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'SQUAW' NAMES REPLACED

Federal board approves 13 new names for locations in Grant County

Blue Mountain Eagle

Thirteen natural features in Grant County have been re-named, replacing "squaw" titles for new monikers proposed by the Grant County Court and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names approved the new names April 14. The list includes eight creeks, one spring, three meadows and one rock.

Here are the new names, along with their locations, name origins and variant names, according to the U.S. Geological Survey's Geographic Names Information System:

1. Škáypiya Creek

Location: 2.5 miles long, heads 15 miles north of Hamilton, flows southeast to the John Day River.

Origin: Umatilla origin, reportedly means "spirit."

2. Little Škáypiya Creek

Location: 1.3 miles long, flows east then north into Škáypiya Creek, 13 miles north of Hamilton.

Origin: Umatilla origin, reportedly means "spirit."

3. Donaldson Rock

Location: Umatilla National Forest, 13 miles southwest of Granite and 14 miles northwest of Bates.

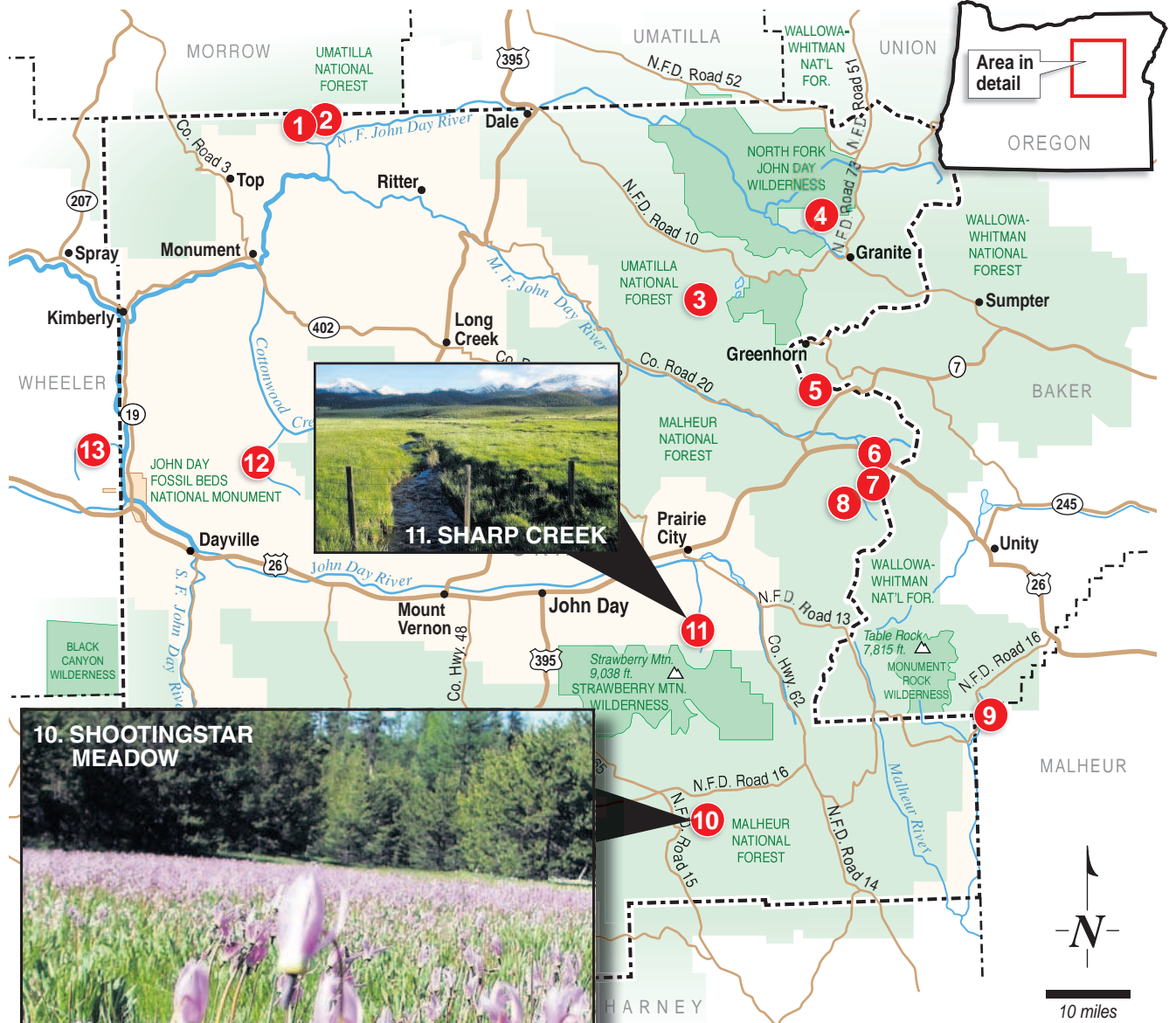
Origin: George W. Donaldson (1901-1992), a lifetime Grant County resident and avid outdoorsman. Donaldson logged with horses and loaded logs via narrow-gauge railroad. During the Depression, he worked with the Civilian Conservation Corps and later worked for the Forest Service with mining and

Renamed areas

1. Škáypiya Creek (Squaw Creek)
2. Little Škáypiya Creek (Little Squaw Creek)
3. Donaldson Rock (Squaw Rock)
4. Kúckuc Creek (Squaw Creek)
5. Myrtle Spring (Little Squaw Spring)
6. Wiwaanaytt Creek (Squaw Creek)
7. Wiwaanaytt Meadows (Squaw Meadows)
8. Frosty Meadow (Little Squaw Meadow)
9. Mona Creek (Squaw Creek)
10. Shootingstar Meadow (Squaw Meadow)
11. Sharp Creek (Squaw Creek)
12. Wewa Creek (Squaw Creek)
13. Goose Creek (Squaw Creek)

Source: U.S. Geologic Survey
Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

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No. 11: Formerly Squaw Creek, now named Sharp Creek, crosses under County Road 60, as it flows from the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness northward toward Prairie City. The creek is one of 13 natural features in Grant County with "squaw" titles that have received new names, approved by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

The Eagle/Cheryl Hoefler

No. 10: A mass of shooting star wildflowers (*dodecatheon meadia*) can be seen each summer at this Grant County site, formerly known as Squaw Meadow. The site is now called Shootingstar Meadow.

Contributed photo

County commissioner candidates speak at forum

Incumbent Chris Labhart faces challenge from Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamsher

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Editor's note: This article covers the county commissioner position on the May primary ballot. The remaining positions will be covered in next week's Eagle.

Candidates vying for positions in the May primary explained their platforms at a forum sponsored by the Mt. Vernon Grange Saturday.

Positions up for election in May include county commissioner No. 2, treasurer, assessor, surveyor and six Public Forest Commission seats.

Assessor candidate David Thunell is running unopposed, as is surveyor candidate Mike Springer.

Both candidates for commissioner No. 2, incumbent Chris Labhart and Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamsher, spoke at the forum, along with all four

treasurer candidates, Doug Carpenter, Julie Ellison, Tandi Merkord and Mary Weaver. Most of the forest commission candidates spoke as well.

County commissioner No. 2

Labhart said he graduated from Grant Union in 1968, where he returned for a 28-year teaching career after his 10-year reunion.

He said job retention, vet-

erans, seniors and health care are his priorities.

Seniors comprise more than 25 percent of the county's population, he said, adding he has visited every senior center. He said there are more than 700 veterans in the county, and he has been working to increase the hours of the veterans service officer position.

"Grant County is a great place to call home," Labhart said, adding people should

work together to improve it.

Hamsher said his family moved to the area in the 1800s and he has lived here his whole life.

He said, if elected, he would hold town halls, listen to the people and act according to the majority's wishes.

Hamsher said he wants to see the county survive and thrive. He said he would try to remove hurdles faced by small businesses to spur the

economy, provide jobs for younger people and combat the shrinking population.

"The status quo isn't working," he said.

He said the Association of Oregon Counties does not represent the rural counties of Eastern Oregon and that he would try to start an association that incorporated rural counties in Idaho, Utah, Nevada and Oregon.

In the next round, Labhart

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Help available for victims of sexual assault

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Sexual assaults happen even in rural areas, but people can help the victims and reduce the prevalence.

Grant County Deputy District Attorney Matt Ipson said these cases do occur here.

"Grant County is not immune from this sort of behavior and crime," he said.

Ipson and about 70 others participated in a candlelight vigil April 8 in John Day to raise awareness during Sexual Assault Awareness Month and National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Andrea Officer, director of the district attorney's office's victim assistance program, said awareness is important.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Deputy District Attorney Matt Ipson and victim assistance program director Andrea Officer are available at the Grant County Courthouse in Canyon City to offer assistance, answer questions and provide resources.

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Prairie City receives grant, loan for sewer upgrade

Residents won't see an increase in utility bill

By Robby Bullock
For the Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — Prairie City is about to get a sewer upgrade, and officials say residents won't see a rate increase.

The city will receive a \$1.28 million loan and a \$624,760 grant to improve its wastewater system from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, State Director Vicki Walker said while visiting Thursday.

"Rural communities across the country are faced with the challenges of maintaining and upgrading their infrastructure," she said. "This project will ensure adequate utilities for Prairie City, protect the environment and help support the town's sustained economic vitality."

Rural Development Community Program Specialist LaDonn McElligott said the city would be able to refinance its current sewer system debt with the Department of Environmental Quality at a low interest rate and a longer term, 40 years, to minimize the cost to residents.

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