

O P I N I O N

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is 10 a.m. Monday.

Turn off your porch lights

To the Editor:
A recent article in *The Nugget* focused on the very real possibility of the monarch butterfly going extinct. Two reasons were given for this drop in its population: the loss of its main food source, milkweed, and climate

change. Another reason not stated is this: electric lights.
For the past 130 years, electric lights have come to cover the globe, bringing with them a destruction of the natural circadian cycle shared by all living things such as butterflies,

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Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday

Partly Cloudy
59/37



Thursday

PM Rain
56/33



Friday

AM Showers
47/30



Saturday

Mostly Cloudy
46/29



Sunday

Mostly Cloudy
49/33



Monday

AM Rain/Snow Showers
48/30



Tuesday

Partly Cloudy
56/33



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Welcoming wolves?



Sisters artist Wendy Birnbaum shot this photograph of a wolf. A group of Sisters Country residents are forming a “Wolf Welcome Committee,” with several events planned. See op-ed, this page.

PHOTO BY WENDY BIRNBAUM

Bringing back the howl of the wolf

By Susan Prince & Jennie Sharp
Guest Columnists

“To be native to a place we must learn to speak its language,” wrote Robin Wall Kimmerer, in “Braiding Sweetgrass.”

Few of us in Sisters Country are natives. Most of us followed our wild instincts to disperse, travel, revel, and lay down roots in a new habitat. Living here, we learn the wild language of Sisters Country, and if we try, we can live in balance with it.

Paradoxically, while the natural splendor of Sisters Country draws us here, our very presence — even when peaceful — can render it less wild, less ecologically balanced. In the last century, humans significantly altered the seemingly healthy forest that surrounds us — the old growth cut, fires suppressed, wolves killed.

So, are our wild areas really wild?

When we listen to the wild language of Sisters Country, we don’t hear the howls of wolves. Less than a hundred years ago we could. We ask, can our efforts bring back this missing voice, so critical to learning the language of our home?

Cultures across the globe regard wolves as symbols of the wild. We believe a forest without wolves is not truly wild; not truly whole.

Like humans, wolves once populated habitats all over the world, including Oregon. Fear, hatred, misunderstanding, and U.S. government policy killed all wolves in Oregon by 1947. Due to a change of heart, wolves are back; and if you talk to a Camp Sherman local you just might hear a story of a recent wolf sighting.

Wolves are currently dispersing across Oregon. Our wild forests need wolves, just as we need our wild forests. We argue that we, too, need wolves.

Wolves and humans have coexisted in habitats across the globe for millennia. Like humans, wolves are cooperative and live in family groups (packs) that protect territory and invest greatly in their offspring. We are more similar than we are different; and share a vast majority of our genetic code. We are both generalists and can adapt easily to various habitats. We compete for food and territory.

We disperse. We travel. We play. We hunt. We cuddle. We howl.

We know wolves come through Sisters Country, but a pack has yet to settle here. We recently asked two local Forest Service wildlife biologists whether wolves would want to settle here. Both said that due to human impact, numbers of wolves’ prey, deer and elk, are significantly lower than in the past. There are a lot of humans in these parts; and wolves are rightly shy of humans.

So, maybe not. But maybe.

What can we do to welcome wolves back to their ancestral home? What can we do to rewild our forests? What can we do to rewild ourselves?

To explore about these questions and more we have created the Wolf Welcome Committee. We envision a time, in the near future, when wolves will be recovered in Sisters Country. Our goal is to encourage a climate of peaceful coexistence where wolves are welcomed by their human neighbors. Together, we will explore the intrinsic value of wolves, the benefits they bring to wild nature, and the important lessons they have to teach humans. When appropriate, we will advocate for non-lethal solutions to protect livestock.

Our first project is a book group in partnership with Paulina Springs Books. In the group we will read two newly released books: “Reign of Wolf 21: The Saga of Yellowstone’s Legendary Druid Pack,” by Rick McIntyre and “Yellowstone Wolves: Science and Discovery in the World’s First National Park,” editors Douglas W. Smith, Daniel R. MacNulty, Daniel R. Stahler.

We will discuss the books virtually on April 7, 6:30 p.m. and May 12, 6:30 p.m. All are welcome to join.

We will host two virtual events open to the public. On April 28, 6:30 p.m. we will facilitate a conversation with Rick McIntyre, the first wolf ranger in the National Park Service, now retired, and Kira Cassidy, wolf biologist. This is an exciting opportunity to interact directly with Rick McIntyre, who has spent more time observing wolves than anyone on earth.

We also will host a conversation with local and regional scientists examining the history and future of wolves in Central Oregon.

To be part of the group, visit Paulina Springs Books to sign up in person, or you can email us at wolfwelcomecommittee@gmail.com.

Views expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or The Nugget Newspaper.

Got a great photo of life in Sisters Country?

Send your high-resolution photo to editor@nuggetnews.com.