

Reward upped in Washington wolf shooting

Conservation groups offer up to \$20,000 for tips

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

Conservation groups have increased to \$20,000 a reward for information leading to a conviction in the shooting death of a wolf in October in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.

The breeding female in the Teanaway pack in Kittitas

County was found dead Oct. 28. She was wearing a telemetry collar, and state and federal wildlife officials went searching for her when the signal stopped moving.

The groups posted a \$15,000 reward and upped it by \$5,000 with a contribution from a Conservation Northwest member.

"This new donation to help bring the Teanaway wolf poacher to justice shows how passionate Washingtonians are about protecting our rare and recovering wildlife," Conservation Northwest

spokeswoman Jasmine Minbashian said in a press release.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman Brent Lawrence said the investigation continues and there have been no arrests.

The federal agency is leading the investigation because the shooting occurred in the western two-thirds of Washington, where wolves are federally protected. Harming a federal endangered species is punishable by up to a \$100,000 fine and a year in jail.

Anyone with information

about the killing of the Teanaway female wolf or who saw anything suspicious in the Salmon La Sac area in October can contact federal law enforcement agents at 206-512-9329 or 509-727-8358. State law enforcement may be contacted at 1-877-933-9847.

Other organizations contributing to the reward are Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, The Humane Society of the United States, The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust and Woodland Park Zoo.



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

This Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife file photo shows a member of the Teanaway pack. A female pack member was found shot to death in October in Kittitas County. Conservation groups are offering a \$20,000 award for information leading to the shooter's conviction.

Idaho grower sees tough competition from Argentina

By JOHN O'CONNELL
Capital Press

PICABO, Idaho — Based on what he's seen, Idaho Barley Commissioner Pat Purdy believes Argentina could become a much more formidable trade competitor with U.S. agriculture.

The only thing standing in Argentina's way is its own government, said Purdy, of Picabo.

Purdy toured Argentina's agricultural sector from Nov. 30 through Dec. 6 as part of a Grain Export Mission sponsored by the U.S. Grains Council, a nonprofit organization that develops export markets in 50 countries.

According to the Idaho Barley Commission, Argentina is already a notable competitor for U.S. corn, malt barley and sorghum and has the capacity to double its corn production and significantly increase its sorghum output. Argentina produces about double Idaho's total barley production, Purdy said.

Though Purdy witnessed an agricultural sector with modern technology, fertile soil and strong yield potential, he said farmers in the South American nation have been hamstrung by their government's policies.

The government collects a 30 percent tax on its agricultural exports. Furthermore, Purdy said, the government imposes arbitrary and unpredictable quotas on commodity exports.

"The producers don't know if there's going to be a market for many of the commodities they produce," Purdy said.

Purdy was impressed by the strategies the growers have implemented to cope with the uncertainty created by their government, which he said "puts the screws on them just hard enough" to leave them with a little bit of money. He said they've learned to change both crop rotations and marketing strategies quickly.



Photo submitted

Idaho Barley Commissioner Pat Purdy, of Picabo, inspects root mass and soil moisture of barley in a field in Argentina. Purdy recently returned from a trip to the South American nation, where he learned about the country's agricultural production practices.

The growers have little on-farm storage, so they keep their grain in silo bags along field borders until there's demand for it.

Operators minimize large, long-term investments in their farms by renting land on one-year leases and hiring custom contractors to perform virtually every step in the production process, rather than buying expensive equipment.

Argentina, which has mostly dryland farms, has also converted the vast majority of its acres to no-till, seeking to reduce fuel costs, conserve water and protect soil from erosion. Seeing all of the country's no-till farming reassured Purdy that he's on the right path by implementing no-till practices on his farm.

"I admired their perseverance," Purdy said. "They've proven if you're nimble and creative, you can come up with solutions to most challenges," Purdy said.

When Purdy arrived in Argentina, growers were just starting their wheat and barley harvests.

Growers assess freeze damage

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

A mid-November freeze damaged vineyards in Walla Walla, high-elevation winter wheat around Waterville, Wash., and fruit trees in The Dalles and Hood River, Ore.

The extent of the damage in those and other parts on the eastern sides of both states will be more fully known in the spring, when damage is more evident. But growers have made early assessments.

It appears cherry and pear trees may be the hardest hit in The Dalles and Hood River, according to Jay Pscheidt and Lynn Long, Oregon State University Extension specialists.

Trees damaged by cold are more vulnerable to disease and pests.

Pscheidt and Long advised growers that copper-based pesticides could be used to prevent bacterial canker if an orchard and those around it do not have a history of copper use or resistance.

Removing damaged and diseased wood by winter pruning may help trees recover and slow or stop the spread of disease, they wrote in an advisory to growers. Summer pruning in diseased blocks should be considered, they said.



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

A young Honeycrisp apple orchard is shown with a wind machine for spring frost protection near East Wenatchee, Wash., on Dec. 25. Honeycrisp is known for winter hardiness but other varieties, particularly when young, are more susceptible to freeze damage.

Temperatures dropped to single digits in many parts of the region on Nov. 10-17. The impact was accentuated by it being a sudden drop from much higher temperatures, so plants did not have time to build much winter hardiness, said Tim Smith, Washington State University Extension tree fruit specialist emeritus in Wenatchee.

"It's worrisome. I wouldn't be surprised to see some damage," Smith said.

Everyone looks for bud damage and that's what occurs in spring frosts, he said. But fall and winter freezes

damage tree trunks and lower limbs, he said. Trees flower in the spring and then collapse from trunk damage, he said.

Younger trees have more vigor and are slower to go dormant so they are more susceptible, and cherries and peaches are among the most vulnerable, Smith said.

"We had a little more cooling and winter hardiness leading into it in the north, but fieldmen are concerned about some cherry damage," said Dan McCarthy, Okanogan County Pest Control agent.

Andy Gale, manager of Stemilt AgServices in

Wenatchee, said Sweetheart cherry buds show some browning. "My hunch is it did a little damage, some thinning and that will be a good thing overall for the market," he said.

So far sampling hasn't shown any damage to rootstock and one-year trees at Willow Drive Nursery, said Neal Manly, sales manager at the nursery south of Ephrata. He said he doubts there's any damage at neighboring fruit tree nurseries in the northern Columbia Basin. Temperatures were lower farther south, he said.

Kretz: Fire management concerns growing

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

A Washington state legislator hopes to hear from farmers and other landowners affected by large forest fires in 2014 at an upcoming meeting.

Rep. Brian Blake, D-Abert, and Rep. Joel Kretz, R-Wauconda, host a meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. Jan. 5 in the Brewster High School Library, 503 S. Seventh St., in Brewster, Wash.

Kretz said the meeting is in response to concerns after huge forest fires in Okanogan County in 2014, including the Carlton Complex wildfire, which burned 250,000 acres.

"I want to hear from the people that lost the most in this fire, the most affected," he said.

"You have to look at the past to improve things in the future. How do we do a better job in the future?"

Kretz foresees long-term agricultural impacts from the fires. Land for grazing is in short supply, as burned pastures will take several years to regrow, and hundreds of miles of fencing are down, he said. Kretz also cited hay losses, orchard and infrastructure, generators used to supply power and deaths of

livestock including "some really valuable genetics."

Areas that typically aren't burned as badly were those that were managed and thinned, Kretz said.

"It was defensible," he said. "We've got to do something with the fuel situations in the forest."

In August, Kretz expressed concern over the way the Carlton Complex fire was handled.

"I would say (my concerns) have probably grown," he said in December. "It seems like everybody you talk to that was anywhere near it has another story of something that didn't go well."

Kretz said he is concerned about an apparent shift in approach in dealing with the fires.

"It's gone from any talk of strategic attacking the fire to managing it, which means let it

go and go sit in town, which we saw quite a bit of," he said.

Kretz said the command structure doesn't appear to make decisions in real time, which is necessary when dealing with a fire. Fire managers hire cheaper equipment from out of state when equipment is nearby, he said. A business in Republic, Wash., had five pieces of machinery ready to go to help a forest fire in Keller, Wash., 30 minutes away, he said.

"One got called out, he got down there, the fire's going, they're screaming for more and one of the supervisors said, 'Don't worry, I've got four coming up from Oregon — they'll be here in six or seven hours,'" Kretz said. "We've got to look at the decision-making process and make it real. You don't save money, because the fire gets away."

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10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Booth Move In
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Early Bird Reception @ Red Lion Columbia Center

Tuesday, January 27
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Spanish Language Session
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Trade Show
1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Cultural Performance Workshop
5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Trade Show Reception & Potato PAC Auction @ TRCCI

Wednesday, January 28
7:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. General Session
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Trade Show
10:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Ladies Program
11:00 a.m. Keynote Address - Charles Fishman, *The New Age of Water*
12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Potato Bar
1:00 p.m. - 4:10 p.m. General Session
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Leadership Recognition Banquet @ Red Lion Columbia Center

Thursday, January 29
7:30 a.m. Continental Breakfast
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. General Session
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Trade Show
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. Hosted Lunch, Three Rivers Convention Center
1:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. General Session

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