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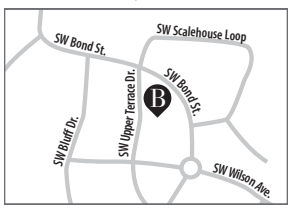

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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

SOUTHERN OREGON

Judge says forest projects need reevaluation

BY MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

Forest treatments planned for 10,500 acres of Southern Oregon spotted owl habitat must be reevaluated after wildfires tore through the area, according to a federal judge.

U.S. District Judge Ann Aiken has ruled that federal wildlife biologists must again consult on species impacts from the two timber projects, which were approved shortly before 4,800 acres within their boundaries burned in 2019.

Federal officials argued another review was unnecessary because the original biological opinion to assess the projects was still valid despite fires that swept through spotted owl habitat.

While the government's overall conclusions may remain unchanged, it's still required to consider "new information concerning wildfires in and around the action area" under the Endangered Species Act, Aiken said.

Even before wildfires damaged the spotted owl's critical habitat, the Poor Windy and Evans Creek projects weren't properly studied by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the judge said.

Tom Kogut/USFS

A northern spotted owl.

Specifically, Aiken agreed with environmental advocates that federal officials arrived at conclusions that were contradicted by their own findings about competition between spotted owls and the more aggressive barred owls.

The biological opinion laid out evidence that spotted owls are out-competed "with no known exception" in areas used for nesting, roosting and foraging, including 10,500 acres of habitat set to be reduced within the 16,000-acre project boundaries, the ruling said.

Despite these representations, the opinion assumed without sufficiently explaining its reasoning that the negative influence of barred owls would be offset by untreated habitat that's left available, the judge said.

While it faults federal officials for falling short of legal requirements, the ruling does not block the forest treatments. A future judgment may include such remedies for violations identified in the ruling.

BEAVERTON

Ex-mayor pleads guilty to having child pornography

Associated Press

The former mayor of Beaverton has pleaded guilty to a federal charge of possessing child pornography.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon said Dennis "Denny" Doyle, 74, entered the plea Tuesday as part of a plea agreement in which a sentence of one year and one day will be recommended.

Between November 2014 and December 2015, Doyle possessed digital media containing child pornography, according to court documents. Several of the images were of children under the age of 12 who had been identified as sexually exploited minors by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Doyle appeared with Assistant Federal Public Defender Elizabeth Daily before U.S. District Judge Michael W. Mosman in federal court in Portland, The Oregonian reported. He'll be sentenced Jan. 24 and remains out of custody.

Doyle told the judge he's in counseling.

On his way out of the courtroom, Doyle said, "You know, we make mistakes."

Doyle served on the Beaverton City Council for more than a decade before he was elected mayor in 2008. He lost reelection in 2020 against current Mayor Lacey Beaty.

By pleading guilty to the felony charge, Doyle won't be allowed to have a firearm, vote or hold future public office, the judge told him.

Dave Killen/The Oregonian

Dennis "Denny" Doyle, center, former mayor of Beaverton, exits the federal courthouse in downtown Portland after pleading guilty to illegally possessing child pornography on Tuesday.

LOCAL BRIEFING

League of Oregon Cities

Redmond Mayor George Endicott receives an award from the League of Oregon Cities, presented by former Pendleton Mayor Phil Houk.

Endicott wins award from League of Oregon Cities

Longtime Redmond Mayor George Endicott received the prestigious Mark O. Hatfield Statesmanship Award from the League of Oregon Cities in at its annual conference in Bend last week.

The award, which hasn't been given out since, 2017, is among the highest honors bestowed by the league.

A Central Oregon native, Endicott returned home after 40 years of federal service, first serving on the Redmond Planning Commission, then being elected to the City Council in 2007. He was elected mayor in 2009 and has served seven consecutive terms. He is not running for reelection in November.

According to the League of Oregon Cities, the Hatfield Award is presented to "a deserving politician who has provided a lasting benefit to the quality of life for the citizens of Oregon."

Past Hatfield Award winners have included former state Sen. Betsy Johnson, former U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, former Oregon Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and, the award's namesake, former Oregon and U.S. Sen. Mark Hatfield.

Hatfield became the youngest-ever Oregon Secretary of State in 1956 at the age of 34. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1966 and is the longest-serving senator in Oregon history.

Deschutes County staff to discuss growth at events

Deschutes County planning staff has scheduled four meetings to provide information about the future growth and development in rural areas of the county.

Since 2010, the population of Deschutes County has grown by more than 25%, the Deschutes County Community Development Department said in a news release on Wednesday. In response to that growth, the county is inviting the public to discuss key issues, challenges and opportunities facing rural Deschutes County, and a vision for the future.

Each of the four events — in Bend, Sisters, Sunriver, and Redmond — will follow the same format, so there is no need to attend all four meetings, the release said.

- The Bend event will be from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Oct. 19 at the Deschutes County Service Center, 1300 NW Wall St. in the Barnes and Sawyer Room.
- The Sisters event will be from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Oct. 20 in the Lecture Room at Sisters High School, 1700 W. McKinney Butte Road.
- The Sunriver event will be from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Oct. 24 in Benham Hall at the Homeowners Aquatic & Recreation Center, 57250 Overlook Road.
- In Redmond the event will take place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Oct. 25 at Redmond City Hall, 411 SW Ninth St., in rooms 207 and 208.

For those who cannot attend make it to one of the events in person, an open house and survey will be available on the county's website beginning Oct. 19 and will remain open through Nov. 4, the release said.

For members of homeowners associations, social organizations or a book club, there is an opportunity for a more personal meeting with county staff to discuss the future of Deschutes County. To participate, email deschutes2040@deschutes.org.

— Bulletin staff reports