

Wolf died after being hit by car, not illegally shot

By **KALE WILLIAMS**
The Oregonian

ENTERPRISE — A wolf in Eastern Oregon died after it was hit by a car, not after being illegally shot as authorities first thought, Oregon State Police said Tuesday, May 25.

The wolf, a 2-year-old female known as OR 106 who was previously part of the Chesnimnus Pack, was found dead Jan. 8 on Parsnip Creek Road about 6 miles southeast of Wallowa.

State police originally said wildlife biologists determined OR 106 had died of a gunshot wound. Advocacy groups offered a reward of more than \$16,000 for tips that led to the person who killed the wolf, which had been fitted with a tracking collar.

An analysis conducted at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory in Ashland showed the wolf actually died of blunt force trauma to the chest and pelvis, state police said.

The wolf's injuries were consistent with being hit by a car, state police said, though OR 106 also



Oregon State Police/Contributed Photo

This 2-year-old wolf was found dead along Parsnip Creek Road about 6 miles southeast of Wallowa on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022. Authorities later determined the animal had been struck by a car.

had injuries that appeared to be the result of a fight with another wolf and a gunshot wound to her left hind leg that was partially healed when she died.

“(The gunshot wound) didn’t appear to be debilitating and was not associated with the cause of death,” state police said in a statement.

Oregon’s wolf population saw only anemic growth in 2021, according to the state’s annual count of the animals, with the minimum number of wolves in the

state at 172, up just two from the previous count. The report also showed a spike in deaths caused by humans.

At least 26 wolves died in the state last year, up from 10 the previous year, according to the report.

Humans caused 21 of the deaths.

Vehicles struck four wolves and a rancher shot another. State police interviewed the rancher and he faced no charges.

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.

The Department of Fish & Wildlife also killed eight wolves associated with the Lookout Mountain Pack, including two pups, after repeated attacks on livestock in Baker County.

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.

Wolf depredation confirmed on Middle Fork of John Day River

Two calves killed in Grant County

By **STEVEN MITCHELL**
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A rancher on the Middle Fork of the John Day River has become Grant County’s second producer to lose livestock to a confirmed wolf depredation.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reported Monday, May 23, that wolves in an area known to be used by the Desolation Pack killed two

calves in the evening hours of May 19.

Additionally, the ODFW report noted that a GPS collar placed wolves at the kill site around the suspected time of death of the second calf.

The report noted that the location of the bite marks and injuries to the calves was consistent with wolf attacks on live calves. The depredation, the report said, has been attributed to the Desolation Pack.

According to the report, on Saturday, May 21, a livestock producer witnessed a wolf feeding on the car-

cass of a 1,000-pound cow. ODFW officials estimated that the cow died the previous night and that, due to the absence of pre-mortem bite marks or hemorrhaging, the cow was found not to have been attacked while it was alive.

“The cause of death was not wolf-related and so our determination was ‘Other,’” the report concluded.

The first confirmed wolf depredation in Grant County occurred in May 2021 on Roy Vardanega’s Fox Valley Ranch. Vardanega reported that five of his cattle were attacked and

killed, although only one of the deaths was confirmed by ODFW as wolf-related.

According to the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management 2021 Annual Report, the Desolation Pack increased from five wolves to nine this year.

A pack is defined as more than four wolves traveling together in the winter. The Desolation Pack also met the criterion of having a breeding pair. A breeding pair is an adult male and adult female with at least two pups that survived to Dec. 31 in the year of their birth.



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife attributed the confirmed depredation of two calves on the Middle Fork of the John Day River to the Desolation Pack.

Grant School Board members agree to settlement in ethics probe

Panel finds board members violated legal scope of executive session

By **STEVEN MITCHELL**
Blue Mountain Eagle

SALEM — Five members of the Grant School Board will be given letters of education by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission, which determined that the school board held an improper closed-door session last summer.

The letters are part of a negotiated settlement, approved by the ethics panel on Friday, May 20, that ends a state investigation into the matter.

The issue was whether the five school board members who participated in the executive session may have violated the state law that governs how meetings of public bodies should be conducted.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle, File

Grant School Board No. 3 listens to community feedback during an Aug. 3 school board meeting. From left, Jake Taylor, Aaron Lieuallen, Haley Walker and Superintendent Bret Uptmor.

The ethics commission’s ruling, which came in response to a complaint filed by the Blue Mountain Eagle, found that the school board members had broken the law by exceeding the legal scope of a legitimate executive session on Aug. 19.

State law allows public

bodies — such as the school board — to go into executive session — where the public is barred and reporters are instructed not to report on the proceedings — only in certain narrowly defined circumstances.

The board had initially scheduled a public

meeting for that day to discuss requirements for returning to in-person schooling, including Gov. Kate Brown’s order that all educators, school staff and volunteers be vaccinated against COVID-19. That meeting was canceled seven hours before its scheduled start time

and replaced with an executive session “to discuss confidential information.”

Based on a reporter’s observation of the proceedings, the Eagle believed the school board’s discussion during the executive session far exceeded the legal basis it cited for the closed-door meeting. When the newspaper informed Grant School Superintendent Bret Uptmor and School Board Chair Haley Walker of this view, Uptmor defended the board’s actions and demanded that the Eagle not print any information from the executive session.

The ethics commission found that during the school board’s executive session, the five members present discussed some matters that were exempt from public disclosure. However, the discussion also included policy matters that were not exempt.

“The board also began discussing district pol-

icies and how to implement them, as well as how to communicate those policies to staff and the public. This part of the discussion appears to have exceeded the scope authorized,” the ethics commission report on the matter said.

The board members agreed to written final orders that stipulated they had violated the open meetings law by holding an improper executive session. Walker declined to comment on the settlement, saying she had not had a chance to review the final stipulated order.

In addition to Walker, the school board members covered by the agreement are Aaron Lieuallen, Colleen Robertson, Chris Labhart and Jake Taylor. All five will receive letters of education from the state. Board member Kelly Stokes was not present at the executive session and was not disciplined by the state.

Man arrested in fatal stabbing on reservation

East Oregonian

MISSION — Umatilla Tribal Police on Wednesday, May 25, arrested a man for the stabbing death of another man earlier that day.

Kawlija Nicoah Scott, 25, is in custody in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, for criminal homicide. Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in a press release May 27 reported Scott is the suspect in the stabbing and slaying of Gabriel David Freeman at his

residence on the reservation.

Scott, a CTUIR member, fled the scene, but tribal police soon caught and arrested him on a tribal charge of homicide. Umatilla Tribal Police is investigating the case with assistance from the FBI.

“Given the nature of the allegations both the CTUIR, pursuant to its inherent jurisdiction, and the United States, pursuant to the Major Crimes Act, have concurrent jurisdiction over this case,” according to the press release.

Grande Ronde Hospital & Clinics proudly welcomes Maurine Robbins, NP — Urgent Care



“I started volunteering in nursing homes at 8 years old and have kept a hand in medicine ever since—I was even a certified Pharmacy technician. I became a Registered Nurse in 2015 before earning my Master of Science in Family Nurse Practitioner from Union University in Tennessee in 2019.

I owned my own wedding and event planning business for 6 years and was the wedding planner for the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville for a year. I also worked with the Tennessee Titans (NFL) when Covid first hit.

We have a son in Michigan at college, and a daughter who will attend La Grande High School. She plays multiple musical instruments.

My husband and I fell in love with Oregon last year. So much so, we eloped to Cannon Beach last October. We love the outdoors...kayaking, hiking, exploring new areas. I am very excited to be here...

it already feels like home!”

Please help us welcome Maureen and her Family to our Community!!

MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION
SUMMERVILLE CEMETERY
MONDAY, MAY 30

Military Colors Ceremony starts at 8:00 am
Short Veterans speech following ceremony

GRH Urgent Care
GRH.org - 10303 S Walton Rd - 541.962.QUICK