

TODAY

Today is Wednesday, June 30, the 181st day of 2021. There are 184 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In **1971**, the Supreme Court ruled, 6-3, that the government could not prevent The New York Times or The Washington Post from publishing the Pentagon Papers.

In **1865**, eight people, including Mary Surratt and Dr. Samuel Mudd, were convicted by a military commission of conspiring with John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln.

In **1908**, the Tunguska Event took place in Russia as an asteroid exploded above Siberia, leaving 800 square miles of scorched or blown-down trees.

In **1917**, singer, actor and activist Lena Horne was born in Brooklyn, New York.

In **1934**, Adolf Hitler launched his "blood purge" of political and military rivals in Germany in what came to be known as "The Night of the Long Knives."

In **1958**, the U.S. Senate passed the Alaska statehood bill by a vote of 64-20.

In **1982**, the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution expired, having failed to receive the required number of ratifications for its adoption, despite having its seven-year deadline extended by three years.

In **1986**, the Supreme Court, in Bowers v. Hardwick, ruled 5-4 that states could outlaw homosexual acts between consenting adults.

In **2009**, American soldier Pfc. Bowe R. Bergdahl went missing from his base in eastern Afghanistan, and was later confirmed to have been captured by insurgents.

Ten years ago: Conservative TV commentator Glenn Beck said goodbye to Fox News Channel, airing his final show before going into business for himself.

Five years ago: Saying it was the right thing to do, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that transgender people would be allowed to serve openly in the U.S. military, ending one of the last bans on service in the armed forces.

One year ago: President Donald Trump came under growing pressure to respond to allegations that Russia had offered bounties for killing U.S. troops in Afghanistan; the White House said the allegations hadn't been confirmed.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Lea Massari is 88. A songwriter Tony Hatch is 82. Singer Glenn Shorrock is 77. Jazz musician Stanley Clarke is 70. Actor David Garrison is 69. Rock musician Hal Lindes (Dire Straits) is 68. Actor-comedian David Alan Grier is 65. Actor Vincent D'Onofrio is 62. Actor Rupert Graves is 58. Former boxer Mike Tyson is 55. Actor Peter Outerbridge is 55. Rock musician Tom Drummond (Better Than Ezra) is 52. Actor Brian Bloom is 51. Actor Monica Potter is 50. Actor Molly Parker is 49. Actor Rick Gonzalez is 42. Actor Susannah Flood is 39. Rock musician James Adam Shelley (American Authors) is 38. R&B singer Fantasia is 37. Olympic gold medal swimmer Michael Phelps is 36. Actor Sean Marquette (TV: "The Goldbergs") is 33.

—Associated Press

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

THE NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS SYSTEM



Andy Geissler, federal timber program director for the American Forest Resource Council, straddles a dry creek in Southern Oregon that has been nominated as a Wild and Scenic River under the federal River Democracy Act.



Submitted photos by Nick Smith via Capital Press

Southern Oregon's Bear Gulch was nominated as a Wild and Scenic River. It was dry and virtually indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape during a recent visit by members of the American Forest Resource Council.

New submissions draw criticism for including creeks and gulches

BY GEORGE PLAVEN
Capital Press

A U.S. Senate bill that would designate nearly 4,700 miles of wild and scenic rivers in Oregon is being criticized for including hundreds of small creeks, streams and gulches that, in some cases, were found to be completely dry upon inspection.

The American Forest Resources Council, a trade group representing the timber industry, recently conducted an analysis of the proposal, arguing that certain nonriver segments under consideration "do not meet the intent or definition of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act."

Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, both Democrats, introduced the River Democracy Act on Feb. 3. The legislation was developed based on more than 15,000 nominations submitted by the public for Wild and Scenic River Act protections.

But according to the forest resources council, just 15% of the waterways are actually labeled as "rivers."

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System includes designated waterways that are not

called rivers, such as Wychus Creek in Deschutes County.

Wyden said the act allows ephemeral and intermittent streams to be included in The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and some of them contribute to public drinking water supplies.

Andy Geissler, American Forest Resources Council federal timber program director, said he used forest maps to cross-reference and locate the proposed sites listed for inclusion in the bill.

Out of 886 segments, 752 are identified as "streams," rather than rivers. Another 33 are identified as "gulches," one as a "draw" and 17 were "unnamed tributaries."

Geissler said he visited several of the streams earlier this year along the Nestucca, North Umpqua and Applegate rivers, spanning the northern Oregon coast south to the Rogue Valley.

Photos taken at Southern Oregon's Bear Gulch in May show Geissler straddling a dry channel, virtually indistinguishable from the surrounding landscape.

"It was pretty shocking to see what was proposed down

"These are some of the most important tributaries of larger, more iconic systems like the Columbia, Willamette and Rogue rivers."

— Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden

there," Geissler said. "Part of it is a lack of analysis."

Geissler's research and observations were the basis for comments submitted by the council on the River Democracy Act, which received a public hearing on June 23 in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The bill would roughly triple the number of wild and scenic rivers across Oregon to protect fish and wildlife, water quality and outdoor recreation values.

It also increases wild and scenic river corridors from a quarter-mile to a half-mile on both sides, which adds up to approximately 3 million acres of protected land — an area approximately the size of Connecticut.

The concern, Geissler said, is whether the designation will make it harder for land manag-

ers to do forest thinning projects designed to reduce the size and severity of wildfires.

"My assumption is these half-mile corridors will be no-touch buffers," he said.

American Forest Resources Council President Travis Joseph said the group does not oppose the Wild and Scenic River Act, created in 1968 to preserve rivers with "outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values." However, he said the River Democracy Act violates the spirit of the law.

Catastrophic wildfires, erosion and sedimentation pose the greatest threats to watersheds and rivers, Joseph said.

"Arbitrary restrictive land designations only tend to impede public lands access and the most important work needed to reduce wildfire risks and impacts," he said. "Unfortunately, this bill only serves to make management of federal lands more restrictive at a time we are experiencing larger and more severe wildfires."

Wyden, who is spearheading work on the bill, pushed back against that notion.

The bill requires the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to establish

wildfire plans and cooperative agreements with states and local governments to allow forest thinning within riparian areas that haven't been prioritized until now, Wyden said.

In addition, Wyden said the River Democracy Act allows ephemeral and intermittent streams to be included in The National Wild and Scenic River System.

"These are some of the most important tributaries of larger, more iconic systems like the Columbia, Willamette and Rogue rivers," Wyden said in a statement, adding that 1.7 million Oregonians receive drinking water from public systems that rely at least in part on intermittent, ephemeral or headwater streams.

Steve Pedery, conservation director for the environmental group Oregon Wild, said there is nothing in law that prevents an intermittent stream from qualifying for protection.

"To people who manage rivers, and are working on things like restoring salmon or protecting drinking water, they recognize that you have to start with the headwaters," Pedery said. "You can't just focus on the big river downstream."

2-year-old found dead identified after 58 years with DNA match

A man fishing in Southern Oregon near Ashland on July 11, 1963, came upon the body of a 2-year-old boy, concealed under blankets, tied with wire and weighed down by heavy pieces of iron.

The toddler went unidentified until Monday, when the Jackson County

Sheriff's Office announced his identity on Facebook, The Oregonian reported. A DNA match and some genealogical sleuthing revealed he was Stevie Crawford, born in New Mexico on Oct. 2, 1960.

The Rogue River man who found the body was fishing in the Keene Creek Reservoir along state Highway 66, the sheriff's office said. In 2007 a sheriff's

detective found the case among old file boxes, and the toddler's body was exhumed in 2008. A DNA sample was taken, but no leads were found.

In December, the Jackson County Sheriff's Office received a tip, which they didn't describe, but an investigator ran the genetic sample through an open-source DNA repository and located two possible siblings.

In an interview with investigators, one of the siblings, a DNA-confirmed maternal half-brother in Ohio, said that he had a young sibling with Down syndrome — a genetic disorder that aided in the identification — who was born in New Mexico and went missing.

How he died and came to be placed in that location remains unclear.

—Associated Press

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