

Zinke asks key questions about Cascade-Siskiyou monument

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke played his cards fairly close to the vest when he visited the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon and Northern California.

The original 53,000-acre monument was created in 2000, but last year President Obama added roughly 47,000 acres.

It's one of 27 national monuments created in the last two decades that are under review by the Trump administration.

Zinke's recommendation to the president for potential changes to the Cascade-Siskiyou monument's boundaries is due Aug. 23. We're unlikely to find out what that recommendation will be until Zinke reports to the boss. He didn't say while in Oregon.

But he did drop some hints. Most intriguing of all: Zinke says he can't find anyone at the Department of Interior willing to admit to having set the boundaries of last year's expansion, or who can explain how the decision was reached.

That's interesting. If the administrative state within the Interior Department accepts that the biodiversity of the region is so unique that it deserves special protections — and Zinke is willing to accept that — it should be easy for them to explain their justification. Why these 47,000 acres in particular?

It's an important question

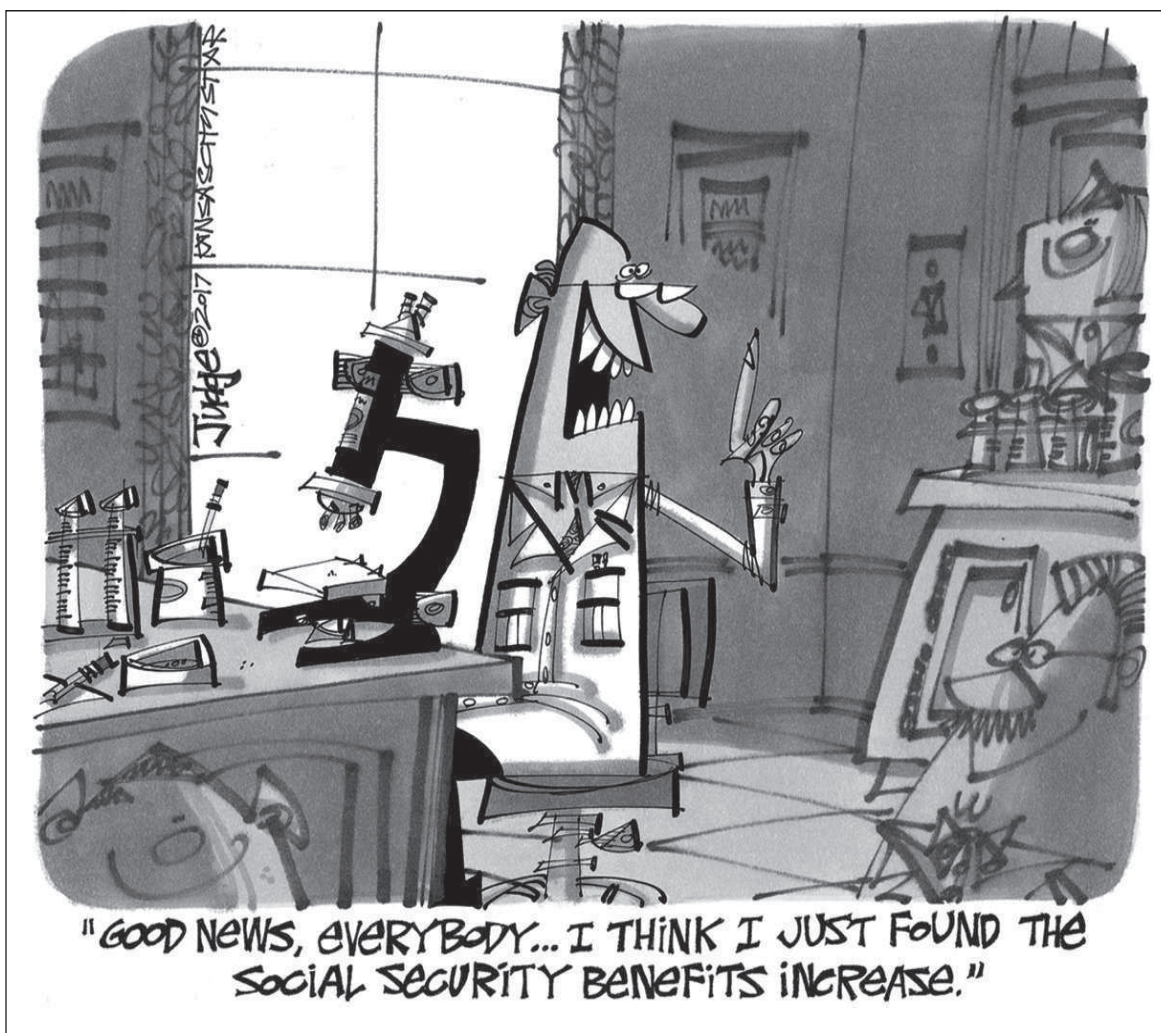
to ranchers who now find their private land encircled by the national monument, and who worry about their grazing allotments on what was national forestland.

Critics of the monument say they've seen the economic damage caused by the original designation, leading them to expect similar restrictions on grazing and logging within the expanded boundary — despite assurances to the contrary.

Zinke said any changes to the national monument would be based on science — which areas contain watersheds, plants, animals, soils and geological features that should be protected. He is also examining how the boundaries affect traditional economic uses, such as grazing and timber, as well as recreational uses, including hiking, snowmobiling and horseback riding. That makes sense.

Those who opposed the expansion can take some comfort in the fact that Zinke is a proponent of multiple-use of federal lands. That's what supporters of the expansion are afraid of.

They should not worry. The 47,000 acres added to the Cascade-Siskiyou were public lands before the expansion, and will remain public lands should the boundaries be altered. They will enjoy the protections that have preserved them for more than a century.



GUEST COMMENT

Help paleo institute do more

By Jeffrey Key
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

I appreciate those who have supported the Oregon Paleo Lands Institute (paleolands.org) over the last few years. Our six active volunteers and one part-time paid staff person continue to provide information to thousands of visitors and educational programs to hundreds of students.

At our center in Fossil, and on our website, information on geologic resources and local community visitor services have been available 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Despite only having staff resources to open the center's door for up to three days a week, in 2016, we continue to provide important services. We want to do more.

As part of our Center Sustainability Project, we have partnered with Bonneville Environmental Foundation (b-e-f.org) and are moving forward to install a solar photovoltaic system on the center in Fossil. This project will reduce our monthly utility cost for

OPLI by producing more electricity than it uses. The project is also being designed to provide an emergency electrical source for the community should PUD electricity not be available. An informational kiosk will be on site to show visitors how our system works. An accompanying education program will be available to local educators that will include workshops and curriculum materials.

The board is recruiting for additional volunteers to help us move toward achieving our mission and expand our services.

We believe strongly that the center should be open at least five days a week during the peak visitor season from May through September.

The center was built primarily with public money and should be open more to service citizens. More support is needed through increased financial support and additional volunteer commitment.

When the Oregon Paleo Project was started in 2002, the thought

was that the institute could provide information and services that the National Park Services could not.

It would be an organization to support the John Day Basin gateway communities by sharing what services were available where. We have been doing that, but we want to do more.

Our group has recently moved the plesiosaur sculpture off the floor to increase space available to accommodate visiting groups and new exhibits.

Please consider joining us to work toward fuller utilization of this valuable public resource and share the stories of the John Day River Basin. Come by and visit with our people and consider helping us build a stronger community-supported facility dedicated to sharing the wonders of the John Day Basin.

Jeffrey Kee, a Grant County ranch manager, is the board president of the Oregon Paleo Lands Institute, an educational, community-based nonprofit in Fossil.

FARMER'S FATE

Carrots, eggs and dead crabs

By Brianna Walker
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

All things are possible with coffee and cowboy boots — at least that's what I told myself as I threw a bag full of toys and snacks into the swather for the kids. Swathing has got to be one of my favorite jobs. I think the only task I enjoy more is driving forklift.

Things were going smoothly. The kids were happily entertained, there was an enjoyable program on the radio and there were minimal gopher mounds in the field I was cutting. In that moment, life was perfect.

Then a funny thing happened. Bang! The platform to the right of the cab appeared to break. I stopped, but other than having fallen a few inches, it looked OK. Odd, but nothing too serious. A few more rounds and I noticed it had fallen even farther and was now starting to rub on the inside of the tire. I stopped — time to call in help.

Ten minutes later my husband looked miserable as we stared at a broken drive hub. The platform hadn't moved at all. It was the wheel that had tilted sideways — a



Brianna Walker

long and expensive fix. I packed up the toys, coffee thermos and kids, and we all piled into the pickup.

My husband looked dejected. This spring had been so wet it had been nearly impossible to get into the fields — and now that we were in, we were broke down. Sometimes farming is like playing five-card poker with four cards.

As we were driving home, my husband started listing all the things that were broke or in dire need of attention. It reminded me of a story my grandmother used to tell. "Everyone in every walk of life faces hardships and adversity. It's how we react to them that changes the outcome," I told my husband. "If you were to drop an egg and a carrot in boiling water, the egg would toughen up, and the carrot becomes mushy and gross."

My husband rolled his eyes, "What about the crab that just turns red and dies?"

"Ahhh. You're ruining the analogy. There's no crab. Carrot or egg. You can only pick between

the two," I give an exaggerated sigh.

"OK, I pick the egg," he smirks at me, "because then you can have deviled eggs for lunch!"

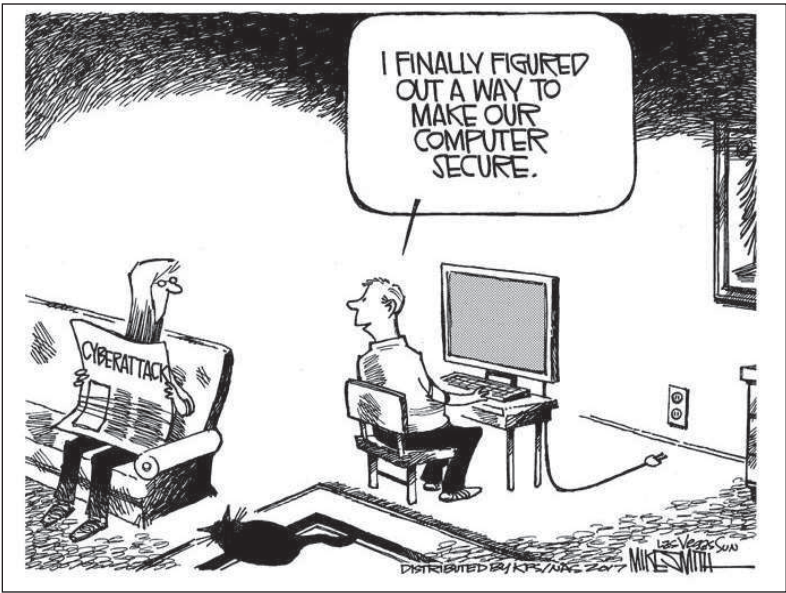
Analogies can be cute — but sometimes boiling water just brings out the devil in us!

A few hours, several phone calls and a lighter pocketbook later we were bringing back a new swather to finish out the first cutting. I threw back in the bag of toys and a new thermos of coffee and climbed into the freshly Armor All-ed cab. The kids immediately started pressing handprints into the shiny glass windshield while I enjoyed the easy straight lines that auto-steer provides.

I began thinking about eggs, carrots and dead crabs, and I realized that my grandmother left out an integral part of the story: coffee grounds. You don't have to be a mushy carrot, a deviled egg or a dead crab. When faced with adversity, you can smile and use it to make coffee.

Add cowboy boots, and all things become possible!

Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.



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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).
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Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

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1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES
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 Outside Continental U.S.....\$60
 Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER
send address changes to:
Blue Mountain Eagle
195 N. Canyon Blvd.
John Day, OR 97845-1187

USPS 226-340

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