

OUR VIEW

DOJ takes step to halt poaching

The news the Oregon Department of Justice hired a special prosecutor to crack down on poachers did not roll across social media or the news wires with a snap, but it is a move that most hunters should, and do, applaud.

The new slot appears to have been created in response to a surge in unsolved illegal killing of deer and elk.

Jay Hall was hired recently by the justice department to be the new assistant attorney general focused on enforcing anti-poaching laws.

Finding a way to stop poaching was also a priority, in the past, for lawmakers as the Oregon Legislature approved money to boost the effort in 2019.

The move to hire a special prosecutor to focus on anti-poaching initiatives is a good idea. The more that can be done in this regard, the better.

Poaching is a terrible crime that damages one of the region's great attributes. For most law abiding and sensible hunters, poaching is a crime that wouldn't even enter into their thinking. Those who cherish our regions attributes — including the ability to go out each season and hunt game — know that poaching hurts many while helping very few.

Our ability to hunt each year is one of those sacrosanct features many of us enjoy yearly and when someone poaches an animal — whether its deer or elk — it impacts every one of us who hand over cash to get a tag.

Legal hunting is one of those intangible elements to our area that make it such a great place to live, work and play. When someone breaks the law and kills game out of season illegally, the entire community suffers.

There is no doubt that poaching will be a part of our western landscape, regardless of how senseless it is. However, a move like the Department of Justice to create a position that will put a spotlight on the crime is good news. The more emphasis we can put on stopping the crime of poaching, the better off our unique way of life will be.



YOUR VIEWS

Not all rural Oregonians want to be Idahoans

I'd like to tell everyone to go outside and sing a song. I recommend "What a Wonderful World." Oregon has a thriving economy. The only ones who experience real hardship here are the poorest. Some have been victims of neglect all their lives. Polluted water, air and soil are harmful to development. Financial struggles are accompanied by lower school attendance. Behavior problems often become aggravated and cumulative.

Investing in healthy families isn't just a softhearted liberal policy. Even the most conservative capitalists must be waking up and saying to themselves: Oh my, I guess we should have put money into a clean environment, good schools and economic support for struggling parents. Then their kids could have grown up to be smart, trustworthy workers capable of learning new technologies. (And getting along well with others.)

Oregon is not perfect but is certainly capable of turning these concepts into reality.

Those who are unhappy with our state should go live in Idaho for a few months. Just try it out before you push your separatist ideology. The media is in grave danger of presenting a distorted picture of rural Oregonians. They are failing to cover anyone here who believes in keeping Oregon whole.

Mary Cooke Cove

LGSD should make other cost-free improvements

The La Grande School District, through the proposed bond issue, will improve use of avail-

able facilities, with the local bond rate remaining the same. I suggest the district take the following actions to improve public understanding of the district mission. These would also be at no additional cost, since district staff are already responsible for them.

1) Provide complete transparency of social studies instructional materials (Power Points, articles, videos, etc.) in the curriculum guides, and improve clarity. Making these materials readily available to the public online would avoid time-consuming public records requests.

2) Remove the material regarding critical race theory from the district website. No other school district in Eastern Oregon has seen the need to have such material on their websites and its presence is an invitation to controversy.

3) Comply with board policies. Students and district residents are expected to abide by board policies, and District staff and teachers should too.

4) Replace or remove the incomprehensible eduspeak from the LGSD Culture of Care Framework web page. One figure has 71(!) bullet points. Focus more on academic programs and progress (e.g., figures tracking standardized testing, graduation rates, how the district is helping students overcome learning deficits due to COVID restrictions, dangers of social media) and a little less on brain physiology.

Stephen Boe La Grande

Landowners could leave legacy of generosity

Legacy building is a powerful human drive. We yearn to leave something

enduring to be remembered by.

Opportunities for creating legacies vary. Leo Adler's generosity will be celebrated for generations by individuals and organizations in Baker City. La Grande's Cook Library and Max Square commemorate Maxine and Tom Cook. Most legacies strive to enhance quality of life by expanding access to education, recreation, human interaction and nature.

Community trails have all the qualities great legacies are made of. They connect towns, friends and families to nature and healthy activities. The world needs more opportunities for communicating and exercising in nature.

Uncounted hours and dollars have gone toward the creation of two public trails, one from Elgin to Joseph and another between La Grande and Island City. Finances were lined up and enthusiastic anticipation nearly unanimous. However, vehement opposition by a few property owners brought both dreams to a halt. That could well become their legacy.

Landowners along other public trails have learned their fears were unfounded and that trails improve their lifestyles and land value. They are happy to have opened their hearts and land to others.

Let the Wallowa Union Rail Authority, county commissioners and a few dedicated trail people schedule a conciliatory meeting. Local landowners could review their initial responses: fear of strangers and loss of privacy. They could emerge as local heroes today and be remembered for generations for generosity rather than obstructionism.

Mary McCracken La Grande

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