

A forest plan we can live with

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan is the overarching management document that guides decisions on millions of acres of public land in Eastern Oregon. Land managers on the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests have been working under that plan, which has not been updated since 1990. That was two Bush presidents ago and about eight years before Google was founded. The plan is long overdue for an update, but the public and land owners (the federal government and we the people) have, as of yet, been unable to make headway on what that should look like.

After a long, arduous process to collect and collate public comment, the Forest Service released six possibilities for what an updated plan could look like. They call those alternatives. The public didn't like any of the six, and the Forest Service decided to go back to the drawing board and consider more alternatives. It was another delay for a new forest plan, but perhaps it will allow for an outcome that more people will be happy with.

It's hard to do. Forest users come in all different stripes, and they want different and sometimes opposite things from the forest plan. Lumber industries want more board feet. Environmental groups want more trees in the ground and wildlife habitat. Recreationalists want great hunting opportunities and easy access to their favorite spots. Tribal groups want to conserve resources and preserve traditional culture.

It's impossible to perfectly please everyone. But as we saw in other Eastern Oregon public lands debates that got out of hand, it is important

for local organizations and individuals to take part in the process and provide accountability for its outcome. How can we expect our government to know what we want if we don't tell them? And not in all caps social media swearing but in reasoned public testimony.

At the same time, we need our government to listen. We cannot be so selfish as to think we will get everything we want, but we are all stakeholders and we deserve to have our voices heard and considered.

The public has had many opportunities to chime in and be considered, and now you have one more in neighboring Umatilla County.

The East Oregonian and Oregon Public Broadcasting have teamed up to bring the OPB show Think Out Loud to Pendleton to discuss the plan. Representatives from the Forest Service will answer questions and discuss the difficulty of the process, and members with industrial, recreational environmental and tribal concerns will make their case for how they want the woods to look and feel. The forum is Wednesday from 7-8 p.m. at Blue Mountain Community College's main lecture hall.

If you plan to attend, please arrive by 6:30 p.m. so you'll be in your seat by the time the audio engineers hit the record button. If you'd prefer to listen, the show will air from 12-1 p.m. and 8-9 p.m. April 7 on OPB.

This forest plan revision has been a long (too-long), expensive (too-expensive), complex (too-complex) process. But as we enter another stage, Oregonians have the opportunity to listen and learn. That is the best way to feel involved and invested.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Constitutional accountability must begin at county level

To the Editor:

The office of sheriff is constitutionally imperative in the United States of America. Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer is the supreme law of the land in this county. Palmer swore an oath to protect and defend the Constitution and the people of Grant County, from all enemies both foreign and domestic.

The FBI, IRS, BLM, BATF, etc., are all agencies of an unconstitutional government and are not required to adhere to our constitutional protections; they operate outside of the Constitution.

If any abuse of power were to occur in Grant County, I know in my heart Palmer has the integrity, loyalty and courage to protect and defend the people of Grant County with his life.

I personally have been abused by agents of the government to the point of pure hatred towards any and all law enforcement. Then I met Sheriff Palmer; he changed all that, by showing what a real law enforcement officer is. In the Supreme Court case of *Printz vs. USA*, Justice Scalia quoted the 10th Amendment saying, the powers are reserved to the people. The feds have no authority over the individual counties of the United States.

The sheriff has a duty, not an agenda, to investigate all matters as they pertain to the defense of the people of Grant County. Sheriff Palmer believes in constitutional government and in seeing to it that all locals abide by their constitutional restraints of power and authority and obey their oath of office — something being grossly neglected by judges, politicians and other government officials today. This brave endeavor is not for timid or fearful people not willing to stand up against corruption, and to address those issues as they threaten life and liberty, rather than hiding from the threats we face through distractions and blind entertainment, and blind trust of those governing and reporting to us; see the truth, and the truth will set you free.

The office of sheriff has the authority to hold those in government accountable to the oath they swore to the people and to the Constitution. This accountability must begin at the county level.

Stanley Vincent
Kody Vincent
Granite

PFC vs. BMFP

To the Editor:

Recent issues addressed in support of Public Forest Commission's mission include:

- Return public lands use management to more local influence, rather than special interests.
- Remove outside agency and group influence regarding local decisions for public land use (includes: Blue Mountains Forest Partners, Sustainable Northwest and outside public agencies).
- Remove collaborative agreements, or policies, that don't support local values/economies, involving: salvage, stream restoration, silviculture, range management, access management and fuels management on public lands.

I believe members of the Blue Mountains Forest Partners have entered the local political race to combat local referendums and plans that conflict with their land use goals.

When Mark Webb, BMFP executive director, entered the political race, it's my understanding Susan Jane Brown, staff attorney for the Western Environmental Law Center, and Dave Hannibal — both serve on the Board of Directors — questioned comments and inquiries as to the appropriateness.

The Public Forest Commission recently supported the Grant County, Oregon Public Lands Natural Resources Plan. I believe Mark Webb tried to derail the Public Forest Commission's vote in support.

Mark Webb and King Williams petitioned against putting the Grant County, Oregon Public Lands Natural Resources Plan as a referendum on the ballot.

I believe Mark Webb and Dave Hannibal have entered the race to dismantle or unseat members that support the original referendum that formed the Public Forest Commission and to negate petitions that are unfavorable to the Blue Mountains Forest Partners' goals.

Frances Preston
Prairie City

VSO-gate

To the Editor:

I agree with (a letter in last week's Eagle by) Dean Elliot 100 percent — County Court needs replacing, starting with (Commissioner Chris) Labhart, our veterans service officer liaison.

April 17 last year, Grant County advertised for a veterans service officer; three highly qualified individuals applied — I was non-commissioned officer in charge of the VSO equivalent in the Air Force for five years; a retired Army Major and a retired Army Recruiter applied. A young lady who spent two years in Army supply and a few others applied. Labhart, in an outrageous display of cronyism, rammed his supply clerk friend through. And then he upped her hours to full time, but she still works part time.

I asked for an accounting of her time, and he refused my request. When the last VSO left, he said the traffic was so low he recommended our VSO be merged with Harney County's. A few weeks ago, my wife's Dependent ID card was about to expire, so I called our VSO to find out where I could get it renewed. Here's the substance of the conversation: Mmmmm, I don't know... I think you do that at an Air Force base... mmmm, isn't there one in Boise? I finally called ODVA and got the correct information for this common question (it's in an armory in La Grande). Where's a good investigative reporter when you need one? I am one disabled retiree asking one question being steered in the wrong direction. How many of our 767 Grant County retirees, dependents and survivors have had this same shoot-from-the-hip treatment in a year? Thank you, Grant County Court. Our military deserves better than this.

Richie Colbeth
John Day

Shape up

To the Editor:

Mail call. Early summer 1965 not too far inland from the South China Sea at a place called Chu Lai, South Vietnam. "Look," announced my friend and fellow Marine, Jimmy Allen, "Mom sent me an Eagle." So it was two young men in a far away place sat on a sandbagged bunker and shared reading the news from Grant County, Oregon.

Since then, weekly for half a century, I have read the Blue Mountain Eagle. The format has changed, and editors have come and gone. The news wasn't always what one wanted to read; however, to borrow a phrase, it was fair and balanced. One came to trust the Eagle to present the unvarnished truth.

Unfortunately, the Eagle has lost some of its standards. News as reported has taken on a bias that is undeniable. Disturbingly, facts are misrepresented or omitted to influence a story, when truthful coverage of both sides of an issue should be the goal.

Is it the newest editor, management or a course chartered by the owners resulting in such bias? Subscriptions have been canceled, and often, when reference to a news article is mentioned, the retort is, "I don't read the Eagle anymore." Kinda sad that citizens have come to the point of "no confidence" in a news agency for Grant County.

The Navy and Marines have a saying when erstwhile conduct is observed, "Shape up or ship out!" To which I will add, "Come on Eagle, shape up!"

Dave Traylor
John Day



'Stand down the secret list of deputies'

To the Editor:

Glenn Palmer, we elected you to serve and protect the citizens of this county. On your own accord, I believe you made a pledge to the Oath Keepers, a delusional body related to the sons of confederates and all their anti-government sentiments.

I have often heard you repeat your mantra proclaiming how you do not recognize the authority of the federal government. The last time I talked to you your son was on his second deployment in a war zone with the U.S. military police. If I follow your logic to its conclusion, the next time your son is deployed to arrest someone, you will call them patriots and encourage those people to put up an armed resistance against the unlawful actions of your son because he represents the federal government.

You have lost your mind, Glenn, and I suspect it is terminal. Stand down the secret list of deputies and retrieve the badges you have issued to unstable persons.

Tommy J Skiens
John Day

Mary Weaver for Grant County treasurer

To the Editor:

Mary Weaver is a very honest, hard working, dedicated person who has been a long-time resident in Grant County. Mary Weaver has over 30 years experience as a bookkeeper and office manager at Chester's Thriftway. Bill Smith took her under his wing in 1974 and started her training in a live office setting. Over the many years that Mary worked for Bill Smith, there were never any concerns about her honesty, dedication and integrity.

Mary Weaver has been your Grant County fair manager for the last five and a half years and has worked diligently to make the fairgrounds something we can all be proud of. With Mary's position as manager, she has learned how to work with the Grant County Fair county budget on a daily basis. During the Canyon Creek Complex fire, Mary Weaver stepped up to help with a fire relief center for all those affected by the fire. Mary worked hard to make sure the community would come back together after such devastation. Mary had so many community leaders and volunteers step up and was able to make a difference in so many of their lives. Mary could not have done it without the support of the community, and now she is asking for your support.

Please vote for Mary Weaver for Grant County treasurer as I know she is part of the heart of Grant County, and she has the experience to do a great job for all of us.

Kim Johns
John Day

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