

GUEST EDITORIAL

Trump's border wall will add a layer of security

A few years ago I visited South Africa where the average house was surrounded by a concrete wall. South Africa has many villages and rural communities of impoverished people where the main goal each day is to find a clean drink of water. However, people throughout many of the towns and cities lived behind walls.



GLENN MOLLETTE
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

Brazil is another country I've visited a couple of times where steel bars in windows and walls around houses are prevalent. Thieves and robbers are common in Brazil and South Africa, and it is understandable why they want walls around their houses to protect their valuables and families.

Gated communities, security fences and security guards have been on the rise in America. We have security in our banks, schools, neighborhoods and churches. Any reasonably thinking business, factory, government building, apartment complex and family must have security and a defense in place. We used to go to bed at night when I was a kid and never thought about locking the door, but I remember my mother making a change one night. She said, "We're going to start locking our door." There were reports of prowlers in the community where we lived and she wanted to protect us.

Today we have prowlers roaming the communities of America. There are estimates of anywhere from 11 to 27 million illegal immigrants. The Department of Homeland Security has estimated approximately 12 million illegal immigrants are in our country. The Pew Research Center has estimated just over 11 million illegal immigrants are in America. Three Yale School of Management Professors published a paper in 2018 estimating the illegal population is somewhere between 16 and 29 million people. These are people who have said, "To heck with American laws and rules. We are coming to do whatever we please in America." These people are robbers and thieves. They have no regard for what is expected in America. Their goal is to get into our country first and then gain the sympathy of America to allow them to stay here. We know many good hard workers come from Mexico. The "good" hard workers come legally.

Most Americans are sympathetic people. We give large amounts of money to charities, churches, food pantries and pay large amounts of money back into our federal government which in turn utilizes our money to help millions of Americans, refugees and immigrants. Research how much money is paid out to refugees. The Cash and Medical Assistance Program reimburses states for 100 percent of services provided to refugees and other eligible programs, as well as associated Administrative costs. Some refugees and other noncitizens can get SSI, Supplemental Security Income for up to seven years. The cost is billions of dollars. I'm not opposed to helping true refugees, but the overall financial load is not light — \$8.8 billion over the next five years or \$80,000 per refugee.

The President has asked for \$5 billion to build a wall on our Southern border. He is trying to protect us. It's not a silver bullet that will solve all of our problems, but it's adding a layer of security.

If we don't build a wall along the Southern border we will soon become like many other third world countries with walls around our houses and subdivisions. Trump's five-billion-dollar wall will look like a pocket full of change in comparison to a nation of gates and walls trying to protect ourselves from millions and millions of illegal prowlers.

TSA : BUSINESS AS USUAL DURING SHUTDOWN...



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Where are the protections for ranchers?

It seems a weekly routine, reading about new depredations on livestock in the Capital Press (a weekly agricultural newspaper covering the Pacific Northwest), hearing neighbors talk about sightings over breakfast at the local café, and finding ourselves in heated conversations about the "wolf problem." Ranchers are restless without answers on this habitual issue, a terror in many rural communities. When I share an article about wolf attacks on the Oregon Cattlemen's Association's Facebook page, the question, "What is the Oregon Cattlemen's Association doing to fix this problem?" becomes ever more prevalent.

The Oregon Wolf Plan revision was due in 2015, but stakeholders, including OCA, ODFW, Defenders of Wildlife, Oregon Wild, OFB, Oregon Hunter's Association and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, have failed to find middle ground on this plan and here we are, 2019, with no answers for the hard-working citizens of this state.

The Cattlemen's Association continues to put ranchers first and refuses to ignore these shattering attacks on cattle producers by compromising on a plan that brushes concerns under the table. Roger Huffman, OCA's Wolf Task Force Committee Chair from Union, calls the current situation "chronic depredation" because multiple attacks are occurring with no response or resolution from ODFW and so the problem continues to amplify.

Many of you may have read the Capital Press article about Ted Birdseye in Jackson County, who awoke on New Year's Day to find an injured, five-month-old calf with 2 feet of intestines hanging out of its backside. This has become "just another day at the office" for Birdseye as he has suffered at least five calf kills and one guard dog kill in 2018. If Birdseye's situation is not "chronic depredation," then what is?

Birdseye is not permitted to take lethal action against the wolves who are scarfing down his property for supper. The wolves are still federally protected under the Endangered Species Act

along highways 395, 78 and 95. This is the story for ranchers across the state, some of whom may face \$20,000 or more in losses from wolves in a given year. So, the question returns to stakeholders, "What are you doing to protect the ranchers of Oregon?"

The governor's office has failed to answer that question, and the monthly stakeholder meetings have only been a means to delay the response further. A stakeholder meeting was planned in Portland for Jan. 8, a draft of the revamped Wolf Plan from ODFW was sent out before Christmas, and there was much to discuss in the new year. However, in true fashion, the day before the stakeholder meeting, an article on OregonLive detailed that The Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, Oregon Wild and Cascadia Wildlands would be pulling out of the stakeholder process due to the lack of their recommendations being accepted.

Mark Bennett, a stakeholder representative for the Oregon Farm Bureau and Baker County Commissioner, says there is a 33 percent average growth rate per year in the wolf population, but even with this growth, the management strategies remain stagnant. The Oregon Cattlemen's Association and other like-minded groups such as Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Hunter's and Rocky Mountain Elk refuse to ignore the need for a new system to handle the rapidly growing wolf populations.

Todd Nash, OCA treasurer, has been a vocal representative for OCA throughout this stakeholder process, and he says there are three points cattlemen will not compromise on in this negotiation: 1) all wolves should be collared or tracked; 2) clear management zones should be created; 3) local biologists should have control of lethal take circumstances. Likewise, OCA is pushing for all non-lethal measurements to be paid for by the government because farmers and ranchers should not be responsible for those exorbitant costs on top of their suffered losses.

Where is the accountability for farm-

My Voice ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ers and ranchers? Where is the governmental protection for state citizens? It has been made clear, through the years, those rights and protections are not valued when it comes to wolves.

With environmental groups refusing to come to the table, it's unclear how ODFW will proceed with stakeholder recommendations. On Jan. 8, the stakeholder meeting went on as planned and the groups that participated gave their final opinions on ODFW's proposal, which may be adopted in March.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association is now focusing on bringing this conversation to Washington, D.C., with the help of members from across the state. If you have suffered property loss or distress as a result of wolves, write a letter to the Oregon Cattlemen's Association or email me at robyn.smith@orcattle.com. Personal statements are encouraged because those who have power over the fate of the Wolf Plan need to hear directly from the people with the most at stake.

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THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

(USPS 299-260)

The Observer reserves the right to adjust subscription rates by giving prepaid and mail subscribers 30 days notice. Periodicals postage paid at La Grande, Oregon 97850. Published Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (except Dec. 25) by Western Communications Inc., 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

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POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:

The Observer, 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850

Periodicals postage paid at La Grande, Oregon 97850

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