

# Governors want more say in habitat rule for at-risk wildlife

By Keith Ridler  
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Governors from 22 Western states and Pacific territories want a bigger say in how the Trump administration defines habitat for wildlife protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The new definition could have implications for how states manage imperiled animals and plants, the Western Governors Association said in a letter Thursday to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The governors insist they are “co-sovereigns with the federal government” and need an equal role in the decision.

The Trump administration is seeking to restrict what land and waterways can be protected as habitat for wildlife facing extinction, one of the latest ways it’s sought to roll back environmental safeguards.

The government is trying to redefine what habitat means for the purposes of enforcing the Endangered Species Act, the landmark law that has dictated wildlife protections in the U.S. since 1973. It released a proposed rule in early August. Governors said they’re having to express their views through a public-comment process on the proposed rule, saying that isn’t enough input and they want the federal government to consult with states.

“It is important for federal agencies and state wildlife managers to maintain a close working relationship to ensure that any new interpretation or application of the term does not result in unintended consequences for state management of species,” according to the letter signed by Democratic Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, chairwoman of Western Governors Association, and Republican Idaho Gov. Brad Little, who’s vice chairman.

Once an imperiled species is listed under the act, federal officials designate critical habitat that it needs to survive. That can include where a species lives and areas where they don’t live but are deemed essential for survival. Such designations can come into conflict with private landowners and those

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## Commentary... Keeping a promise

By Edie Jones  
Columnist

In the August 26 issue of *The Nugget* we learned about a promise that has been granted to Sisters. A promise that will change the lives of 3- and 4-year-olds living in our school district. However, it is a promise that can’t be kept while schools are mandated to keep their doors closed.

That promise is money that has been awarded to the Sisters School District to provide 18 preschool spots to families that apply and qualify. Preschool Promise, awarded through the Oregon Department of Education Early Learning Division, is designed to make available publicly funded, high-quality, local and culturally relevant early childcare and education programs.

The concept that we would have enough families living in Sisters eligible to receive the grant may seem unrealistic to many. After all, it has been several years since our district has been able to meet the guidelines that allow the federally funded Head Start program to be here. However, demographics are changing and I applaud Joan Warberg, principle of the elementary school, and others who diligently put forth the effort to apply for the grant.

Receiving this money is a really good thing! Research indicates the benefits of such a program are far reaching, especially when they make the opportunity of early childhood education available to many who otherwise could not afford it.

Appreciation of the value of preschool has not always been recognized. I clearly remember quitting a preschool teaching assignment when three year olds were admitted into our program. Fully believing it was unwarranted, I exclaimed to my aunt, an elementary school principle, “Those babies should be home with their mommas!” She quickly admonished me with, “That depends on the mommas! If those mommas don’t play with their children, engage them in imagination, and allow them to get their hands dirty, those babies are far better off in school.”

How right she was, and how shortsighted I was, thinking all parents thought parenting was the most wonderful job in the world.

We now know that the more exposure kids have early on to the rich environment of a well-run preschool is invaluable! When it happens, kids are far better equipped to face all learning that will come their way. The more children interact with peers and adults

different than their parents at an early age the easier it is for them to transition into kindergarten and learn.

I now know that preschool is essential — for all children. Lack of this kind of experience will influence more than how they adapt to kindergarten. It will also have a profound effect on how they learn as they continue through the grades.

I encourage anyone who has a preschool-aged child, who even wonders if they might qualify, to apply for the Preschool Promise. Your child’s learning will be enhanced.

In celebrating the Preschool Promise opportunity it is well worth mentioning there are now several other well-run preschool programs in Sisters. Please, if you are a parent of a preschooler, check them out. Your child will thank you.

In addition to preschools, there is another important program for parents with young ones in Sisters. Together For Children welcomes all families with children birth through 3 years old to join them for play and parent education. The website [www.together-for-children.org](http://www.together-for-children.org) provides information about time and dates and ways to access their services during the pandemic.

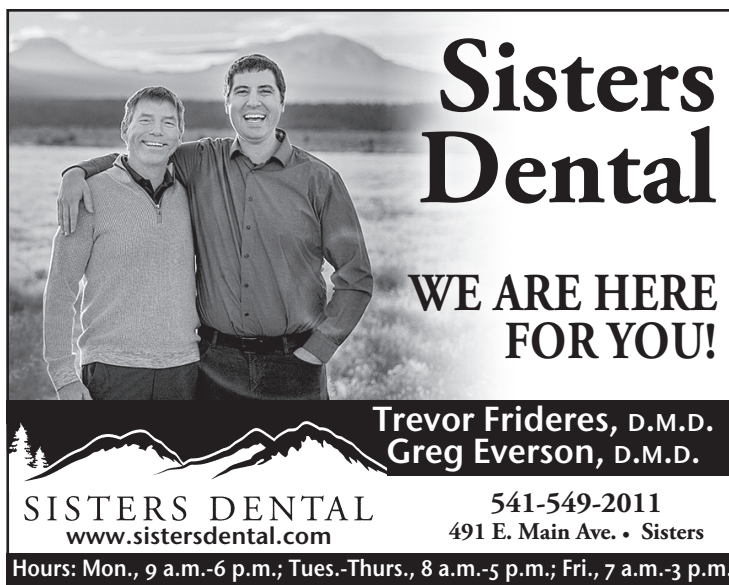
Even though this article is specifically talking to

parents of preschoolers it is also intended for everyone else in our community. Schools can’t allow kids in the building on a normal basis while the virus is present. I implore all of us do our part in wearing masks, washing hands, and keeping our distance so schools can get back to normal operation.

Remember the book “All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten” by Robert Fulghum? Let’s change those words to ... Learned In Preschool...

“Learn to share, play fair, don’t hit, put things away, cleanup your own mess, hold hands and stick together” are extremely important lessons. If all of us adults had learned them well I venture to guess many of the messes we’ve experienced this past summer would cease to exist.

Let’s do our part so this important promise can be kept.



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