

DAILY PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Monday, Sept. 17, the 260th day of 2018. There are 105 days left in the year.



TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On Sept. 17, 1787, the Constitution of the United States was completed and signed by a majority of delegates attending the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia.

ON THIS DATE

In 1862, more than 3,600 men were killed in the Civil War Battle of Antietam (an-TEE'-tum) in Maryland.

In 1920, the American Professional Football Association -- a precursor of the National Football League -- was formed in Canton, Ohio.

In 1939, the Soviet Union invaded Poland during World War II, more than two weeks after Nazi Germany had launched its assault.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$7.1 million
6-11-18-20-30-31

Mega Millions: \$252 million
23-30-40-43-66-13-x4

Powerball: \$163 million
2-18-19-24-34-PB 3 x3

Win for Life: Sept. 15
6-15-16-66

Pick 4:

- Sept. 16
- 1 p.m.: 3-4-0-3
- 4 p.m.: 3-1-6-0
- 7 p.m.: 2-2-5-8
- 10 p.m.: 5-6-6-9
- Sept. 15
- 1 p.m.: 6-1-9-9
- 4 p.m.: 3-8-1-8
- 7 p.m.: 1-3-5-4
- 10 p.m.: 5-3-1-7

ROAD REPORT

- Numbers to call:
- Inside Oregon: 800-977-6368.
- Outside Oregon: 503-588-2941.

NEWSPAPER LATE?

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The great tragedy of life is not that men perish, but that they cease to love."

— W. Somerset Maugham, English author and dramatist (1874-1965).

Attack prompts questions on whether to kill more cougars

By Zach Urness
Statesman Journal

SALEM — In the wake of Oregon's first fatal attack by a cougar — and the second deadly attack in the Northwest this year — the question of how best to manage the state's big cat population has reached the forefront.

Even before a cougar attacked and killed 55-year-old hiker Diana Bober in Mount Hood National Forest last week, mountain lions were already in the public eye.

Their increasing numbers — an estimated 6,600 statewide — have pushed the predators closer to Oregon's population centers, officials said. That's led to a series of high-profile incidents in The Dalles, Ashland, Silverton and Dallas.

Complaints about cougars have tripled in the Willamette Valley since 2011. And the number of cougars killed due to human or livestock conflicts reached 169 animals in 2016, according to state records.

Hunters say they've seen the problem coming for years, ever since a ballot initiative in 1994 outlawed the use of hounds to hunt cougars.

They say it eliminated the most effective tool for managing cougar numbers and allowed the population to skyrocket.

"This is a statistical problem now," said Jim Akenson, a longtime cougar biologist now working for the Oregon Hunters Association. "The more cougars you have on the landscape, the greater the chance of a negative encounter. If their numbers continue to grow, you do worry about this happening again."

Akenson said reinstating hound hunting would not only bring cougar numbers down to healthier levels — around 3,500 animals statewide, he said — it would also re-establish a greater fear of humans in animals increasingly brazen about showing up in populated areas.

Akenson said he'd take a county-by-county approach, looking to cap cougar numbers based on local conditions.

Environmental groups strongly disagree. They point out how rare fatal attacks by cougars are and say hunting causes more problems than it fixes.

"This is an absolute tragedy — a person has died — but we have to remember this is very, very rare," said Dr. John W. Laundré, a professor at Western Oregon University and board member of the environmental group Predator Defense.

This is Oregon's first confirmed fatal attack over a long history, he noted.

Three people have been

killed in California and Colorado in cougar attacks, while two have died in Washington, including earlier this year, when a cougar attacked two mountain bikers near North Bend, killing one of them.

"If you look at it objectively, how few incidents occur really speaks to how well cougars live with us," Laundré said. "Deer kill far more people than cougars by being on the highway and getting hit by a car. Should we wipe out every deer seen near a road?"

In terms of management, hunting is actually among the worst ways to control a population, Laundré said.

Oregon sport hunters killed an average of 261 cougars each year during the past decade, according to state numbers, even as cougar numbers kept increasing.

"There's no evidence that hunting reduces cougar numbers," Laundré said.

Even worse, he said, "using sport hunting as a way of controlling them kills animals that aren't causing any problems, it disrupts the social order, so you have these young male cats that don't get the training they need."

Laundré suggested California's model, which removes mountain lions that cause problems but hasn't allowed sport hunting since 1990. California's population is estimated at between 4,000

and 6,000 animals.

Hunters say they could control the population, but need hounds to achieve that goal.

"The harvest of (cougars) would be doubled if hounds were allowed," Akenson said. "Plus, they impart a man-fear response from cougars that tends to keep cats more wary."

Cougars were once abundant in Oregon, but similar to other predators, such as wolves, that started to change with the arrival of settlers in the 1800s.

Before Oregon was even an official state, bounties were placed on cougars. The bounty was \$10 per animal in 1911 and \$25 by 1925.

"The most effective and devastating method was poison," Derek Broman, carnivore coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, told the Statesman Journal earlier this year.

The number of animals dropped sharply to an estimated 200 by the 1960s.

But, unlike wolves, cougars never went extinct in Oregon. A few pockets remained, mostly in the southwest and northeast.

"My belief is that, unlike wolves — which are pack animals and easier to find — cougars are solitary and prefer really difficult terrain for humans," Broman said. "They likely persisted because there were pockets

of them where humans just couldn't reach."

In 1967 cougars were declared a "game animal" and subject to regulation by state officials. Bag limits were established for hunting cougars, which allowed their numbers to rebound to around 2,000 animals by 1987, according to ODFW.

Once the number of cougars rebounded, their numbers continued to grow and expand into just about any place with a food source — mainly, deer and elk.

The number of cougars increased at a consistent clip, growing steadily to today's estimated total of 6,600.

A big question has been whether the state should establish a hard cap on cougar numbers.

Broman told the Statesman Journal earlier this year that they project Oregon being able to support around 7,600 cougars statewide, although that wasn't a number they necessarily believe they'll reach.

"The arrival of wolves has brought a lot of uncertainty, so trying to pick a hard number right now would be tricky and might end up bring inaccurate in the future," Broman said.

For the moment, state officials haven't commented on whether the current situation will mean any change in cougar management policy going forward.

ALERT

Continued from Page 1A
up for the service by submitting their email address and cellphone number. The second is reverse 911. This is specifically for a landline and mostly will be for businesses, which are more likely still utilizing landlines.

Third is the Integrated Public Alert Warning System. Brock explained there is a training requirement and certification process that goes along with IPAWS when the county initially purchased the system.

"We get access to an area, in the shape of a polygon, to

send a message to anyone in that area using any of the cellphone towers within range," he said. "If you're not from here, but you're on the interstate, you'll be able to receive this message."

The IPAWS is what will be used on Thursday for the test.

"This is the first time a wireless alert has been tested in Oregon, and we don't want anyone to be caught off guard," said Oregon Office of Emergency Management Director Andrew Phelps in the release. "No matter where someone is — at work, in their car, at school, at the doctor's office, anywhere — they should

hear and see the alert on their phone."

On Thursday, everyone who has a cellphone or is watching TV or listening to the radio will receive the alert.

Those locally who do not have cellphones or otherwise want to ensure they receive all of the messages utilized with the emergency system can go to the county's website and, under the Emergency Services page, click on the blue rectangle that says "Sign up for emergency notifications" and enter your email address and phone number.

"This is a very important

test that will help improve our ability to get critical information to the public, both over traditional broadcast

venues such as radio and TV, as well as over mobile phones," Phelps said in the release.

EMBEZZLEMENT

Continued from Page 1A
Club Visa account, the government alleges.

She's also accused of applying for multiple loans on behalf of the doctor and medical practice without their knowledge, falsifying the practice's business records and presenting her boss with falsified bank and property tax statements. The indictment didn't name the medical practice.

Jacobs, according to the government, convinced her boss to give her a limited power of attorney, which she used to divert all the doctor's IRS communica-

tions to her address and phone number.

Meanwhile, she assured IRS agents that she was working to correct the physician's tax filings and then posed as an IRS taxpayer advocate with a fake name, purporting to assist her boss with his tax collection issues, the indictment says.

She used the fake name "Linda Gibson," set up a phone number and voicemail account for her made-up IRS official and gave her boss a fake IRS tax case number, according to the government.

Assistant U.S. Attorney

Donna Maddux told the court she had concerns Jacobs was engaged in potential health care fraud since 2015 and had under-reported her assets to pretrial service officers. The prosecutor signaled she may ask that additional conditions be placed on Jacobs while she's out of custody pending trial.

Investigators suspect there may be other alleged victims in this case and ask anyone with information to contact the IRS criminal investigative unit in La Grande, at 541-706-5712.

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