



Illustration by Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

# ONE WASHINGTON TWO SIDES

The Cascade Curtain has been a part of Northwest history since the beginning

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — Residents of Eastern Washington are frustrated with the more populous Westside of the state. And nowhere was that frustration more prominent than one day last month in the Capitol. On the docket were cougars and wolves, two hot-button issues that split the state right down the center of the Cascade Range.

In one hearing, Eastside ranchers were asking senators to loosen the state's law against using hounds to chase cougars and keep the predators away from livestock.

In another hearing, an Eastside county commissioner told legislators that his constituents were fed up with wolves.

They continue to attack cattle and sheep, costing ranchers tens of thousands of dollars. All the while wolves remain protected under state and federal endangered species laws that draw most of their support from Westside groups and individuals.

In the weeks since, lawmakers have agreed to take a close look at the wolf problem. The hounds, however, will remain on the leash.



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

Spokane Republican Matt Shea passes out papers March 5 on the floor of the Washington state House. He says Eastern Washington would be strong economically on its own.

For the day, Eastern Washington was 1 for 2. Not bad, considering the Westside's population — and representation in the Capitol — is more than three times as large as the Eastside's.

The state's longstanding east-west divide has popped up several times

this legislative session, and it usually involved agriculture. Divisive issues such as wolves, cougars, trails and even honeybees have all surfaced this session in the state Capitol.

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## East versus West: Washington state by the numbers

Eastern Washington 1.5 million	Item	Western Washington
22%	Population	5.4 million or 78%
36	People per square mile	217
22,762	Number of farms	14,487
\$7.6 billion	Market value/crops and livestock	\$1.4 billion
Apples, wheat, potatoes, pears, cherries, hops, grapes	Notable crops	Red raspberries, vegetable seeds, cranberries
68	Number of wolves	0
8 (Yakima)	Average annual rainfall (inches)	51 (Olympia)

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; USDA Census of Agriculture; Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; Don Jenkins and Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

## Drone industry awaits government regulations

Entrepreneurs should lay plans now, experts say

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

Regulations for commercial drones aren't expected until next year but entrepreneurs should prepare for the government to open the floodgates, experts say.

While the Federal Aviation Administration is unlikely to finalize rules for unmanned aircraft by the end of the year, as mandated by Congress, it doesn't make sense for companies to wait to get their business plans in order, according to



A four-rotor, camera-equipped drone hovers during a demonstration flight at a McMinnville, Ore., forum.

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speakers at the recent Precision Farming Expo in Salem.

"It's not too early to get your skin in the game," said Andrew McCollough, an analyst

with SkyWard, a company that makes drone operations software.

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## Wash. Ecology details drought relief budget

Agency seeks to lease water in Yakima Basin

By DON JENKINS  
Capital Press

OLYMPIA — The Washington Department of Ecology has requested \$9 million in drought relief, but only \$5 million would be spent unless the drought worsens in the Yakima Basin.

DOE's drought response coordinator, Jeff Marti, outlined for senators Tuesday a spending plan that includes \$2 million for municipal wa-

ter systems, \$1.5 million to increase stream flows, \$1 million for state fish hatcheries and \$500,000 for administrative costs.

Another \$4 million could be spent on leasing water rights to offset the impacts of drawing from emergency wells in the Yakima Basin.

"We're currently proceeding with a lower-level drought response, and we're prepared to go a higher level of drought response if conditions deteriorate," Marti said at a joint meeting of the Senate agriculture and environment committees.

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