

OPINION

Siskiyou Crest National Monument—the high Siskiyou should be protected

BY JONATHAN SPERO

This is in response to a letter (Applegater Spring, 2010) from Kathy Bishop, who asked supporters of a Siskiyou Crest National Monument to consider the added regulation and the loss of cattle grazing that monument creation would cause. As an Applegate resident and a proponent of the Siskiyou Crest National Monument, I feel she deserves a response.

It is always difficult when change causes the loss of someone's livelihood. While I do not believe that monument status for the Siskiyou Crest will cause a net loss of employment in the area, I understand that those 75 pair of grazing cattle are someone's livelihood. When any active grazing leases are retired, the lease holders should be compensated for their loss; but when the lease of public land for cattle grazing is no longer in the public interest, those leases should be terminated.

Species are going extinct at the fastest rate since dinosaurs roamed the earth. As human population grows or climates change, habitats for other beings are lost. As habitats are lost, animals, plants and microbes must move to new places or die out. The Siskiyou is an important migration corridor, one of the only pathways between the Cascades and the coast. How we manage the Siskiyou mountains will impact the survival or

extinction of many.

I cannot agree that those 75 pair of cattle have "hardly an impact on the land". Their impact is large. From the point of view of a small population of herbs or forbs, the impacts are game-changing. Cattle turn diverse forest edges into meadows. Grasses, able to recover from being grazed, replace the many other species that might survive there if not for the cows. Cattle compact and fertilize the springs and wet spots that are the headwaters of our streams. This impacts the life forms down through the stream system. Cattle

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simplify eco-systems, when maximum complexity is what is needed to provide habitat for the thousands of species here. The single most effective thing we can do to minimize extinctions in the high Siskiyou is to remove the cattle.

None of us likes regulations, but without some rules, society could not function. If the regulations didn't mandate which side of the road we drive on, travel would be far more hazardous than it is. If tighter rules on our activity on these public lands can keep more species alive and provide migration corridors for species whose habitat has been lost elsewhere, I am willing to live with those added rules.

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OPINION

Response to proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument

BY TONY BISHOP

This opinion piece was in response to a Siskiyou Daily News letter to the editor, from Laurel Sutherlin, regarding the proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument.

In response to Laurel Sutherlin's letter to the editor regarding the proposed Siskiyou Crest Monument, I would like to address the points he made in the letter.

First, his group, which is based in Ashland, has not included the people who live and work and raise their families in the proposed area and surrounding areas on the California side of the border. We definitely have an important interest in this matter as it will affect us greatly.

Second, he claims the area is unique as an exceptional biological, recreational, and economically valuable area. Why is this area any more exceptional than any other are? His statement is just hype to further his agenda.

Third, can he tell us how this area has been globally recognized and a hotspot for biodiversity any more than Lithia park may be? Their website does not answer this question with any facts. It is all biased opinion.

Fourth, he mentions there are already many protected areas of different types within the proposal so the area is already well protected and already managed by the federal government. By his own statements, no public lands in the area remain unprotected. In fact a monument designation would only frustrate the efforts and projects for restoration, fuel reduction etc. that are already in place and are being worked on by local federal agencies. These projects also provide some local private employment. He says that unlike a wilderness area, a monument can be actively managed. If a person was genuine about this he would conclude that the area can be actively managed now as it is. Currently any restoration projects are held up and harassed by Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands and other similar groups. In a monument scenario it would only be worse. Sutherlin also says management of the land is divided by overlapping jurisdictions. This is untrue. All of the proposed area is managed by the federal government, and 95% of that management is done by the USDA Forest Service.

Fifth, he says all major roads will stay open. Who will decide what is a major road? And he doesn't address other roads, but I think we know how that would go.

Sixth, as for the willing sellers of grazing permits, what has happened in other areas is the draconian regulations that are imposed on permit holders forces them to be willing sellers. Grazing currently greatly benefits the area, by keeping brush down and meadows open and some fuel

load control. I don't know why these people are always against grazing.

Seventh, Siskiyou County already has large federally protected areas. Our experience here is the more federal land that is protected the worse the economy gets. I don't believe the economic study he mentioned and I would like to see it. Since this environmental radicalism started in the 1980's our economy has continued to get worse, our schools have continued to decline and our youth have had to leave. Most of our living wage private sector jobs no longer exist. The myth of a diversified economy doesn't exist in the absence of base industry. The myth of agriculture and timber being boom or bust industries is untrue, the agriculture industry has been viable and sustainable in our area for over a 150 years and so has the timber industry. Just because an industry goes through business cycles does not make it "boom or bust."

Eighth, county governments are right to ask for coordination in any land use decisions that affect their constituents. These groups always bring up some other place like Crater Lake to justify their actions. We all like Crater Lake, but is that really relevant to the people that live here voicing their concerns? Sutherlin says these other designations have benefited their regional economies, but is that really true? I doubt it, especially on the smaller local level.

I think Mr. Sutherlin and his group should start by making the city of Ashland a national monument first and then let us know how that turns out for the people who live there.

Finally he talks about cleaner water and climate. We all know what a ruse that is. Our experience has been the more the environmentalists do the worse things get. Before all the radical environmental stuff started we had more fish, more game, more water, more firewood, more jobs, more young people, our schools were more viable and had more programs. I think Mr. Sutherlin and his group should start by making the city of Ashland a national monument first and then let us know how that turns out for the people who live there.

And then we could make a better informed decision.

Tony Bishop
530-496-3600

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