burn because of similar conditions and similar storms starting fires in multiple states at once, I think we are always going to wish we had more tankers, more people, more of everything,” he

said.

He said the current federal budget contains money for training of National Guard soldiers to serve as backup forest firefighters. The Guard played a similar role in the 2020 Labor Day wildfires.

“I want to make sure those teams are ready,” he said. “Last year they were short of experienced crew lead-

ers. That was a challenge of too many fires at once across the country.

“When we’re sending out teams to fight fires, we have to have experienced leaders in order to protect the lives of the crew.”

Forest firefighting is divided between the Oregon Department of Forestry — which also protects public lands overseen by the federal Bureau of Land Management — and the U.S. Forest Service.

Merkley mentioned an unpublished federal study that projects a dire future for the Northwest’s forests — that they will disappear by the end of this century — as they face a drier climate, longer fire seasons and insect infestations.

A study by the University of Washington in cooperation with federal agencies, published in 2020 before the devastating wildfires later in the year, did warn of serious consequences by midcentury. “Starting the process of adapting to those changes now will give us a better chance of protecting forest resources in the future,” said David Peterson, a professor at the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences.

Merkley said: “We really have to pay attention to forest management.”

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GOP blocks bipartisan probe of deadly Jan. 6 riot at Capitol

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK AND LISA MASCARO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans on Friday blocked the creation of a bipartisan panel to study the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, refusing to back down on their opposition to the independent investigation even amid emotional appeals from those who fought with and fled from the rioters that day.

The Senate vote was 54-35 — short of the 60 votes needed to consider a House-passed bill that would have formed a 10-member commission evenly split between the two parties. The vote was another sign of GOP fealty to former President Donald Trump and an overtly political effort to shift the focus off the violent insurrection of his supporters.

Though the Jan. 6 commission bill passed the House earlier this month with the support of almost three dozen Republicans, GOP senators said they believe the commission would eventually be used against them politically. And Trump, who still has a firm hold on the party, has called it a “Democrat trap.”

The vote is emblematic of the profound mistrust between

the two parties since the siege, especially among Republicans, as some in the party have downplayed the violence and defended the rioters who supported Trump and his false insistence that the election was stolen from him.

Four people died in the riot, and a police officer collapsed and died afterward of what authorities said were natural causes. Two police officers took their own lives in the days after the riots.

The Republicans’ political arguments over the violent siege have frustrated not only Democrats but also those who fought off the rioters.

Michael Fanone, a Metropolitan Police Department officer who responded to the attack, said between meetings with Republican senators that a commission is “necessary for us to heal as a nation from the trauma that we all experienced that day.” Fanone has described being dragged down the Capitol steps by rioters who shocked him with a stun gun and beat him.

Sandra Garza, the partner of Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick, who collapsed and died after battling the rioters, said of the Republican senators, “You know they are here

today and with their families and comfortable because of the actions of law enforcement that day.”

“So I don’t understand why they would resist getting to the bottom of what happened that day and fully understanding how to prevent it. Just boggles my mind,” she said.



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Jensen, Pastor 8286 11th Street, Terrebonne. http://www.concordiamlms.com Facebook: Concordia Lutheran Mission Phone: 541-325-6773</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Presbyterian</p> <p>First Presbyterian Bend Embodying Spacious Christianity & Welcoming All 230 NE 9th St. (Across from Bend High) www.bendfp.org Facebook & Instagram: @bendfp</p> <p>Speaking Sunday Rev Dr. Steven Koski</p> <p>Join us Sunday at 10am ONLINE at bendfp.org or on https://www.facebook.com/bendfp/</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Roman Catholic</p> <p>Holy Redeemer Roman Catholic Parish Rev. Paul Antao, Pastor www.holyredeemerparish.net Parish Office: 541-536-3571 HOLY REDEEMER ROMAN CATHOLIC, LA PINE 16137 Burgess Rd. Mass: Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri. 9:00 am & Sun. 10:00 am HOLY TRINITY ROMAN CATHOLIC SUNRIVER 18143 Cottonwood Rd. 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