

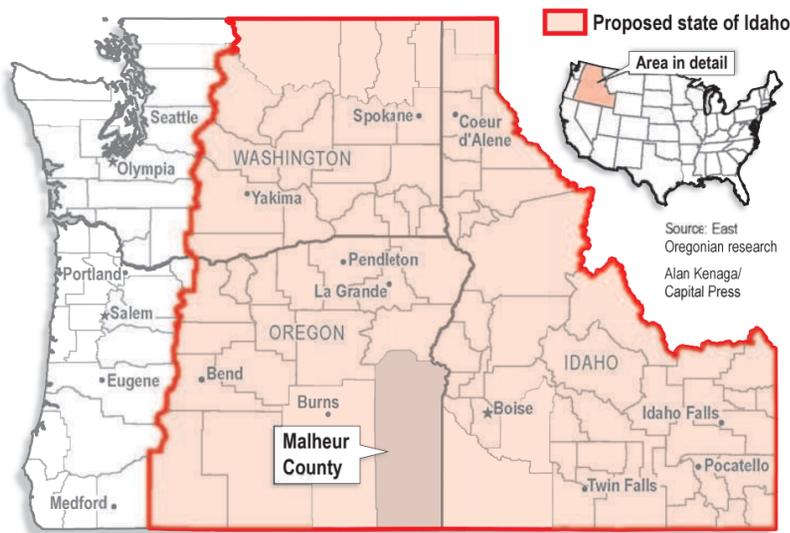
Oregon

Malheur County farmers say they would love to be part of Idaho

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

New Idaho: Re-drawing the map

A La Grande, Ore. farmer is seeking comment on the idea of eastern portions of Washington and Oregon joining Idaho. The new, supersized Idaho would see a 125 percent population increase.



Online:

Online discussion groups have been set up on Facebook and Yahoo.

ONTARIO, Ore. — A recent effort to create a forum where people can discuss the idea of eastern Oregon and Washington counties joining Idaho was welcomed by farmers in Oregon's Malheur County.

If any county in the two states is a good fit for Idaho, it's Malheur County, farmers and agribusiness owners in that county told Capital Press.

"I guarantee you we'd be all for it," said Kay Riley, manager of Snake River Produce, an onion shipping-packing facility in Nyssa, Ore., a few hundred yards from Idaho. "We don't have anything in common with the western part of Oregon."

Farmers in this area grow the same crops, are in the same time zone and many of the Oregon farmers have Idaho cell phone numbers.

Malheur County farmers and ranchers are more conservative and identify more

politically with their Idaho counterparts, said Shay Myers, general manager of Owyhee Produce, an onion shipper-packer in Nyssa.

"Everything about Malheur County is more identi-

fied with Idaho," he said. "I wish I knew how to actually make this happen. I wouldn't mind trying to help."

The major crops grown in this area — onions, sugar beets, mint, seed — are

grown by farmers on both sides of the border and the industries are closely linked.

An onion processing facility in Parma, Idaho, for example, uses onions from farmers in both states and

sugar beets grown in Malheur County end up at a processing facility in Nampa, Idaho.

"With the kind of agricultural industry they have over there, we'd take them in a heart beat," said Rep. Gayle Batt, R-Wilder.

If Idaho annexed Malheur County, it would make life easier for Oregon farmers who have to deal with tougher state regulations than Idaho growers do, said Paul Skeen, president of Malheur County Onion Growers Association.

"We would love to be in Idaho," he said. "Idaho is an agriculture-friendly state and Idaho has a governor that is looking to help agriculture in any way possible."

Oregon State University researcher Bill Buhrig, who has farmed in Malheur County all his life, said growers here have talked about join-

ing Idaho for as long as he can remember.

While it's a nice idea, the logistics of accomplishing that are formidable and incredibly complex, he said.

"There is absolutely no way that would ever happen, but it's fun to talk about," he said.

Idaho elected officials and representatives of the state's congressional delegation said the effort has to originate on the Oregon side but they would be willing to help once it got going.

Ken Parsons, a retired farmer from La Grande, Ore., recently made news for creating a Yahoo forum where people can seriously discuss the idea of counties in eastern Oregon and Washington joining Idaho.

"I don't have any of those answers but there are people out there with that knowledge," Parsons said about the logistical hurdles. "I'm trying to get people sitting around this big Internet table and start building a consensus on how to do it."

Wolf that hadn't been seen in four years turns up in Klamath County

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press



Courtesy of ODFW

OR-3, a 3-year-old male wolf from the Imnaha pack, is shown in this image captured from video taken by an ODFW employee in 2011 in Wallowa County, Ore.

A radio-collared wolf that dispersed from Northeast Oregon and hadn't been heard from for four years has turned up the Cascade Mountains in northern Klamath County.

OR-3, as the wolf is designated, was identified from a photograph taken this summer by a trail camera set up by a private individual.

Like OR-7, Oregon's famous wandering wolf, OR-3 dispersed from the Imnaha Pack, leaving that group in May 2011. He appears to have cut a diagonal south by southwest across the state to the Cascades, also like OR-7 did.

OR-3's radio signal was picked up in the Fossil wildlife management unit in the summer of 2011 and near Prineville in September that year. He hadn't been located since.

Some Oregon wolves wear GPS collars that emit location information at set periods and are picked up by computer. OR-3 wore a VHF radio collar, which requires wildlife biologists to locate it in the field with telemetry equipment, according to ODFW. The wolf's radio collar probably isn't working at this point, the department said in a news release.

The department had no other information about OR-3. The unidentified per-

son whose trail camera took the photo asked ODFW not to share it with the public. It's not yet known whether OR-3 is part of a pack. OR-7, which wandered into Northern California before returning to Southwest Oregon's Cascades, is paired with a female and has produced pups.

Locating OR-3 bolsters the department's findings that Oregon's wolf population is increasing in number and range distribution. Wolves migrated into Oregon from Idaho, where they were released as part of a national wolf recovery program, and biologists have

long expected they would spread from Northeastern Oregon to the Cascades. The first Oregon pack was detected and designated in 2008, and the state now has a minimum of 83 wolves. The minimum total stood at 85 until the Sled Springs pair were found dead of an unknown cause the week of Aug. 24. Russ Morgan, ODFW wolf program coordinator, has estimated Oregon has 90 to 100 wolves; the minimum population is based on confirmed counts.

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Walden backs forest management bill

By MITCH LIES
For the Capital Press



Walden

SUNRIVER, Ore. — U.S. Rep. Greg Walden spoke of frustration with the U.S. Senate's unwillingness to address forest policy, and fielded questions on the uncertainty surrounding the House speakership during a presentation at the Oregon Forest Industries Council's annual meeting here Oct. 12.

Asked who is going to be the next Speaker of the House, Walden, R-Ore., said: "I hope it is Paul Ryan, but I don't know if he'll do it."

Walden said he talked to Ryan, R-Wis., on Oct. 9 about replacing Speaker John Boehner, who has announced he plans to leave his seat Oct. 29.

"There is a lot of pressure being put on Paul Ryan to step into this vacuum or void, and it is the last thing he wants to do. He is a policy guy," Walden said.

"He's always wanted to

chair Ways and Means and rewrite the country's tax code and deal with trade issues. He doesn't want to do management, especially big ego management. And there is a lot of that in (Washington) D.C. right now," Walden said.

"I don't know if he'll do it," Walden said. "If he doesn't I don't know who can bridge the gap."

"Why don't you do it?" a participant asked.

"You need 218 votes," he said. "I'm supporting Paul Ryan."

Outside the questions on the House speakership, Walden focused on forest policy during his luncheon presentation, specifically on the unwillingness of the Senate to revise federal forest management.

U.S. House, bipartisan legislation has been passed to try and give us active management of federal forests to improve their health, to protect their watersheds," Walden said.

"It provides larger categorical exclusions to move quickly on projects that reduce fuel loads," he said. "And when there is a fire, there is really no funding stream to replant after these fires on federal lands."

"This legislation, through expediting recovery operations, would require 75 percent of burn lands to be reforested and paid for with salvage," he said.

"Also, just like you are affected in our rural communities, every time a forest project is halted, the outside groups that sue on forest projects should have to have a little skin in the game," he said. "So under this bill, they would be required to post a bond before litigating on collaborative, or community, wildfire protection plans."

Aviation company stops spraying, faces fines

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

despite a suspension of its applicator's license.

An Oregon agricultural aviation company has agreed to stop spraying pesticides for the next month while it turns over application records to farm regulators.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture sought an injunction against Applebee Aviation of Banks, Ore., because the company allegedly continued to spray pesticides

with ODA and is still performing non-pesticide services, such as Christmas tree harvesting and fertilizer applications, he said.

"The other agricultural support activities are still going on," said Ireland. Pesticide regulators at ODA spoke with Applebee Aviation about its safety concerns over the spring and summer but suspended the company's applicator license on Sept. 25 after learning "these pesticide-related worker safety deficiencies were continuing," according to an agency document.

The company is cooperating

Workers did not wear all the protective gear required to apply several herbicides and weren't properly trained, among other problems, according to ODA.

Despite this suspension, the company sprayed pesticides four times on timber tracts in Clatsop County and on 800 acres of U.S. Bureau of Land Management property near Christmas Valley, Ore., with each violation warranting a \$10,000 penalty, according to ODA.

"Applebee Aviation demonstrated that it will ignore or fail to comply with any or all pesticide application requirements if compliance will cost it money," the agency said in a civil penalty order.

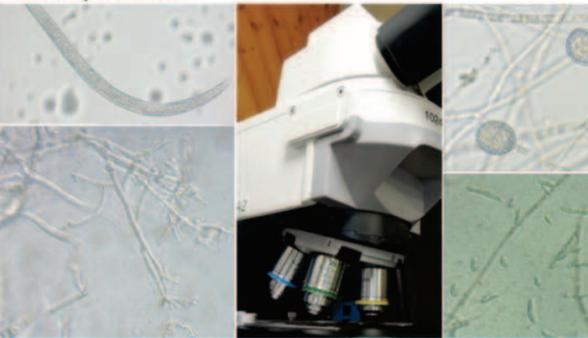
The ODA claims that the company's owner, Michael Applebee, asked the agency for an exception to the license suspension because the BLM contract was worth \$3 million but was told such exceptions aren't possible.

By disregarding the suspension order, Applebee Aviation has undermined the "level playing field" for pesticide applicators who follow the rules, which justifies "immediate and severe consequences," ODA said in a court filing.



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