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May 12, 2022

THURSDAY EDITION

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INSIDE



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Spring storms transform region's snowpack

April storms continue into May, boosting snowpack above average in places

By **JAYSON JACOBY**
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — April showers couldn't completely make up for a meager winter snowpack in the mountains of

Northeastern Oregon.

But the month put on a pretty fair rally.

And so far May has maintained the momentum, with snow falling not only in the mountains but also, most recently on Sunday,

May 8, and Monday, May 9, in the valleys.

A persistent weather pattern over the past month that has pushed cool storms through the region regularly, laden with Pacific moisture, has transformed

a paltry snowpack into one that, in some places, has soared well above average.

Statistics illustrate how stark the reversal has been.

During March, which in many years is the snowiest month at higher elevations, the water content in the snow — the statistic that best predicts summer water

supplies — dropped at 13 of 17 measuring sites around the region. The water content was below average at all of those places by the end of March.

But the storms of April had a profound effect.

At High Ridge, for instance, in

See, **Snowpack/Page A8**

McCloud claims bias from other candidates

Gubernatorial candidate believes treatment violates party bylaws

By **JEFF BUDLONG**
For EO Media Group

SALEM — Republican gubernatorial candidate Tim McCloud claimed discrimination in a Friday, May 6, press release by his own party for violating bylaws put in place to treat all legally qualified candidates equally.

McCloud, the first Black GOP candidate in the state's history to run for governor, believes a recent exchange with fellow candidate Marc Thielman during the April 22 Linn County forum led to him being uninvited from scheduled gubernatorial events and ignored altogether. During the forum, Thielman claimed not to know what a white supremacist is.

"It has been a series of escalating comments he is making with me in the room," McCloud said. "After he said (the white supremacist remark) he came and sat down with me and wanted to fist bump me as if, at that moment, I was going to be an endorser for his comment."

Instead of a fist bump, McCloud wagged his finger at Thielman to note his disapproval. He subsequently voiced his displeasure with the comment on May 5 during a League of Minority Voters event in Portland and

See, **Candidates/Page A7**

THREE-PEAT

LHS A Cappella Choir wins third straight state title

By **DICK MASON** • The Observer

LA GRANDE — No state choir championship experience? No problem.

The La Grande High School A Cappella Choir, competing without a single member who had ever sang at the state championships, easily won its third straight state Class 4A title Saturday, May 7, at Oregon State University, Corvallis. La Grande finished with 334 points to easily beat runner-up McLoughlin High School, which finished with 308 points.

The a cappella choir members knew they had a good chance of winning, but many didn't rest easy until the final results were announced.

"It was surreal. I was confident but it didn't fully hit me until I heard the results," said LHS junior Brielle Hood.

LHS senior Jarom Huntsman said he felt an overwhelming sensation when the results were announced.

"It wasn't real until then," he said.

Last weekend's championship event was the first time the Oregon School Activities Association had conducted state 4A choir championships since 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic,

See, **Choir/Page A7**



Dick Mason/The Observer

Kevin Durfee, right, director of the La Grande High School A Cappella Choir, and his wife, Kascie Durfee, center, the choir's assistant director, talk with LHS Principal Brett Baxter on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. The Durfees had just been presented with shirts by Baxter honoring them for the state choir title LHS won on Saturday, May 7.

BACKGROUND: La Grande High School A Cappella Choir Director Kevin Durfee, flanked by members of his choir, holds the first place trophy his choir won at the state championships in the class 4A category on Saturday, May 7, 2022. Kevin Durfee/Contributed Photo



Wolf depredation, ODFW response frustrate ranchers

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA COUNTY — Wolf kills of livestock are becoming more frustrating to Wallowa County ranchers and livestock officials when they see how those depredations are handled by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Crow Creek rancher Tom Birkmaier, who is the president of the Wallowa County Stockgrowers Association, runs about 500 cows, most of which have calves. He lost a half dozen animals to wolves of the



Todd Nash/Contributed Photo

The elongated nature of a wolf track makes it distinctly different from a dog or coyote track, said Todd Nash, a Wallowa County rancher, county commissioner and president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Chesnimnus Pack in late April and early May. Birkmaier said he asked ODFW to "remove" the pack — meaning to kill them.

In response, ODFW issued a kill permit April 29. The permit, good through May 24, allows Birkmaier or an agent on

his behalf to kill two wolves in Dorrance Pasture or Trap Canyon Pasture, where the depredations on cattle occurred, he said.

One of Birkmaier's agents killed a yearling male on Tuesday, May 3, said John Williams of Enterprise, co-chairman of the wolf committee for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. Birkmaier declined to identify who took the wolf in an interview on May 9.

"I don't want him to get threatened" by wolf proponents, Birkmaier said.

He said that at the time of the killing, the wolf was

not actively attacking cattle, but was in Dorrance Pasture along Crow Creek. A targeted wolf does not legally have to be in the act of attacking livestock, it just has to be in an area where depredations have occurred, he said.

Effective management?

Todd Nash, president of the OCA, a Wallowa County Commissioner and a local rancher, said that the state conservation and wolf-management plan has two main parts.

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WEATHER Full forecast on the back of B section

	Tonight		Friday
	34 LOW		57/47
	A shower or two		Inc. clouds

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Issue 57
3 sections, 34 pages
La Grande, Oregon
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