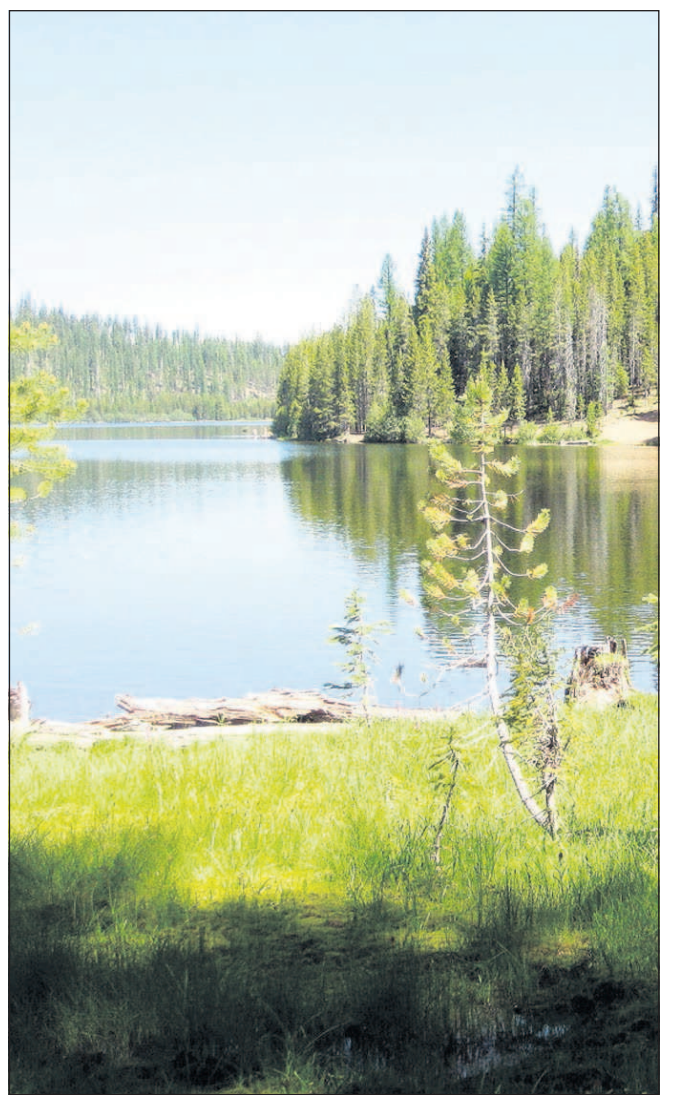




Eagle file photos

Trails, boating, fishing and camping await outdoor adventurers at Olive Lake, about 13 miles west of Granite.



About 13 miles west of Granite, Olive Lake offers cool mountain respite and adventure in the summertime.

GRANITE

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available for those seeking a daylong outdoor respite or a longer mountain vacation. A 2-mile trail encircles the crystal blue lake.

History buffs will also enjoy exploring the area, which was founded on the mining industry.

Gold was discovered there on July 4, 1862 — a date which also gave the new town its first name, Independence. Years later, after learning that

name was taken by another town in the state, the community was christened Granite for the rocks in the area.

The Historic Fremont Powerhouse, built in 1908 to provide power to local towns and gold mines, is also not to be missed. Lo-

cated between Granite and Olive Lake, and recently restored by the Oregon National Guard, the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site also includes a two-story caretaker's cabin, available for vacation rentals.

RECALL

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in county government after incumbent Commissioner Chris Labhart lost his bid for reelection against Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamsher in May. "I think with a change in the two new commissioners, that will bring about a big difference in the way the county is run," Preston said.

But Britton, who has served nearly 14 years, said he will defend himself vigorously. In February, he voted along with Commissioner Labhart and Judge Scott Myers against funding an investigation into

the Canyon Creek Complex, which burned more than 110,000 acres and destroyed nearly 40 homes.

Five months later, Britton said he still feels that was the right decision.

"We needed to move on and start healing," he said. "It's a tragedy, but I really felt it was in the best interest of Grant County."

The Malheur National Forest previously detailed its response to the blaze, which started as two smaller fires that merged and spread amid dry and windy weather. The Grizzly Bear Complex and Comet-Windy Ridge fires also made big runs on the

same day, Aug. 14, of last year.

Britton said he did what he could in the immediate aftermath to help residents start rebuilding their homes by reaching out to agencies and streamlining regulations.

"We were really able to help all those people out," he said.

The petition also claims that Britton violated a 2013 county ordinance requiring all roads, trails and byways across public lands remain open unless authorized by the county court and sheriff's office. That ordinance was passed in order for the Forest Service to heed county input on road closures, Britton said.

Steve Beverlin, supervisor on the Malheur National Forest, said he consulted with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of the General Counsel last year, which determined the ordinance is illegal and unenforceable. However, he said the forest continues to consult with the county court on all projects where access might be impacted.

"Particularly, Commis-

sioner Britton has been very willing to sit down and have those discussions," Beverlin said.

On the other hand, Beverlin said Sheriff Glenn Palmer has never agreed to be a part of those meetings. A letter from Beverlin to Palmer on Feb. 17, 2015, shows the sheriff was previously invited to discuss emergency protocol on the forest, and attend county court sessions where forest projects were considered. Palmer declined to discuss the issue any further when contacted last week.

Britton said he doesn't recall the court ever denying permission for the Forest Service to close any roads, which are done on a project-by-project basis.

The third complaint in the petition argues that Britton failed to recuse himself "in decisions with agencies and individuals of which he has not only benefited personally, but financially." Britton, who owns a welding shop in John Day, said he works on Forest Service trucks and rigs from time to time, averaging \$4,200 in payments each of

the last five years — far from his largest account.

Britton said he doesn't understand how he stands to benefit by being involved in county government and reviewing projects.

"That, to me, is baseless," he said.

Finally, the petition alleges Britton misrepresented his intentions of attending a community meeting Jan. 26 where Bundy and refuge occupiers were scheduled to make an appearance. That was the same night officers arrested Bundy and four others on Highway 395, and shot and killed Robert "LaVoy" Finicum.

Britton said he attended that meeting at the request of others in the community who were uneasy about attending themselves. Commissioner Labhart and Judge Myers also attended the meeting, during which none of them addressed the crowd.

Judge Myers said he prepared a statement in case he was asked to speak, but otherwise isn't sure what people expected them to do. Myers said he feels the recall against Britton is unfounded, and believes

it will fail as Grasty's did.

Britton said he feels there are similar issues at heart between the two efforts, and said he hopes Grant County residents will feel the same way as Harney County.

"Everything I do ... is about what's in the best interest of the people of Grant County," he said.

In his justification statement, Britton said he has participated in county successes, including tripling the timber harvest, actively managing federal lands to ensure infrastructure remains, creating Bates State Park, supporting Lake Creek Youth Camp, bringing "millions of transportation dollars" to the county, keeping the county "fiscally strong" and writing the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

For the remaining two and a half years of his term, Britton said in the statement he plans to work on expanding protection from floods on Canyon Creek, engaging the Forest Service on access issues, developing new water storage sites and protecting the agricultural community from outside intervention.

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BATES

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The department's master plan for the park focuses on water quality, fish habitat, cultural resources, recreation and stewardship, according to the

first meeting's agenda, and the goal is to find a path forward maximizing the interests of all the stakeholders.

Myers said multiple alternatives will be discussed, from removing the dam and the pond to creating a diversion around the pond for fish to deepening the pond and improving the fish ladder.

"I don't see a win-win if we have to compromise and allow the pond to be permanently drained," he said. "I

think we will fight that option."

A variety of people, groups and agencies have been invited to collaborate at the meetings as stakeholders: landowners Pat Voight and Melanie Dejong; Friends of Bates State Park; conservation groups, the Native Fish Society and the North Fork John Day Watershed Council; local government, Grant County Court and Grant County Soil and Water Con-

servation District; tribes, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Warm Springs Tribe; state agencies, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Water Resources Department; and federal agencies, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Myers said meetings are also scheduled for Aug. 18 and Sept. 15, but he was unsure of the times and places. While all the meetings are open to the public, only 15 minutes will be allotted at each meeting for public comments. Myers encouraged county residents to submit their written comments to him at the courthouse or by email, myerssw@grantcounty-or.gov, so he could provide them to the work group.

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