

Daily Courier endorsement

Opinion

Daily Courier Editorial Board

April 29, 2016

Tell the feds to leave us alone

The Josephine County Board of Commissioners sent an advisory measure to the May 17 ballot. Although non-binding, the results could be a useful tool when county officials deal with the federal government over a proposal to add 63 miles of the Rogue River to "Wild and Scenic" status.

The section of the Rogue from its confluence with the Applegate River all the way to Lobster Creek Bridge near the Pacific Ocean already has Wild and Scenic protection. A proposal being considered by the BLM would extend Wild and Scenic status to the Rogue from the Applegate River all the way upstream to Lost Creek Reservoir.

The BLM estimates 85 percent of the riverfront property in this stretch is owned by private property owners, who could be forced to grant scenic easements and additional public access to their land if Congress approves such a designation.

The federal government already has too much say in the lives of Southern Oregonians. It pretends to be interested in local input on these matters, but rarely changes policies based on that input.

Still, we should not pass up an opportunity to let the feds know how we feel. Vote no on Measure 17-72, the advisory measure on the Rogue River's federal designation.

Editorial recommendations are decided by the Daily Courier editorial board — the president, publisher and editor — and therefore aren't signed by an individual, as is the newspaper's usual policy.