

# DEBATE

Continued from Page A1

years during the summer in areas similar to MERA. What he often saw was disheartening.

“They were burned out completely,” he said.

This is why he believes active forest management is critical at MERA.

“It is what we have to have. There will be short-term pain for long-term gain,” Anderes said.

## River Democracy Act

The candidates found some common ground when asked about the federal River Democracy Act. The bill, co-sponsored by Oregon U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, would add 4,684 miles to the Wild and Scenic River system in Oregon, including 135 miles in Union County.

Hill said she does not like the idea of having 135 miles of Union County’s waterways being under federal control. She explained that the federal government is not aware of the issues facing rivers in Union County and is not sure that it is prepared to address the erosion and flooding problems some local rivers are periodically experiencing.

Anderes is also opposed to the River Democracy Act. He said the Union County Board



Union County commissioner candidates Paul Anderes, left, and Lisa Hill participate in a debate moderated by Eastern Oregon University students at Huber Auditorium in Badgley Hall, La Grande, on Friday, May 6, 2022. The candidates answered questions in three sections, discussing a variety of local, regional and national topics.

Davis Carbaugh/The Observer

of Commissioners sent a letter, signed by all the commissioners, to Wyden asking that all 135 miles of the Union County river segments be removed from the proposed legislation. Anderes said the federal government has not been forthcoming about the act. He also said the River Democracy Act would put 89,000 acres of land in Union County under the strain of additional federal government

red tape and bureaucracy.

## Evening meetings

Communication was another issue discussed during the debate. Hill said she would like to see more community outreach on behalf of the Union County Board of Commissioners. The candidate said she wants the board of commissioners to begin holding its meetings in the evening to make it easier for people from outlying

communities to come to La Grande to attend. Hill said she would also like to see more meetings in communities outside La Grande to boost outreach.

If elected, Hill said, she would strive to attend all city council meetings in Union County.

“I want to be out more in the community,” she said.

Hill’s work experience includes 11 years with the Oregon Department

of Transportation, during which time she said she was involved in much outreach involving the agency and the community.

Anderes said he works to communicate extensively with the community, making a point of responding to as many emails as possible.

Anderes also said that the board of commissioners is making an effort to increase its community outreach. For example,

its June 8 meeting, which will deal with the Greater Idaho proposals, is set to start at 6 p.m. in La Grande.

Anderes also pointed out that each member of the board of commissioners is assigned Union County cities to serve as a liaison for. His cities are Imbler and Elgin, which he works closely with. He said he is delighted that the city of Elgin recently received \$2.6 million in funding from the state for upgrading its wastewater system.

## Union County identity

The candidates were also asked about Union County’s identity. Hill said that Union County needs to be become known from something the way Pendleton is known for its Round-Up rodeo.

“We need to identify who we are, then it would be easy to market ourselves,” Hill said.

Anderes said Union County does not need to add a large new event to become better known. The incumbent noted that the county already has a strong lineup of annual community events like the Union County Fair, Eastern Oregon Film Festival, the Cove Cherry Festival and the North Powder Huckleberry Festival. Anderes said that from now through September there are events to attend in Union County almost every weekend.

# WOLF

Continued from Page A1

deaths, 26 in 2021, up from 10 the previous year. Of the 26, the cause of death was unclear for four of the animals, one was killed by other wolves and another died of what are believed to be natural causes.

The rest of the deaths, 21, were caused by humans. The Department of Fish & Wildlife killed eight wolves associated with the Lookout Mountain Pack, including two pups, after repeated attacks on livestock in Baker County.

Especially troubling to state biologists and wolf advocates was the alarming number of poaching incidents.

At least eight wolves, including the entirety of the Catherine Pack, were poisoned in Union County. That case remains open, and a \$50,000 reward has been offered for information that leads to an arrest.

In February of this year, a wolf was illegally shot in Union County, according to Oregon State Police, and another was illegally killed in Baker County in March, though officials did not specify how the wolf was killed.

Rewards of \$22,000 and \$11,500 were offered in those cases, respectively.

The kill permit granted to the rancher who killed the Chesnimnus Pack wolf earlier this week allows

for one more wolf to be killed before it expires May 24.

## Wolves kill 1 calf, injure 2 others in Baker County

BAKER CITY — Wolves from the Cornucopia Pack killed a calf north of Richland last week and injured two other calves in the same area about two weeks ago, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

ODFW biologists on May 5 investigated both cases, which happened in the same area.

In the case of the dead calf, ODFW staff found the carcass of the approximately 225-pound calf on a 5,400-acre public land grazing allotment managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The carcass was mostly eaten, but most of the hide was intact, according to an ODFW report. Biologists estimated the calf died about a day earlier, on May 4.

They skinned the carcass and found pre-mortem bite scrapes on the outside and back of the calf’s right rear left above the leg, with underlying trauma up to one inch deep to the muscle tissue. There was also trauma to the right shoulder and throat.

“The location and depth of trauma is consistent with wolf attack injuries on calves this size,” according to the report.

In the second incident, a rancher found two injured calves while

working cattle gathered on a private pasture. Both calves survived and are healing.

One calf was about three weeks old, weighing 75 pounds, and the other was about eight weeks old and weighed about 100 pounds.

Biologists examined injuries to both calves that they estimated had happened about two weeks earlier.

Biologists shaved portions of the calves’ hides. One calf had bite scrapes up to an inch and a half long on the inside and outside back of its left rear leg, with tooth punctures measuring up to 3/16th inch wide. The other calf had bite scrapes up to an inch long on the outside of the right rear leg, and an infected wound, with multiple bite punctures, on the left rear hock.

The wounds were consistent with wolf attacks on live calves, according to ODFW.

The agency is also investigating a report of another possible wolf attack reported on Saturday, May 7, at a property on Skinner Road at the northeast part of Keating Valley.

A calf was injured in that area about two weeks ago, but the animal survived.

A separate wolf pack, the Keating pack, uses that area, according to ODFW.

— Baker City Herald editor Jayson Jacoby contributed to this report.



The Observer, File

An Eastern Oregon University student walks across the campus quad on Thursday, Oct. 28, 2021. The university’s board of trustees, which meets Thursday, May 19, 2022, is considering a tuition increase at EOU in response to post-pandemic inflation and lowered enrollment.

# EOU

Continued from Page A1

With tuition and student fees accounting for roughly half of most universities’ overall revenue, lowered enrollment trends due to the pandemic play a pivotal role. Add in the ongoing inflation, and colleges are being forced to increase tuition while they concentrate efforts on rebuilding enrollment to pre-pandemic levels.

“Certainly the emphasis is to increase enrollment to ensure that more student have an opportunity to go to Eastern,” Seydel said. “What we’re doing there is really focused on intensive connection with our students and prospective students.”

Seydel noted that the university’s aim is to retain its student services and its faculty members. The challenge of enrollment creates a balance between managing cost factors

while still ensuring that EOU can continue to serve as an affordable, accessible university.

“We’re trying to do everything we can to make it possible for them to come to La Grande, be on our campus, be here taking classes, meet one on one with their faculty mentors, and be able to get the wraparound services they need from our tutoring centers or student support areas so that they can be successful,” Seydel said.

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