

New forest plan a work in progress

The U.S. Forest Service is taking comment from individuals and groups with legal standing to file objections on its final draft of the much-anticipated Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision.

The plans, which were last updated in 1990, will guide land management activities — including timber harvest, livestock grazing and recreation — over 5.5 million acres in the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur national forests in Eastern Oregon for the next 10-15 years.

The Forest Service has been working to replace the 1990 management plan since 2003. Four years ago it released a draft Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed replacement. Near universal backlash from timber, grazing, recreation and environmental interests prompted three years of “re-engagement” with the public.

The Forest Service says its preferred revision calls for more active management to improve forest health and reduce the risk of the large and dangerous wildfires plaguing the West.

To that end, the plan calls for doubling the annual timber harvest across all three forests from a recent average of 101 million board-feet to 205 million board-feet. It could also add as many as 51,600 animal unit months, or AUMs, associated with vacant allotments for livestock grazing across the three forests.

Stakeholder responses to the revisions have been tepid at best.

Doubling the timber harvest would be a boon to loggers and the economies of communities that once depended on the

paychecks from lumber mills.

But timber interests say the proposed revision doesn’t offer any guarantees the Forest Service will be able to meet those targets each year. It’s impossible to maintain mills and other industry infrastructure without that certainty.

Livestock producers would like to be able to graze more cattle and sheep in the forests.

There have been many changes to the management of the forests in the last 28 years that have caused the active number of AUMs to decline from what was provided in the 1990 plan.

The 1990 plan called for 524,000 AUMs for grazing, but only 242,800 are currently available. The revised plan calls for up to 294,400.

Ranchers are skeptical they’ll actually get to graze on those additional AUMs.

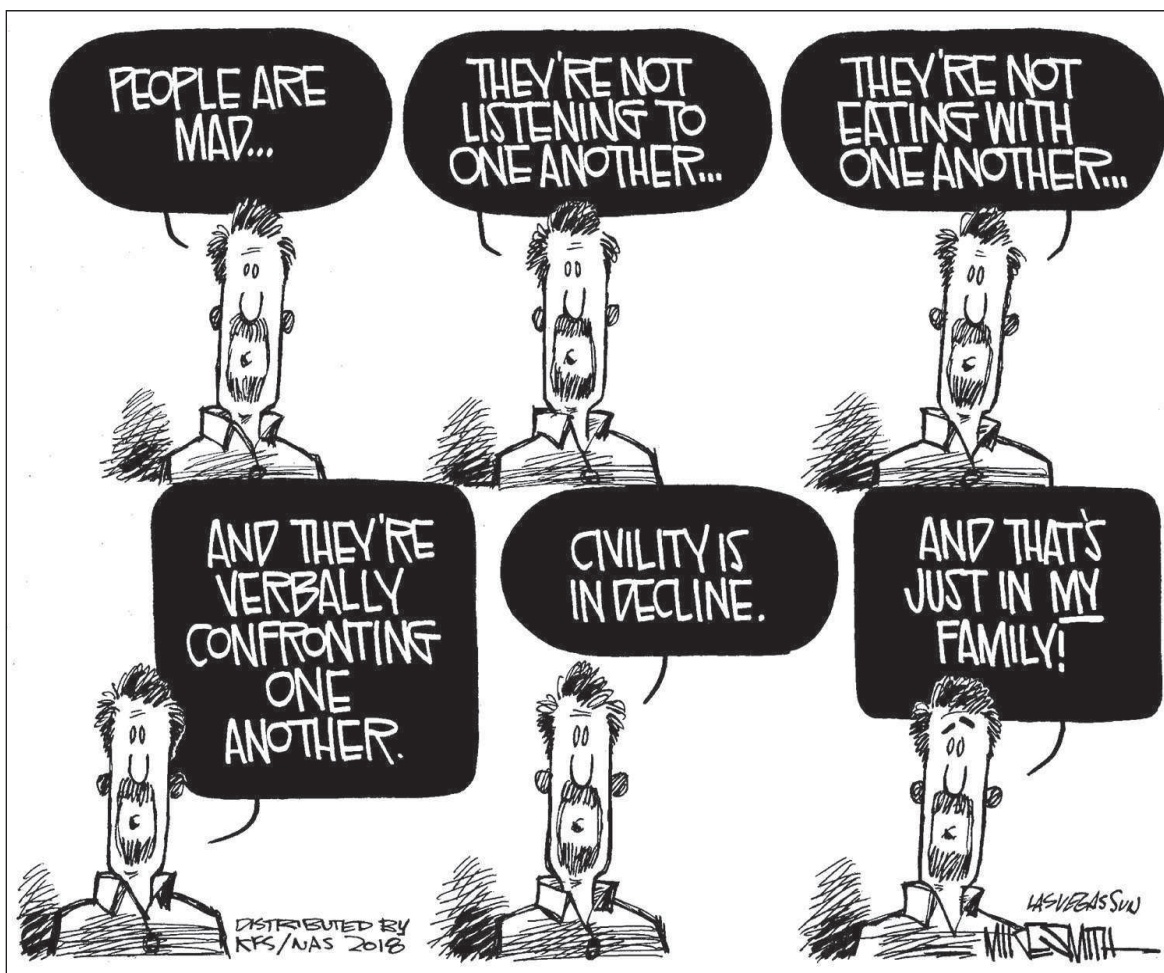
Environmental groups, on the other hand, say the plan places too much emphasis on resource extraction, and does not do enough to protect old-growth trees and wildlife.

We think more logging and more grazing is a good idea. The fuel load in the forests needs to be reduced. Rural communities in Eastern Oregon could use the 1,200 extra jobs and additional \$60 million in income the plan could generate.

Those with standing have until the end of the month to comment. The Forest Service then has 90 days to make further revisions.

Whatever plan is eventually adopted, the operational details will be as much a product of litigation as careful consideration.

Because in the end, it’s the federal judiciary, not the Forest Service, that writes the working forest management plan.



OTHER VIEWS

With free speech comes responsibility

The recent controversy about whether conspiracy theorist Alex Jones’ absurdities should be removed from media platforms has been shaped by his supporters as both a First Amendment and censorship issue.

It is neither. It is an integrity issue. The actions of the managers at Facebook, YouTube and Apple in removing his incendiary content are unsurprising. And certainly, they are very easy to justify.

Free speech isn’t free — it comes with consequences. The First Amendment guarantees only that the government isn’t going to arrest you for what you say, with limited exceptions.

It doesn’t shield you from criticism or consequences. It doesn’t protect you from being fired for what you say in the workplace. It doesn’t mean that anyone has to listen to you. People can boycott you, cancel your television show or ban you from their internet communities.

If you express extreme and reprehensible views, in person or online, you may be ostracized by society.

Unworthy martyr

Jones is a Texas-based media pundit whose InfoWars website is a hotbed of bizarre theories detached from any semblance of reality. The only downside we can see of booting him from Facebook, YouTube and Apple is creating a martyr in the eyes of the radical fringe.

Some of his musings:

- The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing were perpetrated by the U.S. government.
- The 2012 Sandy Hook shootings, in which 20 children and six adults in Connecticut were slaughtered by a young gunman, were an invention.
- David Hogg and other eloquent survivors of the Parkland,

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

— First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, adopted Dec. 15, 1791

Florida, school shootings in February are paid actors, hired to advance a gun-control agenda. (This is popularly known as “Second Amendment fan fiction.”)

He has also been censured for promoting “Pizzagate,” a bizarre story about human trafficking whose publication led to death threats at a Washington, D.C., restaurant, and a false story about an Idaho food processor importing migrant rapists — both fictions for which Jones has had to apologize.

The problem isn’t that Jones holds these views, or tries to disseminate them. The issue is that all too often his pronouncements lead others to threaten, vandalize and harass the subjects of his false stories.

Facebook pages which carried Jones’ statements have been removed after evidence that he disseminated hate speech against Robert Mueller, the special counsel who is investigating President Donald Trump and his close associates; so, too, has his YouTube channel, and so has Apple, which hosted his podcasts on its iTunes platform. Mueller’s probe reportedly examined whether InfoWars had anything to do with Russian interference in the 2016 presidential elections.

In all cases, these private publishing companies have said the outrageous claims fail to meet

their standards and may incite illegal actions.

The most important words

And as for the First Amendment, that’s all about the government improperly trying to set parameters for publications.

It doesn’t factor into the Jones case.

Back in 1791, the most important words ever set to paper in the English language were crafted by the founders of this nation. James Madison originally wrote, “The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak, to write, or to publish their sentiments; and the freedom of the press, as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable.”

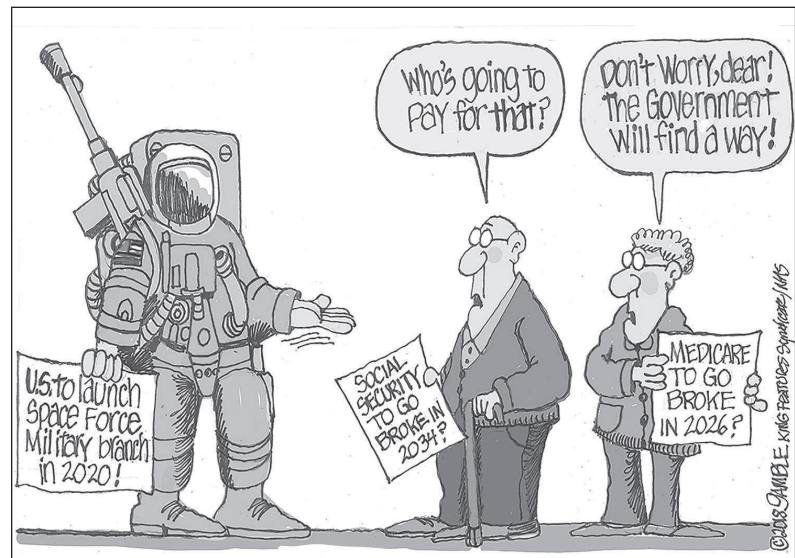
That wording morphed through a careful editing process into those precious words we hold inviolable. “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.”

With that freedom comes responsibility.

Just as it is not responsible to yell “fire!” in a crowded theater, it is certainly not responsible comment to inflame or incite by posting obvious falsehoods that cause others to act inappropriately or even illegally.

Sophisticated and community-minded publishers know that — and choose what they print accordingly.

—The Daily Astorian



WHERE TO WRITE

GRANT COUNTY

• **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.

• **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.

• **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net

• **John Day** — 450 E. Main St., John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.

• **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.

• **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.

• **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.

• **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.

• **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.

SALEM

• **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.

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

• **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

• **Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.

• **Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale** — 900 Court St. NE, H-475, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Slow drivers and not stopping are dangerous

To the Editor:

I’ve noticed that the police log in our local paper never seems to have anyone listed for failure to stop at a traffic control device. I see a lot of people drive through the stop signs and light frequently — I mean almost like a plague! There’s never anyone for driving too slow, and that seems like a normal everyday occurrence. Instead, the fines and tickets seem reserved

for mainly speeders. Slow drivers and not stopping are still dangerous!

Henry Lasiter
John Day

‘I felt humiliated’

To the Editor:

Regarding an incident at the pool, I gave (an employee) my money, and she counted my money and said, “You’re short 5 cents.”

Then (another) came up and counted my money again and said, “You need 5 cents.” Then he told

me, “Go scavenge the parking lot for a nickel.”

I went and looked for a nickel, but I didn’t find one. So my friend called her dad, and he came in and gave me 5 cents. Then I gave it to (the employee) and she said thank you.

I felt humiliated when I had to go look for a nickel in a parking lot and ask my friend to call her dad to give me money.

I didn’t do anything to deserve to be treated like that. (The employee) knows me.

Majik Leigh
Mt. Vernon

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.



Grant County’s Weekly Newspaper

PUBLISHER..... CHRIS RUSH, CRUSH@EOMEDIAGROUP.COM
 EDITOR & GENERAL MANAGER... SEAN HART, EDITOR@BMEAGLE.COM
 REPORTER..... RICHARD HANNERS, RICK@BMEAGLE.COM
 COMMUNITY NEWS..... ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
 SPORTS..... ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
 MARKETING REP..... KIM KELL, ADS@BMEAGLE.COM
 OFFICE MANAGER..... LINDSAY BULLOCK, OFFICE@BMEAGLE.COM
 OFFICE ASSISTANT..... ALEXANDRA HAND, OFFICE@BMEAGLE.COM

1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES
 (including online access)
 Grant County\$40
 Everywhere else in U.S.....\$51
 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

Copyright © 2018 Blue Mountain Eagle
 All rights reserved. No part of this publication covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means — graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, taping or information storage and retrieval systems — without written permission of the publisher.