

ODFW confirms another Baker County wolf attack

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — Wolves from the Cornucopia Pack injured two calves north of Richland recently, the third attack on cattle in that area in the past few weeks, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

ODFW biologists investigated the latest incident on Monday, May 9, in the Summit Road area.

A rancher found two injured calves while checking cattle on a 5,400-acre Bureau of Land Management grazing allotment. Biologists estimated the calves were injured one to two weeks earlier.

Baker County Sheriff Travis Ash, who also responded to the incident, said last week that he thinks one calf, which had the largest open wound, would be euthanized.

Both calves had multiple bite scrapes up to 3/16th-inch wide on the inside, rear and outside of their hindquarters above the hock, along with tissue trauma, according to the ODFW report.

One calf — the one Ash

mentioned — had a pair of three-inch open wounds on the inside and outside of the right hind leg above the hock, according to the report.

The report reads: “These two attacks appear to be from the same event and were attributed to the Cornucopia Pack.”

Biologists also examined a third calf, which had a few scrapes on the lower portion of the left hind leg, mostly below the hock.

Because there wasn’t enough evidence on the third calf to determine the cause of the scrapes, the incident was classified as “possible/unknown” rather than a confirmed wolf attack, according to ODFW.

Also on May 9, biologists examined the carcass of a 125-pound calf that a rancher found the morning of May 8 in a private, 40-acre pasture near the rancher’s house in the Houghton Creek area north of Keating.

The carcass was mostly intact and most of the hide was present, but some internal organs and some muscle tissue on three legs were missing. Biologists concluded the calf had



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo, File

A wolf from the Desolation Pack in Grant County was photographed by a remote camera on June 7, 2021.

died the night before it was found.

Biologists found numerous premortem bite marks on the calf’s back, 1/8th to 3/4 inches wide, with two tears in the hide and associated bruising and muscle tissue trauma.

There were no bite scrapes on the hindquarters, flanks or elbows, areas “where wolves commonly bite,” according to the ODFW report.

Also, the “damage on the back were smaller than expected for wolf. Some

domestic dogs were causing damage nearby, but since the cause of death cannot be confirmed as coyote or domestic dog, this determination is ‘possible/unknown.’”

Ash has said he’s concerned about the number of recent attacks on cattle, and he suggested that ODFW consider either killing some wolves or giving permits to ranchers who have had cattle attacked at least twice, allowing them to hunt wolves.

Under Oregon’s wolf

management plan, livestock owners don’t need a permit to kill a wolf that is biting, wounding, killing or chasing the owner’s livestock or working dogs.

But ODFW can also issue “lethal take” permits to ranchers whose animals have been attacked multiple times within a nine-month period, and who have shown they have tried nonlethal tactics to deter wolves.

Such permits allow livestock owners, or their designated agents, to kill wolves

under any circumstance, even if the wolves aren’t attacking livestock at the time. Permits include the number of wolves that can be killed, and a time limit.

After a series of confirmed wolf attacks on cattle in Wallowa County in late April, ODFW issued a permit to rancher Tom Birkmaier. His agent killed a yearling male wolf from the Chesnimus Pack on May 3.

Earlier this month in Baker County, ODFW biologists concluded that wolves from the Cornucopia Pack had killed one calf and injured two others north of Richland, and that wolves from the Keating Pack injured a calf in the Skinner Road area of the Keating Valley.

The calf that died likely was attacked on May 4, and the two calves that survived were attacked about two weeks before biologists examined them on May 5, according to ODFW reports.

The site where the calf died, north of Richland, is about half a mile from the area where biologists examined the two injured calves on May 9.

Hermiston comes together to renovate a home

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — As Heather Spinden stepped out onto her lawn and looked at her Hermiston home, she said she felt overwhelmed.

“It’s just so beautiful,” she said.

Spinden lives with her youngest son. She said she has multiple health problems and her son, a full-time Burger King employee, has autism.

Built in 1907, her home has four bedrooms, two baths and 1,164 square feet of space. It is a couple of doors down from the Hermiston Public Library and is a stone’s throw away from the Hermiston City Hall, currently under construction.

The place did not look quite so attractive until recently, according to its owner. Spinden said kind and generous members of her community stepped up to make it into the place it is today.

Holly Woods and Josh Ross, an engaged couple, residents of Hermiston, told the rest of the story.

Ross explained he attended school with Heather Spinden’s son, Ben Spinden, starting in elementary school and continuing to high school graduation. After graduation, Ross left town.

He did not stay gone, however. Ross returned, and one winter he saw his old classmate walking down the street. He picked Ben Spinden up, drove him to his home and met his mom.

Ross said he recalls looking around the home. It needed repair, he said, and he thought the family could benefit from a little assistance. He passed this information onto Woods.

“We needed to do something, and it kind of snowballed from there,” Ross said.

Ross and Woods explained they started by giving the Spindens a Christmas basket. But they felt they wanted to do more. That is when they had an idea to paint the exterior of the house.

They brought a contractor to the home, though,



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian

Heather Spinden stands in front of her home in Hermiston on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. A group of residents came together to make needed improvements to the house, businesses donated services and more than \$100,000 was raised for the project.

and learned the siding was not good enough to paint. And new siding was just the start of a laundry list of needs. The house needed roofing, a new chimney, flooring and more.

Fortunately, Ross and Woods were in a position to help. Woods brought the project up to her workplace, Academy Mortgage in Hermiston. It has, she said, helped people through service programs, and her boss thought Academy could help improve the Spindens’ home.

This came at a good time for the Spindens. Their home had problems, and their homeowner’s insurance dropped them last summer.

Suddenly, people wanted

to help. Through contacts, Ross and Woods, along with Academy, started attracting more help.

An employee of Ross-Brandt Electric Inc., Ross was able to get his family’s company on board with this effort.

More people and companies followed, as they posted this work on Facebook, distributed flyers and made phone calls.

Cost Less Carpet donated the flooring, C & C Construction Services Inc. provided much of the roofing, and other companies stepped up, too. Ross-Brandt provided workers, as did some other companies. Jimmy’s Johns Portable Toilets Inc. offered its services, and

other people gave what they could.

Over \$100,000 was given in donations, including around \$40,000 in cash, Woods said. Enough money was left from donations to pay Heather Spinden’s medical bills.

“We didn’t expect this,” Woods said. She added that the Spindens never asked for this help, but people gave it freely.

Heather Spinden said she has a lot of good feelings about her community because of this work.

“We feel so humbled and blessed,” she said. “We’re so happy that they’ve made it so we can enjoy this home, and we’re going to enjoy it, one day at a time.”

Blue Mountain Hospital CEO is stepping down

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Blue Mountain Hospital District’s chief executive officer is stepping down after nearly six years on the job.

According to a press release from the hospital, Derek Daly’s last day as CEO will be Aug. 3.

In the press release, Daly said he and his young family will be moving out of the area to be closer to family in the Midwest, where he will take a job heading up a larger hospital as CEO.

Daly said taking the helm of the unnamed hospital comes at a time and location that is a better fit for him and his family.

“Major life changes,” he said, “including the recent addition of a child to our family, have motivated us to relocate closer to both of our families and the support system they provide.”

Daly added that his motivation for moving on

is not entirely career-driven.

“If this opportunity were solely for professional reasons, I would not be making this transition,” he said. “It is the combination of professional opportunity and personal/family need converging at the same time that make this the right thing for my family.”



Daly

In the press release, the hospital board noted that it will be looking for an interim CEO to “support a productive handoff” when Daly departs in the summer. Simultaneously, according to the press release, the board will begin looking for a permanent CEO.

In addition to Blue Mountain Hospital, the Blue Mountain Hospital District operates Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic, Blue Mountain Care Center and Blue Mountain Home Health and Hospice Agency.

The district has about 250 employees.

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