

'No logical explanation' in cattle mutilation case

Grant County rancher discovers bull killed on his ranch

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A mutilated bull mysteriously turned up dead at a ranch in Bear Valley last month with surgically removed body parts.

According to a Feb. 28 entry of the Oregon State Police log, a rancher called a John Day Wildlife Trooper to report a bull had been killed and mutilated on his ranch with its testicles, scrotum, tongue and lips precisely removed.

Mat Carter, a rancher from the Crown Cattle Company, said he reported the mutilation to the state's wildlife trooper after discovering the dead bull roughly a quarter to half a mile from his house.

The cause of death is unknown.

When Carter found the bull, it had likely been dead a few days and was already decomposing. The 24-hour window during which an autopsy could have been performed on the body had passed.

According to Carter, there were no signs of vultures, coyotes or other scavengers around the bull.

"There's no tracks, there's no signs, there's no nothing," Carter said.

He said it is hard to imagine anyone would have come on to his property, killed a bull, drained its blood, and then cleanly cut out specific body parts.



Contributed Photo

This mutilated cow was discovered on a ranch in Deschutes County in 2020. A similar case occurred in Grant County in February 2022.

According to Carter, with no evidence or leads to follow up on for law enforcement, the incident remains a mystery.

And this was not the first cow mutilation on his ranch, Carter said.

Several years ago, Carter said he was almost sure one of his cows had been mutilated. However, he said, there was no way to say with certainty because he did not get to it quickly enough before flies and other scavengers made it impossible to determine what happened.

He said a similar situation occurred in August, which is why he tries to inspect cattle deaths a little more closely when they occur.

Indeed, Carter's situation is not unique. According to FBI records, since the 1970s, thousands of killings and mutilations of cattle have happened across the U.S. Last year Wheeler County had five cases while Harney County had four in four years, with the previous two occurring in May and June.

The cases, the data reports, are similar to Carter's case.

A cow or bull is found dead in a remote area with no signs of how someone might have made it onto a property undetected. There are no footprints, tire tracks or fingerprints. There is very little — if any — spilled blood and no visible puncture wounds, bullets or strangulation marks.

The bizarre nature of the mutilation and lack of evidence makes it all the more baffling and frustrating for Carter.

Meanwhile, theories abound about who is behind the cow mutilations, be it aliens, demons or cults.

However, in the thousands of cases since the 1970s, no one has ever been caught.

For his part, Carter said he does not try to speculate on it, nor does he believe in UFOs or any other kind of strange phenomenon.

"It's really odd, Carter said. "There's no logical explanation."

Tippet learning the ropes as 4-H leader

By ANN BLOOM
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Sara Tippet has been immersed in 4-H since she was in the fourth grade. Now, she has come full circle as the new president of the Wallowa County 4-H Leaders' Association.

She was in 4-H for eight years participating in the Golden Arrow Livestock Club, and is now a co-leader for that club, along with Nancy Maasdam, her former leader. As a 4-H member, she was also in the Wallowa County Wranglers Horse Club and participated in 4-H cooking and sewing. She was also on the 4-H court. It goes without saying that she brings a lot of 4-H knowledge and experience to her new position as president.

Tippet admits she is still learning the ropes of the job. "I'm still learning a lot," she said, "and how it all works."

But she has help. "(We) have a solid program in Wallowa County and I'm interested in seeing what I can do with that," she said.

Tippet specifically mentioned the knowledgeable people and resources the county has, such as other 4-H leaders, the Oregon State University Extension Service and other resources as ones she can turn to for help.

Some of her plans include getting back into the schools to promote the 4-H program, since this had to be put on hold due to the pandemic. She said she wants to get back into the schools, "to let (the students) know what 4-H is." She explained that 4-H is not "just

raising a market animal."

Tippet said she sees her role as the president as doing what is best for the 4-H program and continuing to make it what it is and, "encouraging the youth of Wallowa County to get involved. Also (encouraging) the adults to get involved and give back to the community."

Her position as president is for two years. Prior to becoming president, she was vice president for two years.

She mentioned there are many potential leaders and resources in Wallowa County that could help with 4-H clubs.

There are some "great photographers in Wallowa County and Wallowa resources has science" resources experience, she said. "It is just a matter of finding them to teach the youth."

Not only has Tippet been involved with 4-H, but her community involvement stretches to the Elgin Stampede and the 2006 Chief Joseph Days Court. She is currently a director for the Chief Joseph Days organization.

Tippet grew up in Enterprise. Her family includes two brothers who were involved with 4-H, which is how she learned about 4-H. She has a culinary arts degree from Walla Walla Community College.

"I have a passion for cooking and baking," she said.

After moving back to Wallowa County and working for a bakery, she accepted a position at Community Bank. She has been with the bank

for 10 years and is the bank manager.

"Community Bank is very community oriented," she said, which allows her to be part of 4-H and Chief Joseph Days.

Debi Warnock, the OSU Extension agent, which oversees the 4-H program, is looking forward to working with Tippet, whom she has known since she started in 4-H.

"For me, I will rely on her advice quite a bit throughout the year. She will be my right hand. I will have close contact with her regarding decisions on 4-H," Warnock said.

Warnock said that the 4-H Leaders' Association is the fundraising and leadership council of the 4-H program.

She said she is anticipating partnering with Tippet and supporting her new ideas and energy.

"We are so lucky. We have such good volunteers that love our program and are happy to pass our traditions to the next generation," she said.

Both Tippet and Warnock have similar philosophies of 4-H and what it brings to youth and the community. If there is one thing Tippet wants people to know about 4-H she said it is what participation in 4-H can do for youth.

"4-H gives to kids," she said. "They learn a lot. It taught me to speak, be sincere and humble. Not just in a show ring."

She said youths in 4-H learn to present themselves to people and learn to communicate with their peers.

"That is a big part of 4-H," she said. "You learn life skills. As you get older, you see that."

Ochoco horse gathers delayed

By MICHAEL KOHN
The Bulletin

BEND — A plan by the U.S. Forest Service to reduce the number of wild horses in the Ochoco National Forest has been delayed again due to problems with the equipment needed to conduct the horse gatherings.

The removal of some wild horses will begin no sooner than late fall of this year, said Cassidy Kern, a spokesperson for the Ochoco National Forest. Previously, authorities had hoped to get the gathers underway in February.

Kern said the chute that the national forest ordered was inspected and determined to be the wrong size.

"There were some specification differences that disqualifies this particular chute

from being able to safely process horses," Kern wrote in an email. "We will be working through a process of returning it and then work with the manufacturer to get the right equipment."

Once the correct equipment is received, the next window of opportunity to begin the horse gathering is just before winter this year, said Kern.

The gathering of horses is more difficult in spring and summer, the reason for the delay until fall, said Kern. The horses are "baited" into the chutes with green grass and alfalfa hay, of which there is plenty on the ground in summertime. When the grass dries up in the fall they become more interested in the grass laid in the traps.

In May of last year, the Forest Service announced

plans to reduce the number of horses in the Ochocos to a management level of 47-57 horses. Kern said the Big Summit herd in the Ochocos currently numbers between 130 and 150 animals.

The number of horses is currently not sustainable and their large numbers are said to be damaging riparian areas, the Forest Service says.

Reduction of the herd does not happen all at once. Just five to seven animals are removed at a time, over a period of five years. Once captured the horses are taken to a holding facility where they are prepared for adoption.

The Forest Service already delayed the start of the gathers in November due to supply chain issues and a delay in receiving the chute and other equipment.

Baker Heritage Museum opens April 8

By LISA BRITTON
Baker City Herald

BAKER — Tour groups are starting to call the Baker Heritage Museum — something that hasn't happened much in the past two years.

Lynn Weems, who started as director of the museum in December 2021, anticipates this coming summer to be a bit more normal — closer to pre-pandemic attendance.

The museum, at 2480 Grove St. just east of Geiser-Pollman Park, opens for the season Friday, April 8.

Hours will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$9 adults (13 and older), \$8 seniors, \$5 ages 6-12, and free for ages 5 and younger.

For \$16, visitors can tour the museum and the Adler House, which is open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Admission to just the Adler House is the same as the museum rates.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is setting up a presence at the museum while the center on Flagstaff Hill is closed for renovation.

The Interpretive Center, which will unveil exhibits in May, will have displays in the Leo Adler Room on the first floor, and occupy about a third of the ballroom upstairs — including a full-size wagon.

Extraordinary Women exhibit

The exhibit "Extraordinary Women of Baker County" continues this season. Weems said they decided to extend it for a year longer than planned. A display about the Chinese presence in Baker County will open in 2023.

Weems said the "Extraordinary Women" display has been redesigned and updated.

"We added some things," she said.

For example, the section

dedicated to Phyllis Badgley now features several of her original pressed-flower cards.

Another addition came when Weems received a phone call from a woman who wanted to donate a friendship quilt made by members of the Baker City Methodist Church that includes 130 stitched names.

"One of them happened to be Myrtle Lee," Weems said.

Lee, who became superintendent of Baker schools in 1943, is included in the exhibit. The quilt is on display near her section.

Other featured females include Johanna Packwood,

who arrived in Auburn as a schoolteacher in 1862, and Nellie McCarty, who participated in four bank robberies between 1891 and 1892 with the McCarty Gang.

Volunteer support

The museum is supported by the Friends of the Baker Heritage Museum, a volunteer group that raises money for exhibits, maintenance and other needs.

Weems said volunteers are also needed for daily activities inside the museum.

Anyone interested in getting involved can call the museum at 541-523-9308.

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