

**CITY:** Staff have managed to create significant savings

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approximately \$4,600 with the new fees.

Prior to the vote, during visitor communications, local event promoter Richard Esterman asked Council to consider grandfathering in long-established events, thus facilitating his ability to hold his summer events. He contended that the new fees were “trumped up by the Public Works Director and City Manager” and aimed directly at him, calling the new fees “a clear act of discrimination.” Esterman said he felt “threatened and discriminated against” and asserted his belief that “there is no accountability at City Hall.”

He argued that he leaves the parks and restrooms cleaner than before his events. Public Works Director Paul Bertagna explained the costs associated with bringing the trampled grass back to its usual lush green.

• City Council will be meeting on Thursday, January 28, in an executive session, to conduct their annual job performance evaluation of City Manager Andrew Gorayeb. His job description will provide the evaluation criteria. Executive sessions are closed to the public.

• The Affordable Housing Work Group, headed by Patrick Davenport, community development director, is

continuing their meetings to investigate innovative ways to attract developers to create affordable housing projects in Sisters. At their last meeting, January 14, they reviewed data and offered suggestions for fine-tuning the housing needs analysis being completed by Davenport’s department as part of the larger urbanization study that will be used to update the City’s comprehensive plan. One recommendation destined to come out of the analysis could be for the establishment of a housing policy board.

• The City has been able to save \$673,000 over the next seven to 25 years by refinancing municipal bonds. With savings already realized by refinancing the City’s loan at Bank of the Cascades, total savings amount to over three-quarters of a million dollars.

• With no discussion, City Council approved as part of the consent agenda an expanded-use liquor license for Eurosports, owned by former mayor Brad Boyd. His previous OLCC license was for limited on-premises liquor sales. The new OLCC license is for the additional privilege of off-premises sales and a 90-day temporary authority.

• Council approved reducing the rent charged to the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce to zero from the current \$750 per month. A portion of the premises, located on the corner of East Main Avenue and North Spruce Street, shall be available for public meeting space.

# Seeking to ratify wolf’s status

By Gosia Wozniacka  
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — Two Republican state lawmakers are trying to thwart a lawsuit filed by environmental groups over a decision to remove the gray wolf from Oregon’s Endangered Species Act list.

The proposals by Sen. Bill Hansell and Rep. Greg Barreto seek to ratify the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission’s November decision to de-list the wolves.

Eighty-one wolves now live in Oregon. State biologists recommended stripping them of the endangered status, saying the species is no longer in danger of extinction in a substantial portion of its Oregon range.

But some independent scientists disagreed. Research shows Oregon could support approximately 1,450 wolves. Currently, the animals are present on just 12 percent of its potential habitat.

In December, three environmental groups sued, arguing the commission failed to follow the best available science when it delisted the wolves, did not conduct an independent peer-review of its proposal and its population viability analysis for the species was flawed. The lawsuit asks for an impartial judicial review of the commission’s decision.

The proposals from Hansell and Barreto include an emergency provision,

which could make the lawsuit immediately moot — or stymie its process. They will be introduced as bills in the House and Senate and considered during the upcoming legislative session in February.

The proposals also seek to amend state law by prohibiting the re-listing of wolves as endangered or threatened unless their numbers fall below a certain low threshold.

Ranching, farming and hunting groups support the proposals.

“We wanted to make the commission’s decision final. We’d like to end the madness and not be bogged down in the court system,” said Todd Nash, a rancher and wolf committee chairman for the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association.

The environmental groups say the bills are unnecessary, because wolves are no longer listed. That could change only if a judge rules the commission acted illegally when it delisted the species.

The bills, said Quinn Read with Defenders of Wildlife, would usurp the authority of the commission to manage species in the state by injecting legislative action and politics into the process.

Environmental groups also said amending the state’s Endangered Species Act for one species could set a dangerous precedent.

“When you have a species like the wolves that has been misunderstood for so

long, this legislation is just furthering down the path for treating the species differently than the others,” said Amaroq Weiss with the Center for Biological Diversity.

“ We’d like to end the madness and not be bogged down in the court system. — Todd Nash

The groups point to an upcoming review of the state wolf plan as the place where management criteria can be adjusted. Currently the wolf plan continues to tightly regulate when a wolf can be killed, but more lethal measures could be allowed to manage wolves in the future.

The wolf plan review will take just a little under one year and will include public hearings and scientific input.

The decision to delist wolves statewide has the biggest impact on wolves in eastern Oregon. They were taken off the federal endangered list four years ago. Wolves further west are still federally protected.

But the environmental groups say state protection is also needed for the western part of the state because federal officials are now proposing to strip wolves of federal protections in most of the lower 48, including in western Oregon.


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