

# THE OBSERVER

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## EOU program ready to Ignite

College of Education partners with Ignite! Reading to foster effective literacy tutors

By DAVIS CARBAUGH  
The Observer

LA GRANDE — Local college students are honing their teaching skills while combating child literacy deficiencies.

Eastern Oregon University's College of Education recently teamed up with Ignite! Reading, a program that utilizes one-on-one, hands-on tutoring to increase reading proficiency among grade school students. The partnership with Eastern is the first of its kind, preparing EOU grads to enter the workforce as teachers who are efficient in teaching students how to read.



Sliverski



Fritz

"We are creating an innovative methodology for ensuring that all kids in our country learn to read on time, which is the end of first grade," Ignite! Reading CEO Jessica Sliverski said.

Ignite! Reading is an intuitive, one-on-one reading program that seeks to improve reading ability among grade school students in the United States. The web of tutors currently stretches across schools in six states, leaning on the "science of reading" to target specific areas of reading inefficiency to help bridge the gap for struggling grade schoolers.

The program came about during the COVID-19 pandemic and began operation in California during the summer of 2021 when Sliverski put her learning methods into place to target reading inefficiency in grade school students. The program is not a response to COVID-19, but rather leans on the versatility of virtual learning to provide students with 15 minutes of high-dosage reading instruction per day.

At Eastern, students in the college of education will gain

See, **Ignite!**/Page A6



The Wallowa Mountains stand covered in snow in October 2021. A faster than normal snowmelt in early 2022 has dramatically lowered the snow equivalent levels in Eastern Oregon, signalling increased water scarcity for the late-spring and summer months.

## 'It's hard to stop'

### Snowpack melting faster than expected in Eastern Oregon

By ALEX WITTWER • EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — Eastern Oregon's snowpack is melting faster than expected, worsening an ongoing drought and pointing to a very dry year if conditions continue.

Scott Oviatt, a hydrologist and snow survey supervisor for the Natural Resources Conservation Service Oregon, a member of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, said snow started melting almost two weeks earlier than usual, and many sites across the state hadn't even reached their peak available snowpack levels before melt off began in the lower elevations.

"Once the snowpack starts melting out, it's hard to stop," he said.

The information comes weeks after many Eastern Oregon snowpack levels were reported to be in good shape. The dramatic decline in snowpack levels coupled with the ongoing drought has caused concern among experts who are watching the snow water equivalent levels closely.

"The fact that we didn't reach a peak value and the fact that we're melting out early is a concern because we are losing the available water content in the snow pack (earlier) than we normally plan on,"



Jayson Jacoby/Baker City Herald, File

Cold temperatures helped preserve the snowpack along the Powder River just below Mason Dam on Friday, Jan. 28, 2022. However, a faster than usual melt has experts concerned about ongoing drought conditions this summer.

Oviatt said. "Depending on location and elevation, we're about two or three weeks early, and we didn't achieve our peak, and now we're at 70% for the Grande Ronde/Powder area and we're dropping rapidly."

Those who rely on water irrigation channels should be especially concerned about the rapidly melting snow. While

snowmelt is generally expected to hit its zero point sometime in mid to late spring, having the water runoff begin and end earlier means that resources will become scarce as summer drags on — and a heat wave event can further impact water

See, **Melt!**/Page A6

## Wolves at the door | Federal judge has redrawn map for managing wolves in the West, Grant County is at ground zero

By STEVEN MITCHELL  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A judge's decision to restore federal protections for gray wolves last month has put Grant County at ground zero for relisting the predators under the Endangered Species Act.

The decision drew a dividing line between wolf populations that can continue to be managed by state agencies and those that will once again be governed by more restrictive federal rules.

In most of Oregon, the dividing line is Highway 395, which runs right through the middle of Grant County.

While the ruling does not

change anything for wolves in the easternmost part of the state, it does cover wolves in the western two-thirds of Oregon and puts them back on the federal endangered species list.

Before last month's ruling, wolves in Western Oregon had been under the first phase of the state wolf plan, which allowed for killing wolves in defense of livestock and guard animals in limited circumstances.

Specifically, wolves could be killed if caught chasing or biting livestock or in situations where the state could confirm that a pack had depredated four times in six months.

Even then, before ranchers

could use deadly force in a wolf attack, they had to have been using nonlethal deterrents such as electric fencing or hazing and had to show those methods had not worked to stop the attacks. Those options are now off the table, with federal protections back in place on Oregon's west side.

Meanwhile, ranchers east of Highway 395, where wolves are under state management, can still shoot wolves caught biting, chasing or killing livestock or working dogs.

In many cases, ranchers are likely to have one herd of cattle on both sides of the highway. And with areas of known wolf

activity in both the East and West Murderers Creek Wildlife Units on either side of the road, Grant County finds itself at the center of the long-running culture war flashpoint around wolves returning to the West.

Roy Vardanega, a third-generation Oregon rancher, became Grant County's first confirmed victim of wolf depredation last May, when five cattle on his Fox Valley ranch were attacked and killed — although only one of the deaths was determined by investigators to be a definite wolf kill.

He said the liberal elites who supported restoring the federal

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### WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

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	32 LOW		60/37
	Cold		Milder

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