

FAITH

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"In Ghana, we were kind of hunkered down," James said. "We were in survival mode."

The couple said one of the hardest parts of living in Accra was the feeling of isolation from anything familiar.

"We were together, but we were alone," James said.

There's no 911 operator to help if something goes wrong, he said.

"We were surviving on faith," Kaylee said.

A rewarding part of living in Ghana was being together 24/7, Kaylee said. James agreed, and said the three of them developed an intense bond, and were it not for that experience, they may not be as close as a family.

While overseas, they also grew their roasted coffee bean business called Level Grounds Xpresso, which has now gone nationwide.

Upon arriving back in the states, the culture shock was "intense," the couple said.

Entering an air-conditioned grocery store, with a wide selection of food options, was overwhelming, they said.

Being around crowds of people was also difficult, and they had to relearn how to communicate with people.

"Interactions in Ghana versus interactions in the U.S. are completely different," James said.



Contributed photo/Meagan Armstrong Photography

Kaylee and James Wilson posed for a photograph with their newly adopted daughter Emmanuella this summer.

"Americans are interested in small talk and not offending each other," Kaylee said.

"— Diplomacy and tact," James added.

He said that even a simple taxi ride was a confrontational experience in Ghana.

"You have to speak plain and brash at times to get what you need," Kaylee explained, adding Ghanaians don't see it as brash.

They had become so accustomed to a blunt way of communicating that it took effort to relearn the "American way" of interacting with people, they said.

Managing The Corner Cup

coffee house in John Day since August has helped them readjust, James said.

Young Wella played with her toys — a doll and a small rocking horse were among the assortment in her toy box — as her parents took turns tending to customers Oct. 10 at the coffee shop.

"She's definitely spoiled but appreciates it, because she knows what it's like to have nothing," Kaylee said, adding that in Ghana, her "toys" included sticks and empty toilet paper rolls and cans.

Wella also enjoys dressing up with an apron and pretending to cook.

"We have healthy lotions, and she'll play pretend hair and skin care," James said. "She has a really active imagination."

Kaylee said Wella understood the village language of Ewe but did not start speaking until they came into her life.

"Now she's speaking non-stop," Kaylee said.

The 4-year-old also enjoys playing with friends, including her cousins, and being with grandparents Kirk and Kim Ausland of John Day and Kent and Kathy Wilson of Portland, she said.

While Wella is James and Kaylee's first child, they hope to see their family grow, down the road.

"We would like to adopt HIV children from as many different countries as possible," Kaylee said.

The couple said they've felt called to help children with this specific "special need."

They hope to adopt a little one from India in a couple years.

"We will walk through whatever door God opens for us," Kaylee said.

James said his advice to anyone with the heart to adopt a child is to overcome fear.

"If you can take care of a kid, do it," he said.

"If you can't adopt, then help someone else who is adopting," Kaylee added. "This has been the hardest thing we've gone through, but also the most fulfilling. We'd do it all again for her."

PROGRAM

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rancher Jim Dovenburg and others brought the program back in 2017.

It was too late in the fiscal year to fully fund the program, and the county budgeted \$35,000 for the program with the stipulation that other funding would become available.

Dovenburg said \$12,000 was raised from landowners. When combined with \$29,000 from the state and federal governments and \$35,000 from the county, funding fell \$24,000 short of the \$100,000 estimated cost for a full-time program, he said.

An option was to operate the program at a three-quarters level, Dovenburg said, but that would mean raising about \$11,000 next fiscal year to fill the gap left after federal, state and county funding was included.

Dovenburg said he was reluctant to request assistance from ranchers again to make up the shortfall. He said he looked into requesting assistance from ODFW or hunting organizations, but an option for the next fiscal year was to roll over funds left from the previous year.

Grant County Judge Scott Myers noted that county policy prohibited rolling over leftover funds to the next fiscal year. Waiving the policy for one program could create significant budget problems, he said. Myers recommended Wildlife Services aggressively spend allocated funding so nothing is left. Commissioner Rob Raschio said he wanted to take a closer look at how the \$100,000 figure for a full-time program was reached.

The funding gap needs to be filled before the next fiscal year starts July 1, Smith said.

Myers noted that some animal damage control actions takes place inside city jurisdictions and suggested Dovenburg contact the local city governments to see if they would assist with the funding.

FOREST

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process is to find as much common ground as possible and work toward a balanced path forward for these national forests and all concerned," Fargo said.

County objections

The Grant County Court finalized its objections to the forest plan during an Aug. 15 special meeting. In addition to citing its comments from August 2014, the court noted that the "entirety" of a report by the Grant County Public Forest Commission was not addressed and should be implemented.

The forest commission was established by voter initiative in 2002 and disbanded following a circuit court ruling in 2016. Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin cited that court ruling in an Aug. 16

email to the county court.

"I believe this judgment invalidates any work undertaken by the Public Forest Commission, including the report that is referenced in the current Grant County objections to the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision," Beverlin said.

Beverlin noted then that the objection period would not end until Aug. 28 should the court decide to modify its objections.

Grant County Commissioner Rob Raschio responded in an email the same day. While agreeing with Grant County Circuit Court Judge William D. Cramer Jr.'s decision about the broad language used to enact the forest commission, Raschio noted that the county court had incorporated the commission's findings in its 2014 comments on the Forest Plan.

"I find them, as a commissioner, as the comments of an advisory committee," Raschio said.

Raschio cited language from Cramer's ruling stating

that Grant County voters were free to establish a forest commission "to provide advisory information on how the county court should seek to collaborate and advocate for uses on state and federal land."

Local objections

Sheriff Glenn Palmer also submitted objections on behalf of the Grant County Sheriff's Office. He opposed decommissioning roads and restricting motorized access through adoption of a Travel Management Plan.

Palmer criticized the "perception that the environment is the primary concern in management of the public lands, and that the social and economic well-being of our communities come secondary to environmental concerns of the agency." He said the forest plan "failed to take a hard look at the impacts of the 2015 and 2016 fires on Eastern Oregon communities."

Palmer also said the "Forest

Service failed to directly coordinate the plan with counties that formally requested coordination, but instead chose to use privately held 501(c) (3) corporations and coerced cooperative agency status to gain lead agency status and to strong-arm counties into relinquishing their right to direct government-to-government coordination or 'lose their seat at the table' and only serve in an advisory role."

Mark Webb, objecting for Blue Mountains Forest Partners, noted that the FEIS "is extremely difficult to read; contains contradictory and extraneous content; is not based on the best available science; and otherwise does not paint a cogent picture of the need for change or how the proposed plan(s) will achieve desired future conditions."

He added that the Land and Resource Management Plan and the FEIS ignored the Blue Mountains Forest Partners' work, and suggested the forest plan will not withstand judicial review.

"This threatens BMFP's ability to increase the pace, scale and quality of forest restoration on the Malheur and may compromise the ecological integrity of the forest and the socioeconomic stability of Grant and Harney counties," Webb said.

Alec Oliver, objecting for Grant County Stockgrowers, said many of the land use restrictions that would be put in place by the proposed plan would impose significant restrictions and loss of forage for the livestock industry, including significant changes to the number of acres classified as riparian habitat conservation areas and riparian management areas.

Ken and Pat Holliday, speaking for Holliday Land and Livestock, Inc., objected that "the table of riparian area widths is arbitrary" and "measurement protocols have

inconsistencies in their estimates of grazing indicators."

MT Anderson, representing High Desert Cattle Co., which holds the Fields Peak and Aldrich grazing allotments, expressed concerns about the McClellan Mountain Wilderness Area proposed in the plan. He asked for assurance that his allotments would be grandfathered in.

Eastern counties

The Eastern Oregon Counties Association summarized its objections into eight major issues, beginning with economics. The association noted that the FEIS focused on the period 2000-2014, but "local economies were already decimated by 2000."

Social and economic well-being should be measured in terms of conditions in 1990, when newly issued forest plans predicted allowable sale quantities of 579 million board-feet, the EOCA said. The association also objected to "generic and rigid access constraints."

"Forest Service lands are public lands and the public should have access to those lands," the association said. "When access is to be limited, the Forest Service must undertake a site-specific analysis on the project level."

The EOCA objected to any designation or recommendation for new wilderness, new wild and scenic rivers or new research natural areas. It also noted that alternatives presented in the plan don't address the need to accelerate the pace and scale of forest restoration efforts.

While acknowledging it supports the proposed grazing guideline, the EOCA had concerns about its implementation.

"If we do not have some guidance for implementation, the effort that went into this guideline will have just been academic in nature and not

provide the desired outcome of maintaining grazing and achieving the desired conditions over time," the association said.

The EOCA was particularly concerned about proposals that wildfire be allowed to burn "in order to hasten achievement of desired future conditions on multiple acres of unplanned ignitions." The association said the proposal "lacks credibility" and was risky.

"The Forest Service does not have the social license for this type of activity in our counties," the EOCA said.

The association also objected to the lack of coordination and cooperation. The EOCA said a "dismissive attitude toward the agency's obligation to cooperate with local government appears throughout the document." This was particularly important when it came to local economies.

"We are the subject matter experts for social and economic well-being, yet we were never contacted by those who prepared the analysis," the EOCA said. "If someone had called, we would have gladly helped. Now we have only the objection process to read and respond."

The EOCA also objected to species diversity guidelines in the forest plan, especially for wolves.

"Our objection is based upon the fact that gray wolves are not federally listed on parts or all of the forests of the Blue Mountains," the EOCA said. "No critical habitat has been designated for gray wolves within the Blue Mountains."

The association noted that under the proposed guidelines, ranchers holding grazing permits would absorb "the entire burden of not only potential killed or injured livestock but also having their entire operations disrupted as the result of these guidelines."

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VOTE NO ON MEASURE 104
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VOTE NO ON MEASURE 105
 Anti-Immigrant measure to repeal Oregon's Sanctuary State law

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