

Who knows what Brown thinks about Owyhee Canyonlands

A group of ranchers, local business owners and natural resource users recently traveled to Salem in an attempt to get legislators to weigh in against the creation of a national monument in Oregon's Malheur County.

While they have the support of Republicans from the state's east side, they didn't get much from Gov. Kate Brown, the person whose voice might carry the most weight.

That's a shame.

Backed by the Oregon Natural Desert Association and the owner of Portland's Keen Footwear, the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness and conservation area would cover about 2.5 million acres of what is now controlled by the Bureau of Land Management.

Critics say the area is bigger than the Yellowstone, Yosemite or Grand Canyon national parks and would cover 40 percent of Malheur County.

Opponents in the region have objected to the proposal, fearing the establishment of a national monument will entail new regulations severely complicating grazing, mining, hunting and recreation on the land while inviting additional environmental lawsuits.

The people of Malheur County believe they've been good stewards of the public lands in their corner of the state since they began caring for it more than a century ago. It's their home. Beyond it being the right thing to do, their economic self-interest depends that they do so.

In March, Malheur County residents voted 9-to-1 against the proposal.

No matter.

Supporters hold the edge. State legislators and Congress have no say in the process.

While the administration has previously said it would

work collaboratively with Congress, local interests and elected officials in making such designations, because the land in question is already owned by the federal government, the Antiquities Act of 1906 requires only that President Obama pick up his pen and proclaim it so.

The administration points out that there is no proposal before the president and won't say how he would act if one lands on his desk.

It's no easier getting a straight answer in Salem.

We asked Brown's office whether the governor supported the proposal or stood with the people of Malheur County who are against it. Here's what her people said she said:

"While this is ultimately a federal decision, I have heard from many Oregonians with strong views about the Owyhee. There's agreement as to the beauty and uniqueness of the Canyonlands and disagreement over whether a monument designation can best ensure those characteristics will be enjoyed for future generations. I have communicated those viewpoints to federal administration officials and will be closely following this issue in the months ahead."

Got that?

Brown — elevated to office and seeking election in her own right in November — has often proven unwilling to make declarative statements on controversial issues.

If the Democrat governor opposed the plan, she might help convince Obama to maintain the status quo. If she's for it, the fix is in.

But we aren't likely to know until after the election — about the time we expect the president to sign his proclamation.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Think about pets in hot weather

To the Editor:

Last Wednesday, as I was driving east through John Day, I came up behind a flatbed pickup with a beautiful hound dog chained onto the back. Lovely to take your dog for a ride, but my car thermometer said 86, and the poor dog was obviously not enjoying his ride. His tongue was out as far as it would go, and he was moving around as if to find a better place to be. I'll bet the blonde girl with the baseball cap on her head for shade wasn't nearly as uncomfortable as her poor companion, and that dog didn't have any choice about where it was. We owe our pets better than that. We tie, chain or otherwise restrain them, and that makes us responsible for how they are doing. What were you thinking, girl?

Mary Brown
Prairie City

'Who brought these individuals to your community?'

To the Editor:

Recently, two individuals, Becky Hudson and Michael Emry (proprietors of "The Voice of Idaho") took up residence in the Grant County RV Park and established themselves as "The Voice of Grant County, Oregon."

On May 6, Michael Emry was arrested in John Day by the FBI for possession of a .50-caliber machine gun, which he admits he stole from his employer in Idaho. It was Emry's stated intent to take the machine gun to Harney County during the 41-day occupation of the bird refuge. FBI records indicate in his past Emry has admitted to making 66 machine guns and a large bomb. Because he was a cooperating witness against others involved, he was never charged. Other information revealed by the FBI includes Emry talking about shooting police officers and a description of how a .50-caliber weapon would penetrate the side of a police car, or even a Kevlar vest.

Emry has been in custody in Eugene since his arrest. At a recent release hearing, the court determined "there are no conditions that will reasonably assure the safety of the community." He remains in custody.

The court has received correspondence from seven individuals supporting Emry's pre-trial release. Two local citizens of Grant County submitted information in support of his release. Judy Kerr, a public lands deputy from Canyon City, states, "Emry is peaceful and law abiding."

Elaine Smith, a special deputy for natural resources from Prairie City, states, "Emry is not a danger" and she hoped he would be released to come back here to live.

In summary, these two Idahoans came (or were brought) to Grant County to be your voice. Emry is

arrested with a stolen .50-caliber machine gun and has a history of making machine guns and explosives. Two local citizens suggest Emry is a great guy and should be released. The court finds no means of assuring the community would be safe if Emry is released.

Who brought these individuals to your community? And why do Smith and Kerr fail to see Emry as undesirable and a risk?

Jim Spell
John Day

Fulfill Navy commitment

To the Editor:

A current graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Keenan Reynolds, requested his service time be deferred so he can play in the NFL. The Baltimore Ravens drafted him.

As a former Navy enlisted and officer, I am highly disappointed with Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, who submitted a request to Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter strongly recommending Reynolds' service be deferred. Carter approved the request.

The United States taxpayers paid for Reynolds' schooling at the Naval Academy along with the schooling of thousands of other academy midshipmen. These are future officers who are expected to serve in the U.S. Navy after they graduate, and many of them make a career in our Navy. And they signed a contract.

If Reynolds' commitment can be deferred why can't other midshipmen have their service time deferred? Why can't deferments occur for baseball players, or midshipmen who want to enter civilian graduate schools, or enter the corporate world or business world?

SECNAV and SECDEF should rethink their approval of the deferment and have Reynolds fulfill his commitment to the Navy.

Donald Moskowitz
Londonderry, New Hampshire

Second shot across our bow — a 'weapon of war'

To the Editor:

When I wrote about the Emrys from Idaho (April 27 in the Eagle), I stated that their plan to become our voice was their first shot across our bow. Who would have dreamed that they actually had hidden a fully automatic machine gun and explosives?

It's time for decent folks to recognize who are the locals partnered with this dangerous man, Michael Emry (and his wife, Becky Hudson). Emry told residents that he was invited here by Tad Houpt and Jim Sproul. Now, two more of Sheriff Palmer's special deputies, Elaine Smith and Judy Kerr, have embraced Michael Emry. The U.S. Court Magistrate was not swayed by their letters of support; and Emry was de-

nied pre-trial release out of concern for the safety of our community. (He is held on weapons charges.)

Kerr said Emry "has acted as a calming influence at community meetings and gatherings." Whoa! Elaine Smith wrote to say she hoped he "will be released to come back here to live," adding that he is not a danger to the community.

I strongly disagree. Michael Emry's history is about violent aspirations, building and selling military grade weapons of death and destruction. Palmer's special deputies who are responsible for the Emrys coming to our county need to be held accountable. Why hasn't the sheriff condemned his deputies' support of the Emrys and revoked these deputies' licenses? Does he endorse outrageous, irresponsible behaviors? Once more, we need to hear from our sheriff. Where is he?

The Emrys host "The Voice of Grant County, Oregon." Doesn't that just make you puff up with pride for their willingness to be your voice for truth and freedom? I imagine you can buy a lot of freedom with a bomb and a fully automatic machine gun capable of mowing down a law officer nearly a mile away. The prosecutor said Emry's illegal weapon (he stole to sell) is a "weapon of war" and was destined for the occupied refuge. That plot failed, and so it had found a new home in the Grant County Fairgrounds (RV Park) where the couple was living, and where our families gather.

Kay Steele
Ritter

My vision of hope

To the Editor:

I look forward to serving the people of Grant County as county commissioner. My passion for fair and honest government will be expressed in actions. For those of you who did not vote for me, my door is always open. Positive change arises from open communication. Mutual trust within this community must be restored for any of us to be healthy again. I welcome you.

Our way of life is endangered. This is not dramatic rhetoric; it is reality. The struggle for us to heal and continue to care for those damaged by the fire trauma demands our wholehearted efforts. Economic survival will be achieved only by an increase in opportunities to work for a family wage. Every job we can create or imagine counts more than it ever has before. This is the time to find compassion for your neighbors' concerns and fears. Let's continue repairing and rebuilding, with gratitude and thanks to the contributions that others have made before us. I appreciate those who encouraged me and helped get the word out. Thank you for sharing my vision of hope.

Jim Hamsher
Prairie City

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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.
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