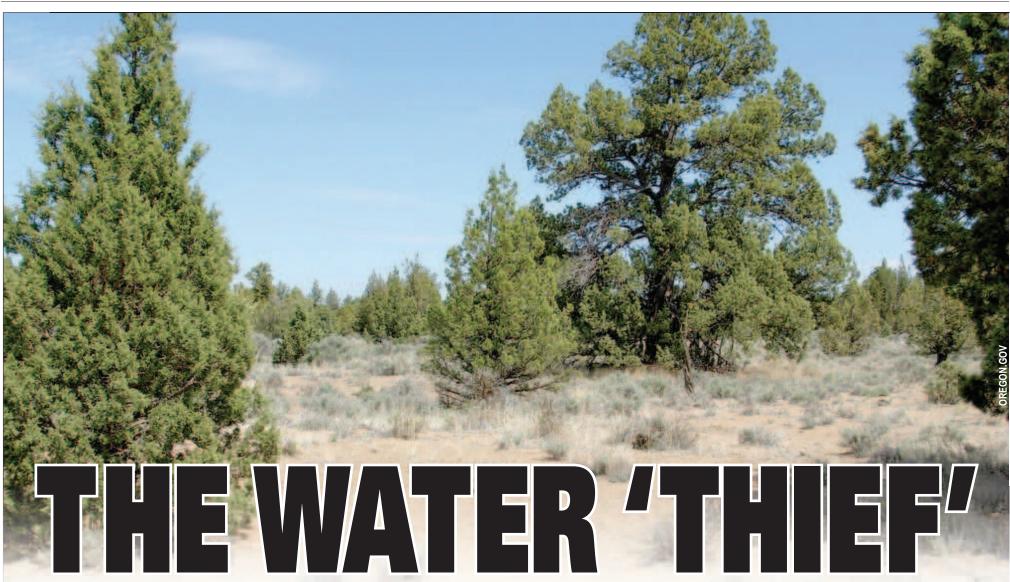
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In Central Oregon, landscape benefits from removing juniper trees

By ERIC MORTENSON Capital Press

RINEVILLE, Ore. — Removing intrusive Western juniper trees from the landscape is the buzz among researchers, ranchers and government land managers.

Cutting juniper can improve greater sage grouse habitat, restore rangeland for grazing cattle and even provide jobs in struggling rural communities, the experts say.

John and Lynne Breese have a 30-year jump on them. In the draws and slopes outside Prineville, the Breeses have been cutting juniper since the late 1980s.

Walking a section of what's called the Stump Puller Pasture, John Breese explains the rapid impact of cutting juniper. Trees on a 16-acre parcel of the pasture were cut a year-and-a-half ago and the branches experiment.

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John and Lynne Breese of Prineville, Ore., have advocated juniper removal as a way to improve stream, soil and range health. They've been at it since the late 1980s, and policymakers have come around to their way of thinking.



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press A mature juniper tree lies where it was cut. While the tree might have supplied marketable lumber, hauling it to a sawmill is problematic.

Idaho aquifer agreement finalized

By JOHN O'CONNELL Capital Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho — Idaho surface and groundwater irrigators have finalized terms of an agreement aiming to reverse declining Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer levels.

The agreement, reached on July 1,

provides a potential longterm solution to a water call filed a decade ago by irrigation companies with the Surface Water Coalition against junior well irrigators with Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc.

Surface users say they've been injured by declining spring flows into the Snake River from Blackfoot to Milner Dam, due to the increase in junior well use.

The sides now have until Aug. 1 to convince member districts to participate, or continue facing the risk of curtailment during future dry

The agreement seeks to stabilize the aquifer within the next five years and meet its longterm goal of restoring levels to the average fill from 1991-2001 by 2026, according to IGWA attorney Randy Budge.

Aquifer levels during the target period were roughly between current lows and peak levels from the early

Washington vet sees chance for worse bird flu season

"We were struggling to work out

the recovery goal over the last few days," Budge said. "The experts looked at it and concluded trying to look at one year is probably not the way to do it."

Under the final terms sheet, well users will be expected to reduce their

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THIS WEEK IN THE CAPITAL PRESS

DROUGHT

Grass seed suffers from drought, heat Page 3

Packers assess damage in massive Wenatchee wildfire Page 5

er said Monday. the worsening scenario," he said. partment of Agriculture has

been reviewing last year's outbreak and planning to prevent and respond to a reoccurrence. One lesson from last year: It could have been worse.

By DON JENKINS

OLYMPIA — Bird flu

could return next winter with

new strains that are more prev-

alent in wild birds and more

deadly for chickens, Washing-

ton State Veterinarian Joe Bak-

'We have to be ready for

The Washington State De-

Capital Press

The virus in Washington was limited to a small per-



WSDA prepares for second season with virus deadly to poultry

winter in the Coweeman River in Washington. Migratory birds brought centage of wild ducks and raptors, four mixed-bird back-

bird flu to Washington in mid-December 2014. State Veterinarian Joe Baker says officials need to be prepared for another outbreak this coming winter. Don Jenkins/Capital Press antined infected premises. "Frankly, compared to

A goose flaps its wings last

what happened in the Mississippi Flyway, we got off pretty easy," Baker said. "We can't necessarily count on that good fortune the next time it hits." The first U.S. detection of

highly pathogenic bird flu was

in mid-December at a lake in

next two months throughout the West, including at two commercial poultry farms in California. The Western outbreaks stopped in mid-February, but

northwest Washington. The disease appeared over the

the virus resurfaced in early March in the Midwest, with much more disastrous consequences. More than 48 million birds in 15 states have been culled, according to the USDA. The last case was confirmed June 17 in Iowa.

The USDA investigated outbreaks at more than 80 commercial farms and concluded that while migratory birds introduced the virus, biosecurity lapses spread it.

Turn to FLU, Page 12

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yard flocks and a game bird

farm of mostly pheasants. The

outbreaks were spaced apart

geographically and chrono-

logically, keeping WSDA

and the U.S. Department

of Agriculture from being

overwhelmed as they quar-

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