

Ordinance

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language for the ordinance on the second draft. Most importantly, the ordinance needed to be consistent with all state and federal laws, he said.

Commissioner Sam Palmer stressed the importance of invoking coordination. It was like signing a contract, binding the federal government to an agreement. The days of handshakes are over, he said.

Last minute email

Mark Webb, a former Grant County judge and executive director of the Blue Mountains Forest Partners collaborative group, emailed the county court the night before the hearing with additional comments. He was neither for or against the ordinance, and his comments appeared to be clarifications or suggested improvements.

Several citations in the ordinance were to federal regulations that were repealed or were irrelevant to coordination in land management contexts, Webb said. He also recommended adding citations to Oregon regulations to provide a state statutory framework.

Webb also suggested replacing the phrase "to the satisfaction of Grant County" in Objective 8 with "in a manner consistent with state and federal laws," and he expressed concerns about the section establishing a natural resource advisory committee.

"I encourage you to clarify what role this committee will play, since federal agencies are required by law to coordinate their land management plans with county plans, not public comments submitted by advisory committees — even county advisory committees," Webb said.



Dave Hannibal



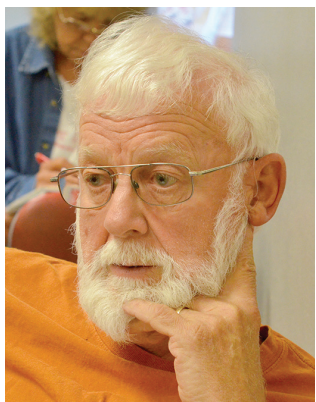
Eva Harris



Jim Sproul



King Williams



Jim Spell



Frances Preston



Billie Jo George

Concerns and issues

Several people at the public hearing also expressed concerns about the natural resource advisory committee. Eva Harris said the language in the ordinance "muddies the water."

Harris also questioned references to the county's "custom and culture," which she said changes over time as new people move in and out of the county and as younger generations bring forward new ideas. The county's customs and culture can't be "locked in," she said.

Harris said she wasn't opposed to the idea of governments coordinating for natural resource planning, but she believed it was already taking place. The new ordinance would "just clutter up the clerk's office," and she suggested rewriting it.

Jim Spell said he was neutral on the idea of coordination but wondered if the ordinance was needed at all. He wanted clarifi-

cation on what it meant to "invoke coordination."

Dave Hannibal, base manager for Grayback Forestry Inc., said he was glad the county was not taking an extremist position on coordination, as could easily be found online.

The timber wars are over, Hannibal said, and progress is being made in the timber industry, with more projects that improve the forest conditions. He said he wasn't sure if the ordinance was needed and didn't want to see the county take an obstructionist role.

King Williams, a consultant with Iron Triangle, said he supported the idea of coordination but wasn't sure if invoking it in an ordinance was necessary. He also was concerned about language calling for a natural resource advisory committee without defining its exact role.

In support

Jim Sproul said he was glad to see the county invoking coordination. It's

been a long time coming and was sorely needed, he said. The county needed to dispel the myths that the county intended to run roughshod over the federal government.

If the government doesn't agree with the county, then it must explain why, Sproul said. He also said it was "mandatory" to have a natural resource advisory committee. The court doesn't have the time to do all the needed work to make coordination effective, he said.

Billie Jo George said she supported the ordinance. Everyone will be able to get the information they need through coordination, not just a select few, she said. Frances Preston also expressed her support for the ordinance.

Court positions

For clarification, Myers noted that the ordinance didn't specifically refer to an existing county ordinance describing custom and culture but instead to

its meaning in general.

He also noted that natural resource advisory committees in other Eastern Oregon counties have been successful. The court needed to be careful in making appointments to the committee and remove anyone who didn't represent the county.

Myers agreed that great progress was being made in relations between the county and the Forest Service, but he wasn't sure if the ordinance would make things better or worse.

Hamsher noted that the court doesn't want to push for outdated science. He said he wants to see more timber sales on the Malheur National Forest and the pace of restoration projects sped up. He said he wasn't sure if it was necessary to invoke coordination, but he didn't think doing so would harm the county's relationship with the Forest Service.

He emphasized that he wanted to see the role of the natural resource advisory committee well defined. Lack of a good definition is a problem he's seen with other county committees, and Hamsher asked to put the matter on the court's next agenda.

Palmer said it was important to include language for a natural resource advisory committee in the ordinance because the make-up of the county court can easily change after each election.

Fire staff using new technology to manage fire

Blue Mountain Eagle

The 3-acre Cow Fire on the Prairie City Ranger District started Aug. 9 as a result of multiple lightning storms that moved across the forest. The fire is burning in the remote high elevation area within the Glacier (1998) and Sheep Mountain (1990) fire scars.

Fire management staff are utilizing a new tool to monitor the Cow Fire called the Remote Autonomous Observation System. The system includes two cameras observing the fire. One is focused on a specific section, and one is providing a panoramic view of fire area. RAOS will allow for 24-hour observation and can be viewed by several fire managers from multiple devices including laptops and tablets. Computer modeling is also being employed to help anticipate fire spread. The latest modeling has shown low potential for rapid or significant growth. Some of the factors fire management staff have taken into consideration in determining growth of the Cow Fire include past fire scars, fuel conditions and the position of the fire on the slope. The observed fire behavior to date has been very low intensity smoldering and creeping.

Fire management staff will utilize the Remote Autonomous Observation System, aircraft, ground crews and computer modeling to monitor the fire.

As long as conditions are favorable the Cow Fire will be allowed to continue to function in its natural role on the landscape.

Smoke is expected to be seen from the area over the next few weeks as temperatures remain warm and fuels dry out. Visitors to the area are reminded to be prepared for smoke and increased fire traffic.

Fire danger is high across the forest, which is in Phase A of public use restrictions and at Industrial Fire Precaution Level II.

For more information on this incident, visit Inciweb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/6526>. To report wildfires, call 911 or John Day Interagency Dispatch at 541-575-1321 or Burns Interagency Communications Center at 541-573-1000.

Leave

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In response to the Eagle's initial records request April 5, Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer said the records may be exempt from

disclosure under state statutes that shield information about a "personnel investigation of a public safety employee" and "investigatory information compiled for criminal law purposes."

However, neither exemption applies if "the public interest

requires disclosure in the particular instance."

On Aug. 14, Palmer announced his intention to resign as sheriff in a few months.

The Eagle continues to pursue its records request for other public documents to explain the situation.

In April, county officials declined to comment because it was a personnel issue.

Abigail Mobley, Zach Mobley, Palmer and the members of the Grant County Court did not respond to requests for comment emailed Friday afternoon.

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