

BLM lands turned over to Wildlife Service

A bill which would protect the nation's wildlife preserves from being caught up in an administrative noose and turned over to the Bureau of Land Management, an agency that is historically more attuned to mining and grazing interests than to conservation, has been approved by the Senate Commerce Committee.

Sen. Bob Packwood (R-OR) who introduced this bill with Sen. Lee Metcalf (D-MT), last March, said the legislation should be reported out of the committee to the Senate floor early next year.

The proposal specifically transfers management of three wildlife refuges from the Bureau of Land Management over to the Fish and Wildlife Service, and gives the Fish and Wildlife Service sole jurisdiction over the entire National Wildlife Refuge System which reaches into 49 of the 50 states.

The three ranges include the Charles Sheldon Antelope Refuge lying in the southeastern corner of Oregon and stretching into Nevada, the Charles

Russel National Wildlife Range in Montana and Kofa Game Range in Arizona.

"The Bureau of Land Management has publicly admitted that 83 per cent of the range-land it manages is in fair, poor, or bad condition, and no apparent effort is being made to improve it," Sen. Packwood said. "These three preserves constitute more than 2 million acres of the nation's most important wildlife conservation areas that are essential to the preservation of several rare and endangered species," he said.

"I don't believe we can justify turning these lands over to BLM knowing the history of this agency's interests in grazing, mining and oil and gas leasing. If we do, we might as well say the hangman's coming," Sen. Packwood said.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has the professional expertise and a long history of dealing with wildlife problems and would be better able to manage these lands, he said.

lone accepted for flood insurance

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced recently that effective Nov. 11, 1975, lone, OR has been accepted into the National Flood Insurance Program.

This means that individual property owners are now eligible to buy flood insurance protection at affordable federally-subsidized rates, offering more extensive coverage under the expanded program authorized by the 1973 Flood Disaster Protection Act.

Under the emergency program as amended Dec. 31, 1974, flood insurance at subsidized premium rates will be available on structures in amounts up to \$35,000 for single-family dwellings and up to \$100,000 on multi-family and non-residential properties and up to \$10,000 per unit on residential contents and \$100,000 on non-residential contents. After a rate study has been completed in the community, coverage up to double the above amounts will be available at actuarial rates.

As provided under the 1973 Act, buildings that are newly constructed or substantially improved after the areas having special flood hazards are identified may be insured under the National Flood Insurance Program at subsidized rates until the rate study has been completed (or Dec. 31, 1974, whichever is later). Once a building is eligible for such insurance it continues to be eligible for such insurance as long as the community continues to participate in the program.

The 1973 Act also provides that all buildings located within the special flood hazard areas of a community participating in the program must be covered by flood insurance after Mar. 1, 1974, in order to be eligible for any form of mortgage loan from a Federally-insured or bank or savings and loan association, or from any Federal agency. After June 30, 1975 no such loans may be approved in communities that are now participating in the flood insurance program.

Heppner man injured

Wayne Ball, Heppner, suffered multiple cuts and bruises in a single car accident, last Wednesday afternoon. The accident occurred as Ball was traveling toward Heppner and his pickup truck left the highway and rolled over an embankment.

First aid was rendered at the scene of the accident by Morrow County Health Nurse Pat Wright and another motorist, Earl Ayers.

Ball was taken to Pioneer Memorial Hospital and released from the hospital Saturday.

A passenger in the vehicle, David Gene Owen, Heppner, was lodged in the Hermiston City Jail following the accident on charges of disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

Owen appeared before Justice of the Peace Charles O'Connor Thursday and pled guilty to the charges after refusing counsel.

Justice of the Peace Charles O'Connor postponed sentencing Owen until Jan. 2. Owen is to report to the mental health clinic before Jan. 2; meanwhile he is free on his own recognizance.

Taxes to increase

Some Oregon wage earners will find a bigger bite taken from their January pay checks, while others will think they've had a small pay increase.

The reason for the changes is the new withholding tax tables which become effective Jan. 1, 1976, reports Oregon revenue department director John J. Laddell.

"Oregon's tax tables have not been revised since 1964 and federal taxes, upon which the Oregon tables are based, have been changed several times since then. We believe the overall effect is that a person will have less additional cash to pay when filing his or her tax return in 1977," he says.

For example, a single tax-

payer with no exemptions earning between \$1,000-1,039 a month will have \$4 more a month withheld. While a married taxpayer earning the same amount will get an additional \$5 a month.

A single taxpayer claiming two exemptions and earning

between \$1,000-1,039 a month will have \$11 more withheld. Whereas the married person with two exemptions and earning the same amount will receive an extra \$2 in the pay envelope.

The tables are designed to withhold even dollar amounts.

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