

CASE

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Officials took photographs and conducted a grid search until the effort was halted by snowfall.

Hansford initially said he needed to further study the skull fragment to determine if it was human. The sheriff's office at first assessed the skull as from a bear, but an anthropological exam confirmed it was from a human. By that time, however, winter conditions in the area ended the on-site investigation.

Interest in the case was renewed seven months later when Ted Ferrioli discovered

a corpse in the cold rushing waters of Vance Creek. Ferrioli was walking his dog on the weekend of May 2-3, 1998, when he discovered the remains.

The naked body, missing its head and hands, was found partially buried and immersed in Vance Creek, below a log landing from an old timber sale and about 100 yards from where Holliday had found the skull fragment. It was believed the creek did not run high enough to move the body downstream.

The body was semi-mummified after being in Vance Creek for a time and then frozen through the winter. The remains were transported to Driskill Memorial Chapel and

then sent to the State Medical Examiner's Office in Portland for additional examination.

An autopsy determined that the deceased white man was 49-73 years old, about 5 feet 7 inches tall and weighed about 225 pounds. The forensic lab determined the man was killed between May and November 1997. No personal items, teeth or hair were found in the area, but the autopsy determined the man had severe atherosclerotic coronary artery disease.

Budget concerns

Palmer, who was a John Day police officer at the time of the discovery, took over the case following his election as sheriff in 2000. After gathering

information on the case and reaching a standstill, he went to the public in 2011 seeking assistance.

The cause of death was a homicide, Palmer said at the time, but he withheld details on the manner of death. The sheriff said the man was either brought to the site and killed or killed somewhere else and dumped there.

A nearby secondary road was likely used by the suspect, Palmer said. The remoteness of the area suggested the perpetrator was a local, but DNA testing had ruled out leads involving missing people. He said he believed the man was from outside the area.

Palmer noted at the time that

several leads had been unsubstantiated or disproved. Even psychics had come forward with opinions, he added.

"We're still trying to find his identity," Palmer said at the time. "It's definitely a homicide, but we know that somebody doing this by themselves is highly unlikely."

Palmer advised the county court Nov. 28 that investigating the cold case would increase expenses for the sheriff's office, including overtime.

"Until we can determine if this person was shot and killed here or shot somewhere else and dumped here, this will be our case until a crime scene of a different origin can be determined," Palmer said.

These types of investigations are time consuming, he said, and if the sheriff's office dedicated one or two people solely to this case, other personnel likely would have to carry the rest of the office's workload.

The office is also investigating the death of Terry and Sharon Smith on Nan's Rock Road near Mt. Vernon as a homicide. The couple's home burned during the night of July 17-18.

"This, coupled with the Smith case, is going to be labor intensive, and there will most likely be costs associated that we did not anticipate in our budget process," Palmer told the Eagle.

ACCESS

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ing from an open forest to a closed forest, she said, and the direction seemed to be a mandate from Washington, D.C. For those who rely on the forest, the change was making honest people into criminals, she said.

Under a closed forest, all roads are closed unless designated as open, Frances Preston said.

Closed forest roads made putting out the 2015 Canyon Creek Complex fire more difficult, Jim Sproul said. Grant County never had that problem before, he said.

The stage was set years ago by previous forest supervisors, Judy Kerr said. In addition to closing roads, the Forest Service had illegally taken over historic roads that should belong to the county, she added.

Tank traps

Howard Geiger said he wasn't opposed to closing some roads, but the Forest Service should not use "tank trap" berms or rip up the roadways because the road could not be reopened in an emergency. He also noted that "tank trap" berms can be dangerous for snowmobilers. Geiger said many road closures were rubber-stamped through the federal environmental review process without individual review.

Destroying the forest road system made no sense, Shannon Voigt said. Closing roads will impact all multiple uses, from berry picking to firewood cutting, he said.

The Forest Service has done more harm to Grant County than anything else in history, Ron Phillips said.



From left, Judy Kerr, Grant County Commissioner Jim Hamsher and Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer attend a Forest Plan objectors meeting.

Residents can no longer make a living here unless they're a government employee, he said. As a result, residents rely on firewood cutting to heat their homes, but road closures force them into smaller and smaller areas. As for wildfires, the sooner firefighters can get to them the better, so roads need to be kept open, he said.

Rex Storm, representing Associated Oregon Loggers, said the Forest Service places too much emphasis on ecosystem management and not enough on socioeconomic benefits. Management decisions are coming from Washington, D.C., not local officials, he said. Road-density figures for elk security were artificial, and impacts to fish and riparian areas were overstated while socioeconomic review was insufficient.

Fire risks

Grant County Commissioner Jim Hamsher said roads should not be closed until the forest is "cleaned up" to reduce fire risks. He didn't want cities in Grant County to suffer the same fate as Paradise, California, recently did in the Camp Fire. He also noted that the rebounding recreation industry could benefit from more open roads.

Hamsher said he wanted the Forest Service to work more closely with the county. The Forest Plan objection process provided little time for him to comment, he said.

Objectors and interested persons in the room represent hundreds of years of experience and education in forestry, Sheriff Glenn Palmer said. He recalled cut-

ting firewood in the past all across the Malheur National Forest and a more vibrant timber industry that kept locals employed. He suggested keeping the forest open to everyone and handing responsibility over some forest roads to the county.

Alec Oliver, representing the Grant County Stockgrowers Association, explained the importance of open roads to ranchers moving cattle to pasture. He suggested the Forest Service let ranchers maintain the roads. He noted that everyone in the room favored leaving the roads open and said he didn't see the need to spend money decommissioning roads — let them close on their own, he said.

Joe Cronin, a rancher from Burns, was concerned a forest road providing im-



Seated left to right, Jim Sproul and Dave Traylor participate in a Forest Plan objectors meeting at the Trowbridge Pavilion at the Grant County Fairgrounds Nov. 27.



Forest Service reviewing officer Chris French, in the brown plaid shirt, speaks at a Forest Plan objectors meeting in John Day. The Forest Service held four sessions during the week in different locations.

portant access to his property could be closed — even after he spent more than \$27,000 on repairs to it. A historic road used to move his cattle might also be closed in the future, he said.

Mike Browning recalled a past Forest Service meeting on access. About 350 concerned residents were told

about future road closures, and no public comment was taken, he said. The people of Grant County should be allowed to comment on all prior road closures, he said. He was pessimistic about the outcome of the latest meeting — the Forest Service will do whatever it wants, he said.

FOREST

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also wanted the rule limiting the harvest of trees measuring 21 inches at breast height replaced by common sense.

Timber harvesting is the economic engine that enables other multiple uses, said Rex Storm, representing Associated Oregon Loggers. The myriad requirements in the forest

plan prevent forest managers from achieving the goals stated in the plan, he said.

Mark Webb, the executive director of Blue Mountains Forest Partners, noted that forest plan requirements limited the types of vegetation treatments allowed. The result was some areas were treated and some were not.

The focus on achieving desirable conditions will be the downfall of the forest plan,

said King Williams, representing Iron Triangle Logging. Too much emphasis was on ecosystem management instead of socioeconomic benefits, he said.

In order to address forest conditions, the Forest Service needs to treat 3.5 percent of the Malheur National Forest annually, Williams said. But not enough suitable land for forest projects was being made available, he said.

Ranchers object

Susan Doverspike, a rancher from Burns, described how the conditions of one grazing allotment dramatically improved following a thinning project, including more streamflow from a spring that had dried up.

Blowdown at an allotment that had not been treated was so thick horses and cattle couldn't get through,

Doverspike said. Her crews used chainsaws to clear a path linking one pasture to another. She noted it was not a question of if a wildfire would occur there but when.

Cici Brooks, a rancher from Fox, described a forest project near her grazing allotment that went through a NEPA process long ago with no follow-up work. She also described a thinning project where the slash was never burned and the logs left on the ground prevented horse travel.

The spread of lodgepole pine impacts grass for cattle grazing, horse travel and

elk habitat, said Alec Oliver, representing Grant County Stockgrowers Association. He described the management differences between private and public land, and he recommended the Forest Service mimic private practices.

The Forest Service needs to be more proactive about preventing wildfire, Jim Sproul said. Citing the destruction of Paradise, California, by the recent Camp Fire, Sproul noted the only thing that saved Canyon City from the 2015 Canyon Creek Complex fire was a change in wind direction.

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