

Editorials are written by or approved by members of the Capital Press Editorial Board.

All other commentary pieces are the opinions of the authors but not necessarily this newspaper.

Opinion

Editorial Board

Publisher
Mike O'Brien
opinions@capitalpress.com

Editor
Joe Beach
Online: www.capitalpress.com/opinion

Managing Editor
Carl Sampson

OUR VIEW

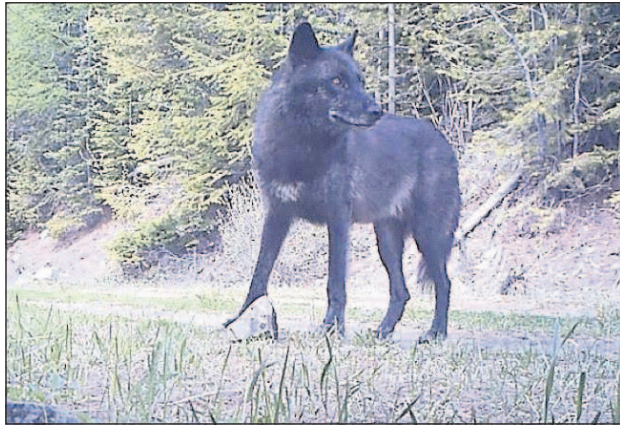
How to reduce cost of killing wolves

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife spent \$119,577.92 to kill seven wolves from the Profanity Peak pack.

It seems like a lot of money, considering the job was left undone. But we have no expertise in such things.

Wolves in the eastern one-third of Washington aren't protected by the federal Endangered Species Act. The state's policy calls for shooting wolves when measures such as putting more people on horseback around herds fail to stop depredations.

Though the entire Profanity Peak pack was slated for elimination, the operation has been suspended with four



The Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife has spent \$119,577.92 to kill seven wolves from the Profanity Peak pack.

Courtesy of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

wolves surviving. Wildlife officials say they didn't quit because of the mounting cost.

WDFW spent the money during an operation in northeastern Washington that began Aug. 4 and ended Oct. 19. Expenses included renting a helicopter, hiring a trapper, and

paying the salaries and benefits of WDFW employees.

Tracking and killing wolves is an expensive proposition that seems to carry no real discount even when done in volume.

Dispatching 64 percent of the Profanity Peak pack cost \$17,082.56 per wolf killed.

That's less than the \$26,000 it spent to kill just one wolf in 2014, but more than the \$10,857.15 per wolf it spent in 2012 to kill seven.

Wildlife wolf policy coordinator Donny Martorello said the agency will look at culling wolfpacks in the future in "the most frugal way we can."

Cattle Producers of Washington President Scott Nielsen has an idea.

He says Washington wildlife officials could authorize ranchers to kill wolves that are attacking livestock.

"We would work collectively," Nielsen said. "It would cost the state nothing."

It's probably too simplistic to assume it would cost nothing,

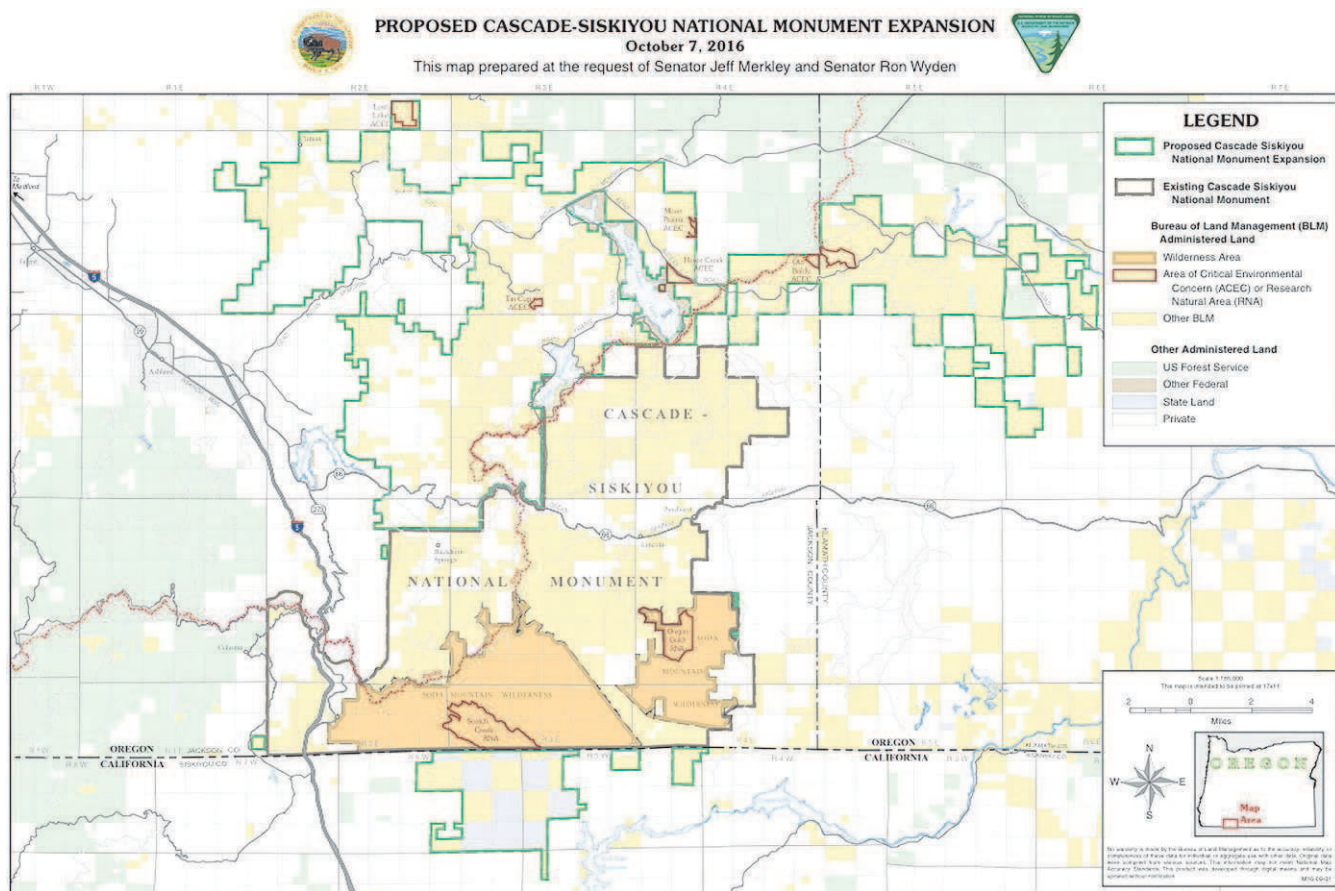
because government would still be involved, or that ranchers would necessarily have better luck. Still it's an idea worth studying.

Environmentalists would rather pay ranchers to move off allotments than to kill even one wolf. That's not going to work for cattlemen.

Allowing a cattleman to kill a wolf attacking his herd makes sense. Killing a problem wolf early enough may prevent the need to kill a whole pack later. That would be cheaper for the state, better for the cattlemen, and better for the wolves.

It's not often cattlemen catch wolves in the act, but they nonetheless should have the tool at their disposal.

OUR VIEW



Region depends on Columbia-Snake River System

By TOM KAMMERZELL
For the Capital Press

Guest comment
Tom Kammerzell



Once again, the value of the Snake River system is going to be reviewed, but this time with a twist.

In May, Judge Simon, in his ruling related to the Snake River Biological Opinion, has now brought the entire river system, including the dams on the Columbia, into the discussion.

This is new territory. The public is being given the opportunity by Jan. 17 to weigh in on the diverse value of the entire river system. Contact information can be found at the end of this column.

As the dialogue continues with regard to the damage done to salmon numbers, it should be noted that the true devastation was done in the late 1800s and early 1900s by fish wheels and canneries, which no longer exist. In fact, the numbers of fish are continuing to increase and in some cases are higher than in 1938 when Bonneville Dam was built.

Economic asset

The Columbia-Snake River System is a vital economic asset for the entire Northwest. The eight dams and locks on the Columbia-Snake River System provide transportation, energy and economic benefits to the region. They also provide flood safety, lest we forget the Vanport flood of 1948 which removed an entire city and killed over 50 people.

Thanks to the eight dams and locks on the Columbia and Snake rivers, farmers and businesses have access to the safest, most environmentally friendly way to move their product downriver to export. Farmers as far inland as the Midwest can take advantage of barges to move their crops down to the export terminals on the lower Columbia River.

Wheat gateway

The Columbia-Snake River System is the nation's No. 1 wheat export gateway with 49 percent of U.S. wheat moving through the system, and our inland lock and dam system plays a big role in getting that wheat to market. Just rail or barging can't do it alone — we need both cargo modes to move all the product coming out of our area.

Keeping the river system open for business helps to protect lives, jobs, farmers, our regional and national economy and helps feed people around the world.

From an environmental perspective, the dams should be celebrated for providing the cleanest, greenest way of moving millions of tons of commodities. The last time barging was suspended for a period of time, the impact of

the increased trucking raised emissions by a whopping 323.2 percent.

Clean power

The eight dams on the river system are also counted on by every person in the Pacific Northwest when they reach for a light switch. Close to 60 percent of the power used in the Northwest is generated by the clean, renewable, carbon-free hydropower generated by the dams on the river system.

Furthermore, the dams help to regulate the flow of energy to the grid from wind and solar, and provide a firm backup for when those other renewables are not generating. This is evident in the winter when cold weather requires more electricity and the dams are called upon to meet that demand.

Salmon gains

The modern benefits of the river system have allowed commerce and energy to flow while also dramatically improving salmon runs on the river. The eight dams on the Columbia-Snake mainstem have always had fish passage facilities. Over the past 20 years, we have seen tremendous investments made at the dams to make them world class facilities, plus important habitat work in our tributaries and the estuary.

The collaborative efforts of our federal agencies, tribes, states and nonprofits have led to record-breaking returns for some of our salmon populations and dramatic improvements in others.

Like every other river in the world, we'll always have challenges, such as the unusually high temperatures we saw last year. But as improvements continue and partnerships strengthen, we look forward to continued increases in our fish runs.

The year is 2016, not 1816. We require electricity all of the time, not just when the wind blows and the sun shines. With the ever-increasing world population more mouths need to be fed affordably. I encourage advocates of the current river system to weigh in to help protect these vital economic assets for our region.

Visit <http://www.crso.info/> for the list of meetings, submit your comment letter at comment@crso.info or mail a letter to CRSO EIS, P.O. Box 2870, Portland, OR 97208-2870 by Jan. 17.

Tom Kammerzell is a Port of Whitman County, Wash., commissioner and wheat producer.

The other monumental mistake

Not one more acre. That's our answer to the question no U.S. senator from Oregon would ever ask us: How much more Western land needs to be locked up as national monuments?

Whether it's in Oregon or anywhere else, no one has demonstrated the need for setting aside more land — particularly productive land better used for grazing or timber harvests.

All proponents have demonstrated is the ability to pander to special interests and build websites promoting new monuments as the next best thing to Yosemite.

Not only is the environmental lobby promoting the 2.5 million-acre Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument proposal in southeastern Oregon — a travesty in itself — it also wants to double the size of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon.

Why? Because it'll make President Barack Obama look good to the environmental lobby. He can lock up those areas without so much as a vote of Congress.

A particularly insidious feature of this latest proposal — backed by Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, both D-Ore. — is that 34,000 privately owned acres will be included in the new lock-up. That's on top of 19,000 privately owned acres already within the monument. If the monument is ultimately expanded, about 40 percent of it will be privately owned.

That means private ranches could lose grazing allotments and access to timber land could be lost as the Bureau of Land Management closes roads.

What proponents don't say is hikers can now enjoy the land without adding 1 square inch to the monument. Nothing has to be done

to make it "better."

In fact, the people who have grazed their cattle on the land have done such a good job of managing it that recreationists now say they want to preserve it the way it is.

If those people — including Oregon's two U.S. senators — care so much about the land, they should just leave it alone.

The U.S. government already manages 27 million acres of National Conservation Lands. That's an area equal to the size of Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and Vermont combined — with Puerto Rico thrown in.

You'll note that not even the most strident environmentalist would suggest turning those states or that territory into national monuments. It's because people live and work there.

Just like in rural Oregon.

Readers' views

Irrigation deliveries shut off early

Re: Owyhee irrigators get full allotment. We were allotted 4 acre-feet this year, but how can you use it all when they shut off

deliveries two weeks early? A normal season should run from 15 April to 15 October. They even shut our pumps off.

They hoped to save 100,000 acre-feet in the reservoir; they saved around 160,000 acre-feet.

It is commendable to save

water, but another two weeks wouldn't have drafted the lake that much and it would have really helped those with beets in the ground and those putting in fall crops.

As for the pumps, the board needs to sit down with Idaho Power and the

Bureau of Reclamation and negotiate a fiscal year for electricity.

There is lots of water in the river and it makes no sense to shut those irrigators down early.

P. T. Rathbone
Farmer
Marsing, Idaho

Letters policy

Write to us: Capital Press welcomes letters to the editor on issues of interest to farmers, ranchers and the agribusiness community.

Letters policy: Please limit letters to 300 words and include your home address and a daytime telephone number with your submission. Longer pieces, 500-750 words, may be considered as guest commentary pieces for use

on the opinion pages. Guest commentary submissions should also include a photograph of the author.

Send letters via email to opinions@capitalpress.com. Emailed letters are preferred and require less time to process, which could result in quicker publication. Letters also may be sent to P.O. Box 2048, Salem, OR 97308; or by fax to 503-370-4383.