



Katy Nesbitt / For WesCom News Service

Heather Howard and her German shepherd, Gracie, do one last trailing exercise as trainer Bonnie Whitman looks on during a four-day workshop at the Lostine Wildlife Area.

## SEARCH

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Like water or smoke, scent doesn't follow a straight line or even along the actual path of the victim; instead it meanders based on the air currents, eddying around rocks and trees. The human scent the dogs are following comes from the constant natural shedding of human skin.

"Thousands of skin rafts are shed per minute; tiny particles of DNA and the bacteria decomposing it has a unique odor for each individual," McDonald said.

It doesn't matter if a victim has showered or used skin products, McDonald said, because a dog's sense of smell is vastly more sophisticated than a human's.

"A dog has ten times the ability to smell as a human," McDonald said. "When a person smells pizza, he smells all of the ingredients together while a dog can smell the different ingredients separately — the cheese, the sauce, the crust and the toppings."

Human scent can be easily detected for about six hours, McDonald said, depending on temperature and humidity, but it drops off altogether after about 20 hours. When a search is for a dead body, a trained cadaver dog knows the scent of dead tissue as opposed to a live person.

"As soon as tissue dies, the scent changes," McDonald said. "Cadaver dogs are taught to discriminate and can find a human bone in a pile of elk bones."

Dogs cross-trained to find

*"A dog has ten times the ability to smell as a human."*

— Glen McDonald, search and rescue veteran

both live and dead people will follow live smell first, but the reaction between finding a cadaver and finding a live victim is different.

"When Gracie finds a live person she comes to me, spins, barks and she will point, but when she finds a cadaver she sits and barks — she's much calmer," Howard said.

Cadaver dogs are trained to act sedately when they find a body so as not to disturb the investigation scene.

"Because of the scene's forensic value, we don't want them dancing around," McDonald said.

The true teamwork of dog and handler demands that the human learn from the dog as much as the other way around because each dog communicates differently. McDonald said his now-retired search dog, Sky, would put a front foot on his hip when he found a live scent and would lie down when he found the scent of a cadaver.

McDonald's first search dog, Kai, was a Karelian bear dog, and the first search and rescue dog east of Bend. When Kai was only a few years old, he was diagnosed with cancer. The community rallied, including the county's school children, and raised \$7,000 for his vet bills. At 5 years old the dog succumbed to the disease.

Following Kai's loss the search and rescue trainers at High Country Canine in Montana and the breeders at Sapphire Shepherds let McDonald take his pick of two litters. McDonald named his new pup Sky and started training him at seven weeks. He said it takes about two years to get a dog trained sufficiently and is a major commitment for both the handler and his or her family.

"The amount of support and development is substantial," McDonald said. "We work dogs two times a week as a team and at home."

Howard said during the four-day training her whole family came out to "hide" for the team, even her son who came home from serving in the Marines the night before was out in the field.

"He was raised with this," Howard said.

McDonald said Walla Walla County Search and Rescue, funded in part by the county's lodging tax, receives incredible support from the community and the sheriff's office. The dog team members are Holly Akenson and Kia, Elina Rice and Birch, Max Linn and Sioux. Members Glen McDonald, Kelly McDonald and June Jones don't currently have dogs, but support the team.

Raising and training a dog can be up to a 12-year commitment, but McDonald said, it's worth it.

"They enrich our lives," McDonald said. "There's something especially poignant about working with a dog that adds to the bond."

## GREEN

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A four-wheel drive pickup or SUV with low-range can navigate the road — and probably with no damage save some paint scratches from the alder trees that in places intrude on the ruts — but an ATV or a motorcycle is a better choice. Both are more maneuverable and generally more adept at absorbing the worst of the impacts.

And there are a lot of impacts no matter how judiciously you drive.

The kidney-bruising jolts won't seem so painful, though, once you've crested the last hill on the trail and taken in the emerald glory of Red Mountain Lake.

If it is not the prettiest lake in the Elkhorns — and I would not argue against it — it surely is the greenest.

The lake's bottom of white granitic sand helps to give the water a bright green shade that's quite different from the typical cobalt blue of alpine lakes.

It is obvious why the lake was formerly known as Green Lake, a name that some people — me included — still prefer.

I don't know the origin of the "red" affixed to the mountain that towers above the lake. I've dimmed to its summit a few times and didn't see anything conspicuously red along the way except some Indian paintbrush blossoms.

Most of the mountain is made of granitic rocks, which generally are white or gray.

Color confusions aside, the peak makes a fine and dramatic backdrop for the 5-acre lake, which is at an elevation of 7,123 feet.

At 8,928 feet, Red Mountain is the third-highest point in the Elkhorns, trailing only its brown sedimentary neighbors several miles to the south — Rock Creek Butte (9,106 feet) and Elkhorn Peak (8,931).

The trail, which starts at an unmarked trailhead on the north bank of the North Powder River, no longer has an official bridge — or, indeed, even a trailhead sign.

But there is an obvious path leading upstream for about 100 feet to a pair of logs that make for a relatively reassuring, or at least stable, bridge.

Beyond the river the trail makes a nearly unrelenting climb, gaining about 1,100 feet in 1.3 miles.

There are several switchbacks, but these are not the nearly flat features that make many trails in the Eagle Cap Wilderness so accommodating to horses and hikers.

Switchbacks on the Red Mountain trail — and on many other trails in the Elkhorns — don't moderate the climb much but they at least offer a bit of variety as you plod upward.

The trail crosses one rockslide and skirts a second before crossing the stream that flows out of Red Mountain Lake. The stream crossing is about one-eighth of a mile from the lake.

## IF YOU GO....

From Haines, drive west on the Anthony Lakes Highway for 4 miles. Where the highway makes the second sharp right corner, continue straight on Muddy Creek Lane.

Follow Muddy Creek Lane, which heads straight at the Elkhorns, for about 2.7 miles to an intersection with Foothill Road. Turn right (north) and drive for almost 1 mile to Bulger Flat Road, which climbs steeply. Turn right.

The Bulger Flat Road is well-maintained gravel for about 2.6 miles but it gets rough beyond a bridge over the North Powder River. From the bridge it's about 6½ miles to the unmarked Red Mountain trailhead on the left.

The road, which becomes Forest Service Road 7301, passes through private property, so be sure to stay on the main road and heed any signs that denote the correct route for public access.

A 6.4-mile reach of the North Powder River was designated as a scenic river under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1988.

A rough path circles the lake. There are a few campsites on the east side, where a couple of frigid, spring-fed streams trickle into the lake. A rockslide covers most of the lake's western shore.

Red Mountain Lake is open for trout fishing year-round, and there is a healthy population of eastern brook trout. The daily limit is five trout, with a minimum length of 8 inches.

If you'd like to try for Red Mountain's summit, the easiest route is by the west ridge. Where the trail reaches the lake, cross the outlet stream and hike west past the lake, then climb to the ridge crest and follow it to the top. It's an arduous climb — the elevation gain is 1,700 feet — but not a technically difficult one.

The other main destination in the North Powder River canyon is Summit Lake.

Its trailhead is about 2 miles upriver from the Red Mountain trail — and the road is no better.

The Summit Lake trail is a bit longer than a mile, with an elevation gain about the same as with Red Mountain Lake, but with even steeper sections.

Summit Lake has similarly spectacular scenery, although it's considerably bigger, at about 17 acres.

Red Mountain Lake is an out-and-back hike, but the trail to Summit Lake continues for two miles beyond the lake to a junction with the Elkhorn Crest Trail. If you have a friend (a really good friend) you might be able to arrange a shuttle, sparing you (but not your immensely generous acquaintance) the return drive.

## Pendleton residents report strange objects in the sky

PENDLETON (AP) — Many Pendleton residents are questioning what it was they saw last week in the skies over the town.

Residents spotted a small white object July 11 floating above the south area of Pendleton for the better part of an hour, the East Oregonian reported.

Some thought the object was a kite or plastic shopping bag.

Construction worker Virgil Bates Jr. used his smartphone to zoom in and take photos and video of the object.

"Check it out," he recalled

saying. "It's not moving. It's staying in one spot."

Bates said the object did not behave the way a bag would in the wind. He said it was large enough to view from miles away and the underside was in shadow.

Pendleton's Eastern Oregon Regional Airport is home to the Pendleton unmanned aerial systems (UAS) range. Darryl Abling, the range manager, reported Project Vahana tested one of its craft at 8:30 a.m. for a five-minute hover about 25 feet off the taxiway. Otherwise, he said, nothing else flew on the range.

The situation grew stranger when a second similar object came into view and drifted down beside the first, Bates said. Then one object zipped off in a straight line over McKay Creek drainage east of Pendleton.

"It just kept going until we couldn't see it anymore," he said, and the other object seemed to disappear.

The objects remain a mystery.

## Are You Fraud Aware?

Old West Federal Credit Union and AARP are teaming up to bring you our 1st Annual Fraud Aware Fair!

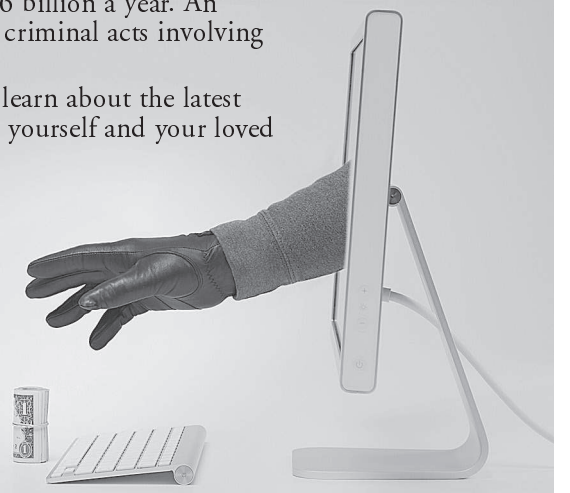
**Where:**  
The National Guard Armory  
404 S. 12th Street  
La Grande, Oregon

**When:**  
Thursday, July 26th, 2018  
10:30 a.m. to Noon  
\* Snacks will be provided \*

Financial fraud is growing at an alarming rate, and fraud targeting older Americans is estimated to be over \$36 billion a year. An estimated 1 in 18 seniors fall prey to criminal acts involving financial fraud.

Come to our **Fraud Aware Fair** and learn about the latest trends and how you can help protect yourself and your loved ones from financial harm.

**OLD WEST**  
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION  
**AARP**



## Spring Cleaning 101

What you should know about the disposal of household hazardous waste.

### What is household hazardous waste?

HHW is anything labeled toxic, flammable, corrosive, reactive or explosive. These materials can threaten family health and the safety of pets and wildlife.

### What are some examples of hazardous waste?

Aerosols: Bleach, Drain Cleaners, Metal Polish, Mothballs, Oven Cleaners, Toilet Bowl Cleaners, Ammonia-based Cleaners, Mercury Thermometers, Wood Polishes, Waxes, Fertilizers, Insecticides, Herbicides, Rodenticides, Spa and Pool Chemicals, Roofing Compounds, Antifreeze, Batteries, Motor Oil, Paint Strippers and Thinners, Gasoline and more.

### Where can I safely dispose of my hazardous waste?

**La Grande Facility:** Open to any resident of the three counties every other Tuesday, 8am-12 noon. By appointment, however, small labeled quantities accepted daily. (541) 963-5459.

**Baker City Facility:** Open the first Wednesday of each month, 10am-12 noon. By appointment only. (541) 523-2626.

**Enterprise Facility:** Open the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month 10am-12 noon. By appointment only. (541) 426-3332.

Americans generate 1.6 million tons of HHW per year!

The average home can accumulate as much as 100 pounds of hazardous waste.

## RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY-PUBLIC BIDS ACCEPTED



Community Connection  
of Northeast Oregon, Inc.

The public is invited to bid on residential property owned by Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc. in Granite, Oregon. The property will be open for inspection on Friday July 27, 2018. 10am-3pm. Minimum bid is \$28,375; deadline for bids is 2pm August 10, 2018 in La Grande Oregon

Contact Rochelle Hamilton  
at 541-963-3186 for a bid packet.