

DAILY PLANNER

TODAY

Today is Wednesday, March 20, the 79th day of 2019. There are 286 days left in the year. Spring arrives at 2:58 p.m. Pacific time.



TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On March 20, 1995, in Tokyo, 12 people were killed, more than 5,500 others sickened when packages containing the deadly chemical sarin were leaked on five separate subway trains by Aum Shinrikyo cult members.

ON THIS DATE

In 1413, England's King Henry IV died; he was succeeded by Henry V.

In 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte returned to Paris after escaping his exile on Elba, beginning his "Hundred Days" rule.

In 1854, the Republican Party of the United States was founded by slavery opponents at a schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin.

In 1942, U.S. Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur, having evacuated the Philippines at the order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, told reporters in Terowie, Australia: "I came out of Bataan, and I shall return."

In 1952, the U.S. Senate ratified, 66-10, a Security Treaty with Japan.

In 1969, John Lennon married Yoko Ono in Gibraltar.

In 1976, kidnapped newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst was convicted of armed robbery for her part in a San Francisco bank holdup carried out by the Symbionese Liberation Army. (Hearst was sentenced to seven years in prison; she was released after serving 22 months, and was pardoned in 2001 by President Bill Clinton.)

LOTTERY

Megabucks: \$9.6 million
1-8-19-33-36-41

Mega Millions: \$50 million
10-42-53-67-68-15-x3

Powerball: \$550 million
30-34-39-53-67-PB 11-x2

Win for Life: March 18
4-6-60-66

Pick 4:

March 19
• 1 p.m.: 7-8-7-8
• 4 p.m.: 1-6-8-9
• 7 p.m.: 2-2-7-2
• 10 p.m.: 9-8-7-3

Pick 4:

March 18
• 1 p.m.: 9-9-5-2
• 4 p.m.: 9-0-2-1
• 7 p.m.: 6-5-1-1
• 10 p.m.: 3-5-4-5

ROAD REPORT

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

NEWSPAPER LATE?

Every effort is made to deliver your Observer in a timely manner. Occasionally conditions exist that make delivery more difficult.

If you are not on a motor route, delivery should be before 5:30 p.m. If you do not receive your paper please call 541-963-3161.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Every spring is the only spring, a perpetual astonishment."
— Ellis Peters (Edith Pargeter),
British author (1913-1995)

OTEC helping with Pioneer Park project



Stu Spence photo

Progress is being made at Sam Marcum Field at Pioneer Park. Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative drilled holes for the new backstop Tuesday morning. The backstop is part of several improvements to the softball field, where the dugouts and concession stands have also been upgraded.

Baker man charged with child sex abuse

WesCom News Service staff

A Baker City man was arraigned Monday in Circuit Court on three charges of sexually abusing a child.

Baker City Police arrested Thomas Nathaniel Baker, 43, at 5:59 p.m. Friday at the police department. He was charged in a grand jury indictment with one count of first-degree sexual abuse, a Class B felony, and two counts of third-degree sexual abuse, Class A misdemeanors, District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said.

Baker was jailed and then released Saturday morning after posting \$13,000 (10 percent of

the total \$130,000 bail), a corrections deputy at the jail said Monday.

The crimes involved a girl known to Baker. The two counts of third-degree sexual abuse are alleged to have taken place within the last year in Baker City, Shirtcliff said. The first-degree sexual abuse charge is alleged to have taken place between 2007 and 2009 in Baker City when the girl was younger than 14, Shirtcliff said.

Baker did not enter a plea.

Upon conviction, the first-degree sexual abuse charge carries a mandatory minimum 75-month prison term. ■

Ranchers set to try new tactics in protecting cattle

By Jayson Jacoby
WesCom News Service

Almost a year has passed since wolves killed four calves and injured seven others in eastern Baker County, and several affected ranchers are ready to try new tactics to protect their herds.

Their efforts will be bolstered by having relatively timely information the wolves' movements based on data from tracking collars the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has fitted on several wolves.

That includes wolves from the Pine Creek pack, which was responsible for all the attacks on cattle in April 2018, as well as a pair of wolves, one formerly a member of the Pine Creek pack, that have been traveling together for the past month and could potentially start a second pack as early as this spring.

Barry DelCurto, who owns a ranch near Halfway, lost one calf to wolves from the Pine Creek pack.

Wolves attacked the calf in April, and the calf died in June after DelCurto and his wife, Shella, spent \$850 on veterinarian bills.

Barry DelCurto said when he turns out his cows and calves on a Forest Service grazing allotment east of Halfway, probably around the middle of April, he will strive to keep the herd congregated in larger groups, where in theory they are less vulnerable to wolves.

DelCurto said there is one cross fence in place in the allotment, and he plans to build a second fence to aid in confining his cattle.

He also plans to install temporary electric fencing for the same purpose.

DelCurto said his ultimate goal, in limiting the movement of his cattle, is to keep them out of a corridor that, based on last year's events, seems to be the Pine Creek pack's preferred route from the Low Hills country southeast of Halfway to the higher, forested country north of Highway 86.

He also will employ "range riders" — people on horseback who will try to

keep track of the cattle and discourage wolves from approaching.

"It's all going to be an experiment," DelCurto said. "It's going to take some time to develop it to fit us."

The DelCurtos learned about ways to try to protect their cattle after attending a four-day workshop in Montana in September 2018 put on by a ranching couple who deal not only with wolves, but also with grizzly bears and other predators.

The DelCurtos were so impressed by what they learned from Hilary and Andrew Anderson that they invited the couple to put on a two-day seminar in Halfway in early January.

The DelCurtos aren't the only Baker County ranchers who are preparing for another spring of moving their herds onto spring grazing lands where wolves roam, said George Rollins, who lives near Halfway and is the former co-chairman of the wolf committee for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Rollins said he has talked with many ranchers, including ones who lost calves to the Pine Creek pack last April, and "we expect the wolves to be back in the same area as they were last year."

"That seems to be their pattern," Rollins said.

One difference this spring, he said, is that ranchers won't be taken by surprise.

"People are much more aware, and they'll be watching out," he said.

Some ranchers plan to use fladry, a type of fencing designed to deter wolves.

Rollins said other ranchers he's talked with also plan to revise their grazing schedules to avoid moving cattle into the Low Hills country where several of the wolf attacks happened last spring.

"A lot of guys are altering their approach, delaying when they move cattle into that area or going to other private ground," he said.

"They're trying to be proactive. Doing the same thing over and over and expect-

ing a different outcome is not going to work."

Not every rancher has access to other early season grazing land, however, so there will be cattle in the Low Hills during the same period as last year, he said.

Rollins expects more range riders this spring, as well as a concerted effort among ranchers to increase the human presence around cattle and, if they see wolves, to make noise and otherwise try to haze the animals.

Oregon's wolf management plan doesn't allow ranchers to shoot wolves unless the animals are attacking livestock, but ranchers can fire guns into the air and make noise to try to scare off wolves.

ODFW officials killed three wolves from the Pine Creek pack last April.

The situation this spring could be complicated by changes in the Pine Creek pack.

Most particularly, a 2-year-old female wolf from the pack joined up around Valentine's Day with a young adult male wolf, and they have been traveling together since, said Brian Ratliff, district wildlife biologist at ODFW's Baker City office.

Ratliff said both the male, designated OR-68, and the female, OR-57, are wearing tracking collars.

ODFW officials tranquilized OR-68 in early December between Richland and Halfway and attached the collar, Ratliff said.

Although the two wolves paired up around the time wolves typically breed, Ratliff said biologists won't know until later this spring whether the female will have a litter of pups.

Generally a pregnant female will "den up" — find a den in which to have and raise pups — by around the middle of April, Ratliff said.

Biologists can generally tell when a female has entered a den — presuming other members of the pack or, in this case, the breeding male, has a tracking collar — due to what Ratliff called the "wagon wheel effect."

After the female enters

the den she generally stays close by, forming the hub of the wheel. Meanwhile other wolves, or just the male in the case of a pair, travels away from the den and then returns regularly, bringing food to the female and pups, each out-and-back trip constituting a "spoke" on the wagon wheel.

The movement pattern is distinctive, and strong evidence that a female has birthed pups, Ratliff said. "Typically you can say with pretty good certainty when a female has denned up," he said.

As for the Pine Creek pack, its breeding female, designated OR-36, was tranquilized early this year and fitted with a new tracking collar.

Ratliff said OR-36 had seven pups born in mid April of 2018. At the start of 2019 biologists believed the pack consisted of 12 wolves.

Since then, Ratliff said, OR-57 left the pack and paired up with OR-68.

During a recent airplane flight Ratliff said two other wolves from the pack, probably 2-year-olds, weren't seen. He expects they have also dispersed from the pack, but as neither is collared it's not possible to know where they are.

ODFW has not confirmed any attacks on livestock from the Pine Creek pack or the OR-57/OR-68

pair this winter, Ratliff said.

Biologists did investigate the deaths of two newborn calves during February, and one calf in early March.

Although wolves had scavenged at least two of the calves, there was no evidence to indicate that wolves had killed any of the calves, according to reports from ODFW.

Two of the cases were described as not related to wolves.

Ratliff said the OR-57/OR-68 pair had been in the area where the calf carcass was found in early March, and ODFW provided to a rancher in that area an alarm that will blare if the collar on OR-68 comes loose.

The two wolves later moved out of that area, but Ratliff said the alarm system is available if needed.

He said he also alerts ranchers to the movements of both that pair and the collared wolves from the Pine Creek pack.

"We're constantly in contact," Ratliff said. "They call me, I call them. We try to keep that open line of communication."

Rollins said he appreciates Ratliff's efforts, which will help Baker County ranchers as they try to prevent wolves from attacking their herds.

"Brian has been really good about calling landowners," Rollins said. ■

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