

DAILY PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Wednesday, December 19, the 351st day of 2018. There are 14 days left in the year.



TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On Dec. 19, 1998, President Bill Clinton was impeached by the Republican-controlled House for perjury and obstruction of justice (he was subsequently acquitted by the Senate).

ON THIS DATE

In 1777, during the American Revolutionary War, Gen. George Washington led his army of about 11,000 men to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, to camp for the winter.

In 1813, British forces captured Fort Niagara during the War of 1812.

In 1907, 239 workers died in a coal mine explosion in Jacobs Creek, Pennsylvania.

In 1946, war broke out in Indochina as troops under Ho Chi Minh launched widespread attacks against the French.

In 1950, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was named commander of the military forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

In 1957, Meredith Willson's musical play "The Music Man" opened on Broadway.

In 1972, Apollo 17 splashed down in the Pacific, winding up the Apollo program of manned lunar landings.

In 1974, Nelson A. Rockefeller was sworn in as the 41st vice president of the United States in the U.S. Senate chamber by Chief Justice Warren Burger with President Gerald R. Ford looking on.

In 1986, the Soviet Union announced it had freed dissident Andrei Sakharov from internal exile, and pardoned his wife, Yelena Bonner. Lawrence E. Walsh was appointed independent counsel to investigate the Iran-Contra affair.

In 2001, the fires that had burned beneath the ruins of the World Trade Center in New York City for the previous three months were declared extinguished except for a few scattered hot spots.

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$5.7 million
20-28-32-33-45-46

Mega Millions: \$305 million
13-22-32-60-69-9 x3

Powerball: \$262 million
8-38-43-52-55-PB 17-x3

Win for Life: Dec. 17
27-50-70-76

Pick 4:

Dec. 18

• 1 p.m.: 5-1-1-7

• 4 p.m.: 2-3-0-5

• 7 p.m.: 5-1-4-2

• 10 p.m.: 7-7-0-6

Pick 4:

Dec. 17

• 1 p.m.: 9-0-8-7

• 4 p.m.: 8-8-9-9

• 7 p.m.: 9-7-2-2

• 10 p.m.: 8-0-8-5

ROAD REPORT

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Worse than not realizing the dreams of your youth, would be to have been young and never dreamed at all."

— Jean Genet (1910-1986),
French writer and political activist

Workshop gives ranchers hope in wolf debate

By Jayson Jacoby
WesCom News Service

Sheila DelCurto's despair, after a spring when she wondered whether her family's Baker County ranch could survive the arrival of wolves, has been replaced by optimism about the future.

For Sheila and her husband, Barry, who run cattle in the Pine Valley near Halfway, late summer and fall constituted a sort of crash course into the biology of wolves.

The couple, who lost a valuable calf to a wolf attack this spring, traveled to Montana and to Pendleton to attend workshops about ranching in wolf country. They came home with knowledge, to be sure.

But Sheila DelCurto said that wasn't the most important thing they gleaned from their travels.

"It's given us hope," she said. "That's the biggest thing. We look at wolves now as another challenge we have to work around."

DelCurto is so enthusiastic about what she learned that she's spent much of this fall raising money to make possible a two-day workshop in Halfway on Jan. 10-11, 2019.

Hilary and Andrew Anderson, third-generation ranchers from Montana who deal not only with wolves but also with grizzly bears and other predators, will talk about the ranching techniques that so impressed DelCurto during the four-day workshop she and her husband attended in Montana in September.

"These are people who are living the situation, day in and day out," DelCurto said. "They grew up with wolves — we didn't. They found a way to survive, and to improve profitability. That's the bottom line."

DelCurto said that although she and her husband learned a variety of tactics to reduce the risk of losing cattle to wolves, the core lesson seemed at first counter-intuitive to her.

"Before, we just focused on the wolves," she said. "But the idea is that you focus on your cattle, not on the wolves."

Specifically, DelCurto said the Andersons urge ranchers to train their cattle to move in larger herds rather than to scatter.

Wolves are less likely to attack a group of cattle than, say, a lone calf that has wandered away from the herd, DelCurto said.

Keeping cattle in bigger groups has other benefits, she said.

Large herds are easier for ranchers or their hired range riders to track, for one thing. That's especially valuable for the DelCurtos, who run the ranch by themselves and rarely employ range riders.

When ranchers see more of their cattle on a regular basis they're more likely to find animals that are sick or injured early enough to attend to them, and potentially prevent a minor problem from becoming fatal, she said.

The herding technique can also improve the quality and amount of forage, DelCurto said.

Most important, she is confident that the Andersons' techniques are ones



ODFW photo

A wolf from the Snake River Pack passed a remote camera in eastern Wallowa County in 2014. Wallowa County ranchers are learning to live alongside the predators.

that most ranchers can employ — the DelCurtos among them.

Although DelCurto is excited about the prospects, she's also realistic.

"These are things we can do, but it's not an overnight change," she said. "It's going to take years to train the cattle to stay in a group. You have to be persistent."

Frustrating spring

But compared with the situation several months ago, DelCurto said the notion that she and her husband need to be patient hardly seems an obstacle.

After wolves from the Pine Creek Pack killed four calves and injured seven others during April, DelCurto said "we didn't know what to do."

The DelCurtos owned one of the injured calves. It died in June after the couple had spent about \$850 in veterinary bills to treat the animal's wolf bite wounds.

DelCurto said she had a phone conversation with Suzanne Stone, an official with Defenders of Wildlife, an organization that advocates for preserving wolf populations, about a workshop designed to help ranchers co-exist with wolves.

Nothing came of the conversation, at least initially.

But then in September Stone offered the DelCurtos a trip to a four-day conference in Montana, all expenses paid.

DelCurto said she and her husband had scheduled a trip to the Oregon Coast with their grandchildren, but they decided to cancel it and go to Montana instead. "This was important," she said.

The DelCurtos spent four days in the Tom Minor Basin near Yellowstone National Park. They learned how the Andersons have made their ranch more profitable despite dealing with a range of predators that includes wolves and grizzly bears.

DelCurto said the lessons from the Andersons — and in particular Hilary, who is also a wildlife biologist who has worked in Yellowstone — were a revelation.

"She gave you a whole different perspective of looking at things," DelCurto said.

In particular, she said, the Andersons emphasized that ranchers should consider wolves as just one of the many threats they have to deal with, rather than concentrating solely on the

predators.

The bottom line, DelCurto said, is that a calf that dies from a disease has the same effect on the ranchers' profitability as a calf that's killed by a wolf.

The goal, in either case, is to address the threat, and in the case of wolves the idea is to manage cattle in ways — the herding concept is a key example — that make them less vulnerable to wolves, DelCurto said.

"We know the wolves are there, and they're not going away," she said.

Some of the other recommendations from the workshop are ones that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has given to ranchers since wolves returned to Oregon in 1999.

Burying cattle carcasses rather than leaving them on the ground is an example, DelCurto said.

Protecting winter cattle pastures by installing fladry — a type of temporary fencing designed to keep wolves at bay — is another.

The Andersons also recommend ranchers avoid using loud voice commands when working their cattle, DelCurto said.

The goal, she said, is to keep the cattle calm, which makes it more likely that they'll stay in larger herds. Loud voices can also attract wolves and other predators, she said.

DelCurto said that although she's apprehensive about what might happen next spring when she and her husband move their cattle to spring pastures in the Low Hills country south-east of Pine Valley — where most of the wolf attacks happened earlier this year — she's also excited about trying the techniques she learned about.

"We had been worrying all summer because we had no clear idea how to change things," DelCurto said. "Now we do. There's no guarantee this will work, but in my opinion it's worth a try. I do know it has worked for other people."

Pine Creek wolf pack — plus 1

The situation in the Pine Valley area this coming spring is likely to be similar to 2018, said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at ODFW's Baker City office.

Ratliff said the Pine Creek Pack's breeding female gave birth to seven pups

continue to confine their migration to those zones, ranchers should be able to avoid putting their cattle directly in the wolves' path.

In the meantime, ODFW will alert ranchers to the wolves' movements occasionally. Two of the Pine Creek wolves are fitted with tracking collars, including the pack's breeding male. Those collars are equipped with both a GPS transmitter, which broadcasts the animal's location twice a day to ODFW, as well as a radio transmitter.

Baker County has given several ranchers radio receivers that can alert them if the collared wolf is close, Ratliff said.

ODFW also collared a third wolf, a male pup born this spring. Ratliff said the pup is not a member of the Pine Creek pack. Biologists know this is the case because the pup has black fur, and none of the wolves in the Pine Creek pack has black fur so the pup couldn't have been birthed by the Pine Creek pack's breeding female.

The breeding female is wearing a collar but it no longer works.

Ratliff said he hopes to capture the pack's breeding female this winter and attach a new collar that has a radio transmitter but not a GPS device.

The radio-only collars don't give ODFW daily location updates, but they last much longer — usually at least six years — and have proven to be less prone to malfunctioning than the combination GPS-radio collars, he said.

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