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FOREST PLAN BLUES

Forest Service withdraws Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision

By George Plaven
EO Media Group

After 15 years of planning, studies and negotiating with Eastern Oregon communities, the U.S. Forest Service is scrapping three revised land management plans for the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests. Collectively known as the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision, the documents contain guidelines for everything from grazing and timber harvest to wilderness protections. While the plans did not authorize any specific projects, they did set goals and desired conditions for the forests — making them a lightning rod for controversy among industry and environmentalists.

Chris French, acting deputy chief of the Forest Service, has instructed Regional Forester Glenn Casamassa to withdraw the revised forest plans,

which were released in June 2018 along with a joint Environmental Impact Statement. The current forest plans, which were last updated in 1990, will remain in effect for now.



The Eagle/ Richard Hanners
Chris French, brown plaid shirt, a Forest Service reviewing officer, speaks at a Forest Plan objectors meeting at the Trowbridge Pavilion at the Grant County Fairgrounds on Nov. 27.

“Many factors compounded to produce revised plans that would be difficult to implement,” French told Casamassa in a statement. “While my review did not identify any specific violations of law, regulation or policy, significant changes occurred over the 15-year time period of the planning process.”

Forest plans are expected to be revised every 10-15 years to account for changes in the landscape and to keep up with the latest science. The Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision has gone through multiple iterations and remains hotly contested in the region.

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Architects present Innovation Gateway concepts

Commercial greenhouse business faces hurdles

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Although the Innovation Gateway project in John Day could become an attraction for visitors while benefiting local residents, the business plan for the city's commercial greenhouses might require more work.

That was one of many takeaways from a special meeting of the John Day City Council held at the Grant County Regional Airport and streamed live on March 12.

Destination development

Ken Pirie and Michael Zilis of the Walker Macy landscape architect firm in Portland presented several conceptual designs for the

83-acre city-owned riverfront project area, much of it brownfield properties.

Project goals set from the beginning include creating a thriving destination, attracting investment and jobs, honoring John Day's identity and character, promoting a connected and healthy community, creating opportunities for hiking and biking, providing public access to the John Day River and Canyon Creek, constructing the Seventh Street extension as a parkway with pocket parking, opening up the north side of the city for development and diverting traffic from the Bridge Street river crossing to Patterson Bridge Road.

A proposed main loop trail along the river and a network of other trails would connect the Innovation Gateway complex at the former Oregon Pine mill site to the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site, the new

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Clear path presented for new treatment plant

Details presented for possible river restoration project

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The design for John Day's new wastewater treatment plant has been given a green light, and there is a clear path forward for construction of a facility that will produce Class A reclaimed water, City Manager Nick Green announced March 12.

In some ways, the project is the most critical to the city and the linchpin to other projects related to developing 83 acres of city-owned brownfield property along the John Day River — including even a possible restoration project aimed at returning the river channel to a more natural condition while reducing flooding concerns.

The design for the wastewater treatment plant was approved that very same day by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Green said during a special meeting at the Grant County Regional Airport. The council unanimously approved a resolution adopting a 2019 wastewater facilities plan update supporting the new plant.

Green noted that the new treatment plant will take up 1 acre versus the 30-plus acres currently occupied by three sewage lagoons and a 70-year-old mechanical treatment plant. The lagoons are not the best use for riverfront property, Green said. The city will pursue \$11 million in grants and loans to pay for construction of

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EO Media Group file photo
The Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision has been withdrawn.

Is it the end of daylight saving time?

Bill would end biannual clock change

By Mark Miller
Oregon Capital Bureau

Whether they're for standard time or daylight saving time, Oregonians are tired of changing their clocks twice every year. That's the message state senators considering a time change in Oregon received last week.

More than 50 people submitted written testimony or addressed the Senate Committee March 12 regarding Senate Bill 320. Only one witness argued that Oregon should keep switching between standard and daylight time every March and Novem-

ber. The others said they want to get rid of the biannual change.

The legislation would let voters settle the matter in November 2020. If voters approve the change, Oregon would switch to daylight saving time in March 2021 and stay there.

“I just think it's a smart thing to do, and I think people are just grumpy and tired of changing the clock,” said state Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer, who is sponsoring the bill along with state Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, Rep. John Lively, D-Springfield, and Rep.

Mike Nearman, R-Independence.

Public testimony backs up Post.

Aloha resident Jonas Acres said, as a software engineer, changing between times makes his job much harder and can lead to errors. For example, he noted, the change to standard time in November means that one hour in the early morning is repeated every year. Most Oregonians are asleep by then, but for businesses and services that never sleep — Acres used hospital emergency rooms as an example — having two 1 a.m. hours

can be a nightmare when tracking vital data.

Those timekeeping issues can be very serious, even life-threatening, in some fields, Acres said.

“We need to patch DST out of the current society,” Acres said. “SB 320 will let clocks do their jobs, ticking happily from one hour to the next in the monotonic progression ordained by heaven and the laws of thermodynamics.”

Some submitting written testimony urged lawmakers to abandon daylight saving time and make standard time year-round instead.

“I am in the fourth generation of a family afflicted by SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), and it is already

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