



TIGER BOYS CLAW TO SIXTH IN STATE
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OREGON STANDOFF: JUSTICE OR AMBUSH?



File photo

Anti-occupation protesters hold signs in the back of the John Day Senior Center Jan. 26. A group of refuge occupiers, including Ammon and Ryan Bundy, was supposed to speak at the meeting before authorities apprehended them on Highway 395 north of Burns.

Sheriff's natural resources plan won't be on May ballot

Judge rules petition in violation of Constitution

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

The natural resources plan created by the sheriff and a group he deputized will not be one of the items on the May ballot for local electors.

Grant County Circuit Court Judge William D. Cramer Jr. ruled Jan. 26 that the prospective petition for the local initiative failed to meet the requirements of the Oregon Constitution and ordered the county clerk to decertify the petition and remove it from the ballot.

Prairie City resident Frances Preston said she filed the petition on behalf of the Grant County Coordination Committee, a group deputized by Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer to create the Grant County, Oregon Public Lands Natural Resources Plan last year. The plan was not adopted by the county commissioners. The petition sought to adopt the plan and invoke coordination with the U.S. Forest Service.

Cramer ruled the plan did not meet constitutional requirements to include the full text of the proposed law — because the full text of the unofficial resources plan was not included — and to only concern one subject. Further, he ruled the initiative was administrative in nature, whereas only legislative matters are subject to the initiative process.

Preston said it was her first time filing a petition, and she plans to use what she learned to pursue the petition again for the November ballot.

"It's all fair," she said. "It was a learning experience. I already have a rewrite I was prepared to submit, but there wasn't going to be enough time."

County residents King Williams and Mark Webb challenged the initiative, which sent the matter to the judge to review.

Williams said voters would not have known what they were voting for because the text of the natural resources plan was not included. He said he is not opposed to many of the items included in the plan created by Preston and others. He said, however, the county already has an adopted plan in place, and any changes should be made through a public process involving hearings and community input.

Cramer noted the challenges also brought up points that "may be well taken" about whether the plan, even if it had been adopted by voters, would have been legally enforceable. He said those points, however, were beyond the scope of his review.

The committee deputized by Palmer to create the plan includes Todd, Elaine and Mike Smith; Brooks Smith; Judy Kerr; Billie Jo and Terry George; Dave Traylor; Roger McKinley; Jim Sproul; and Preston.

Grant County residents on both sides of spectrum

By Angel Carpenter and Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHAN DAY — Reactions remain mixed in the county where Ammon Bundy and others were headed for a community meeting when they were arrested and one killed Jan. 26.

Whether for or against, or somewhere in between, the takeover of the refuge and the imprisonment of the Harney County ranchers, the John Day meeting and the death of LaVoy Finicum are hotly debated by local residents and people throughout the nation.

Some are calling the shooting murder, the ultimate expression of government overreach and the abolishment of free speech.

Others are saying authorities waited too long to take action to end the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge that began Jan. 2, where a small group of holdouts still remains.

Canyon City resident Tad Houpt, who organized the Jan. 26 meeting and invited the refuge occupiers, said he is planning another meeting, but he would not specify the date because he did not



File photo

Tad Houpt of Canyon City breaks the news to the audience at a meeting Jan. 26 in John Day that the Bundys had been arrested en route to the meeting where they were expected to speak.

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want the government "to assassinate some more speakers." He said, after watching the FBI video of Finicum's shooting, he is certain that is what happened.

"They're using tactics of war against the people of Grant and Harney counties, and that's treason," he said. "When our government is at

war with the people, that's treason. The truth will come out on this in the long run."

John Day resident Jim Sproul was one of many who stayed to speak at the Jan. 26 meeting even after learning the refuge occupiers had been apprehended en route. He said Thursday they were "ambushed" while trying to

exercise their First Amendment rights and inform people who wanted to know what was actually happening in Harney County.

"Those people (the occupiers) were coming up to exercise free speech, the right to express ourselves in an open forum," he said. "That message of free speech was stopped by the Oregon State Police and the FBI. There is a reason they did not want those people in Grant County."

Sproul said the situation is far broader than the Bundys or the Hammonds, the father and son ranchers from Burns whose resenting for setting fires that burned on federal land was a rallying cry for the group that took over the refuge. Sproul said it represented "federal overreach at its greatest."

"I hope that out of all this we learn something," he said. "We're losing our people, our way of life, and now we're losing our free speech."

A group of picketers showed up at the meeting to protest against the refuge occupiers, and Sproul said he respected their First Amendment rights.

John Day resident Judy Schuette, who organized the group of about 50 picketers, said she planned to stay for the entire meeting but became uncomfortable after news broke of the arrests and the shooting. She said some of the attendees appeared to be agitated, and someone told her it might not be a safe environment, so she left early.

"I think there is still a lot of unknown ahead of us," she said. "If that faction continues to be active with

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Standoff further polarizes federal land debate

Experts: Incident likely to reinforce opinions on both sides of issue

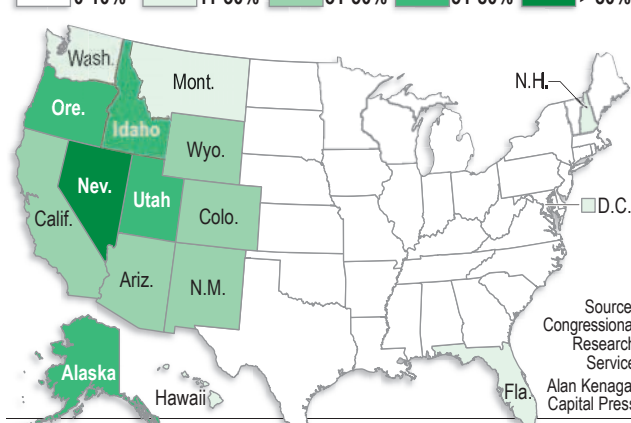
By Mateusz Perkowski and Eric Mortenson
EO Media Group

The showdown between federal agents and armed militants in Southeast Oregon will likely further polarize the public over the management of federal lands, experts say.

For some, the recent killing of an armed protester and arrests of several others will buttress the view they

Federal land by state

Land area by percent of state
0-10% 11-30% 31-50% 51-80% > 80%



Source: Congressional Research Service
Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

were extremist militants with unrealistic goals.

For others, the government's actions and its siege

of remaining protesters occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge will confirm fears of persecution

by federal agencies.

Whether the standoff will ultimately lead to changes in the federal government's oversight of the West's vast public lands is also subject to varying interpretations.

Char Miller, an environmental analysis professor at Pomona College, said that Ammon Bundy and the other armed protesters miscalculated the public's reaction to the occupation.

The national attention may have boosted the protester's egos, but it also created a backlash against using the threat of violence to influence federal land policy, Miller said.

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