

Bills aim to provide more firefighting flexibility

PENDLETON (AP) — In the wake of a July fire that burned 80,000 acres of land in north-central Oregon, state Sen. Bill Hansell is introducing a package of bills that he thinks will improve firefighting efforts on farmland.

The East Oregonian reports that the four bills sponsored by the Republican are intended to provide flexibility in fighting wildfires in the area and move a previously unprotected land into the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s jurisdiction.

At its height last summer, the Substation Fire was the largest fire in the United States, burning thousands of acres of wheat in the process.

Hansell said farmers were worried about assuming liability for property damage or injuries while fighting fires, so he created Senate Bill 290, which grants civil immunity to people fighting fires in good faith. Another measure, SB 311, moves 400,000 acres of land in Sherman and Wasco counties into the state fire marshal’s jurisdiction.

Groups withdraw from wolf talks

PORTLAND (AP) — Environmental groups have withdrawn from talks aimed at updating the wolf management plan in Oregon.

Wolf conservation advocates, ranchers and hunters have been meeting with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for months to update the rules that protect and manage the state’s rebounding wolf population.

One hotly debated topic is how and when wolves can be killed when they attack livestock.

Oregon Wild, Defenders of Wildlife, Cascadia Wildlands and the Center for Biological Diversity say in a letter to Gov. Kate Brown that ODFW has rejected all their suggestions as too expensive or too difficult.

The agency’s draft for a wolf plan last year was sharply criticized by the same groups.

Conflict between ranchers and wolves has grown as the species makes a comeback in the state.

ECLIPSE: Event will occur on Sunday, January 20

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will occur that will be visible over more than half the earth, and Central Oregon will have as good a view of this event as any part of the world.

Though the eclipse starts as a barely noticeable penumbral eclipse at 6:36 p.m. local time, we will start to notice a bit of darkening of the moon on its lower left side by about 7:20 p.m. when the moon will be due east of us and at an elevation, or angle above the horizon, of 25 degrees. It will be about one-half dark at about 8:20 p.m. and will show the famous red (blood red) color over part of its surface. The still-bright half will tend to overwhelm the darker and redder side for most viewers.

The maximum eclipse will occur at about 9:10 p.m. when the moon will be at about 45 degrees elevation and just east of southeast. As the moon begins to emerge from the earth’s shadow it will be about half lit again by 10 p.m. and by 10:30 p.m. the partial phase of the eclipse will be over. The

penumbral eclipse will end at about 11:50 p.m., but during the last hour the casual observer may not even notice any darkening of the moon.

This particular eclipse is sometimes referred to as a super blood moon eclipse; super because the moon is near perigee in its orbit, placing it closer to the earth than it normally gets, and blood because the blue wavelengths of light are scattered by earth’s atmosphere, allowing the red end of the spectrum to fall upon the moon.

Because this lunar eclipse occurs in our winter, we will have a view of it with the moon very high in the sky and the opportunity for photography will be better than for a summer lunar eclipse at our latitude. As the moon progresses through the partial phases, exposure settings will need to vary tremendously. For instance, at the start of the penumbral phase, the moon is about as bright as a normal full moon. You can get a decent image of the early phases of the eclipse with manual camera settings such as: ISO 400, f/8, 1/200 sec. Put your camera on a tripod for the longer exposures. During the partial phases, you will need to increase the exposure time to about 1/3 to

1/2 second. The bright part of the moon will be overexposed for these shots. For the total phase, you will need to have the camera on a tripod and shoot at something like: ISO 400, f/4, 2 sec. A telephoto lens or zoom lens with a focal length of 150 to 500 mm will give you a better image of the moon. Remember to spend some time just viewing the eclipse with your naked eyes or through binoculars.

For information about Richard Lighthill’s observatory and to view a time lapse video of a previous

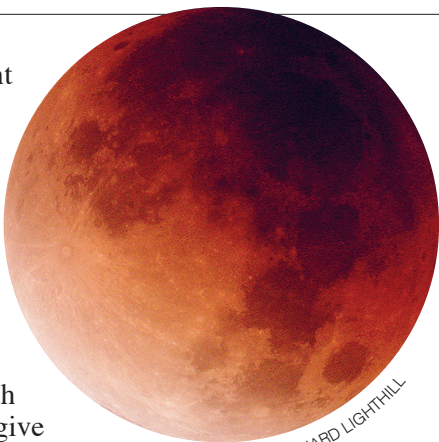


PHOTO BY RICHARD LIGHTHILL

lunar eclipse, visit <https://tinyurl.com/ycovp4zf>. To be alerted about astronomical events check the Sisters Astronomy Club Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sistersastronomy.



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