



Courtesy of ODFW

The Imnaha wolf pack's alpha male after being refitted with a working GPS collar on May 19, 2011. It's one of four wolves recently killed by wildlife officials because of livestock depredation.

Complaint claims lawmakers misled Legislature on wolf bill

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
EO Media Group

The environmental group Cascadia Wildlands is accusing three Oregon lawmakers of knowingly misrepresenting a bill that ratified the state's decision to remove gray wolves from the endangered species list.

The complaint was filed Monday with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission against Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie; Rep. Sal Esquivel, R-Medford; and Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove.

Barreto introduced House Bill 4040 during the short legislative session earlier this year. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife had previously determined wolves no longer need endangered species protections, and the Fish and Wildlife Commission followed through with delisting wolves in November 2015.

HB 4040 effectively gave the Legislature's stamp of approval, and Gov. Kate Brown signed off on the bill in March.

Cascadia Wildlands argues that in order to secure votes for the bill Witt, Esquivel and Barreto made false statements that HB 4040 would not affect a judicial review of the wolf delisting decision.

"There's a real concern this bill passed through the House with a fundamental misunderstanding of what it does," said Nick Cady, legal director for Cascadia Wildlands. "Salem can be somewhat of a black box ... We perceived this as pretty egregious."

Cascadia Wildlands, Or-

egon Wild and the Center for Biological Diversity had all requested a judicial review of the delisting decision. The case was tossed by the Oregon Court of Appeals on April 22, which cited HB 4040.

Cady claims the bill's sole purpose was to block their review, despite claims from Barreto, Witt and Esquivel.

According to the complaint, Barreto said during a Feb. 4 hearing that the bill "does nothing more than shore up the decision by the Fish and Wildlife Commission," and "Our objective in this is not to usurp the authority of the commission. It is only to shore up the decision that they have made and to make the (wolf) plan a workable plan as was written." He also sent a written document to colleagues stating the bill had no language precluding judicial review.

However, on Feb. 16, the Legislative Counsel Committee issued a report to Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, stating that the only legal effect of HB 4040 was to "validate any real or perceived irregularities" in ODFW's decision under state law.

"In essence, the only effect of the bill was to preclude judicial review of the commission's delisting decision," the complaint reads.

HB 4040 passed the House 33-23, and the Senate 17-11.

Since then, ODFW shot and killed four wolves from the Imnaha Pack in northeast Oregon for frequently attacking livestock in the area. There is still no legal hunting of wolves allowed in Oregon.

Water outlook in E. Oregon still improving

By **SEAN ELLIS**
Capital Press

ONTARIO, Ore. — Farmers who depend on the Owyhee Reservoir will receive more irrigation water in 2016 than they have the past two years combined.

As a result, they are planting more high-water — and more lucrative — crops such as corn, sugar beets and onions, which they cut back on the past three years because of the drought.

Land that was left idle because of the lack of water is now being put back into production.

A good snowpack year in the Owyhee Basin has caused the water supply situation to go from good to better.

The Owyhee Irrigation District has increased the 2016 allotment for its patrons to 3.8 acre-feet. It had been tentatively set at 3 acre-feet in March.

The 1,800 farms in Eastern Oregon and part of Idaho that depend on the reservoir received 1.7 and 1.6 acre-feet the past two years.

The OID system has been running for more than three weeks now but the reservoir level is still rising a little bit each day. It held 430,000 acre-feet of storage water on April 27.

"There is a hair more water coming in to the reservoir than is going out. We're doing pretty good," said Malheur County dairyman and farmer Frank Ausman, a member of the OID board of directors.

He said there's a good chance patrons will end up with their full 4 acre-foot allotment this year.

"We think we'll be able to tweak it again and get to 4 acre-feet but at this point we don't want to give something away that we don't have yet," he said.

Reservoir in-flows were above 1,500 cubic feet per second on April 27, well ahead of last year, when they were near 200 cubic feet per second, said OID board member and farmer Bruce Corn.

"I'm very optimistic we'll have a full 4-foot allotment this year," Corn said.

Farmers and Oregon



Sean Ellis/Capital Press file

A sugar beet field near Ontario, Ore., is irrigated in this file photo from June 11, 2015. Irrigators this year hope to get their full allotment of water because reservoirs are filling.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

A winter wheat field near Ontario, Ore., is irrigated April 26. Farmers in this area who depend on the Owyhee Reservoir will receive more irrigation water this year than the past two seasons combined.

State University Extension agents say corn and sugar beet acres, which were down by about half the past two seasons, are up substantially this year, and onion acres will also increase.

"There definitely seems to be a lot more sugar beets and corn than there has been the last couple of years," said Stuart Reitz, an OSU Extension cropping systems agent in Ontario. "I think things are getting back to a more

normal routine and farmers are starting to get their rotations back in order."

Ausman, who likes to grow as much of his own animal feed as possible, said he left a lot of ground idle the past two years.

"Now I'm farming every drop of land I've got," he said.

Ausman said that in his area, "A lot of ground that was setting empty these past few years has been planted to corn this year."

Corn said farmers in the area who get their irrigation water from the Malheur Basin are also in a much better situation this year.

"The whole Malheur County area is significantly better than we were the last couple of years," he said.

Washington FFA members gear up for convention

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

ROSALIA, Wash. — Rosalia High School sophomore Collin Pittmann's hard work all comes down to this.

Pittmann will compete against other students from across the state in the prepared public speaking career development event at the Washington FFA state convention May 12-14 in Pullman, Wash.

He will speak about wolves in the state, including the problems they cause for livestock producers.

Pittmann devotes every weekend to working on his speech and finding new newspaper articles on the topic. He's spent more than 30 hours on the speech, which is about seven minutes long.

"When I get to convention they're also going to ask me questions, so I need to be informed on anything happening with wolves in the state," he said.

Pittmann is one of more than 2,000 FFA members who will make their way to the annual convention on the Washington State University campus in Pullman, said Abbie DeMeerleer, executive director of the Washington FFA. About 400 advisers and chaperones and 300 guests are also pre-registered.

This year's theme is "Come Together."

DeMeerleer said FFA will announce a new record membership number at the convention.

"We're still growing," she said.

The event will include an expanded education expo, at which industry partners and FFA members can discuss career and education opportunities, and an educational program for elementary students,



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Rosalia High School sophomore Collin Pittmann practices for the prepared public speaking competition the morning of April 27 in the high school shop. Pittmann is one of more than 2,000 FFA members who will attend the Washington FFA state convention May 12-14 in Pullman, Wash.

both introduced last year.

Keynote speakers will include barrel racer and motiva-

Online
<http://www.washingtonffa.org/>

tional speaker Amberley Snyder, who continues to ride horses after being paralyzed from the waist down in an automobile accident; Judson Laipply, creator of the popular "Evolution of Dance" video on YouTube; and National FFA Western Region Vice President Sarah Draper.

DeMeerleer hopes FFA members will leave the keynote presentations "inspired, motivated and excited about what they can do."

Past state officers will also be recognized during the May 14 evening session.

DeMeerleer aims to keep cultivating relationships with industry leaders by having state officers visit them, and having them attend career development events.

Rosalia's Pittmann advanced to nationals last year in

the creed career development event.

"You're with a lot of like-minded people — they're nervous, they want to make a difference in their local communities and FFA chapters," he said. "They all want to do well. It's a really exciting time for all FFA members."

DeMeerleer recommends stopping by the Cougar Lounge at Beasley Coliseum before 5 p.m. each day to purchase tickets to attend sessions. They are \$5.

BITTENBENDER RETIREMENT ANTIQUE AUCTION

2 DAY AUCTION - 2 RINGS - 1000'S OF ITEMS!
Fri. & Sat. May 13th & 14th- 10am MST
2121 Caldwell Blvd. Nampa, ID
INCREDIBLE SELECTION OF 1700'S & 1800'S PENNSYLVANIA/ EAST COAST AREA ANTIQUES, PRIMITIVES, COLLECTIBLES, POTTERY, CROCKS, & SO MUCH MORE!
Preview May 12th, 10am-7pm
Go to www.downsauction.com for complete details.

DOWNSAUCTION
Since 1979

19-4/17 Nampa, ID • 208-467-1712

Bag needs? Bag solutions!

SMITH PACKAGING
YOUR MAIN SUPPLIER FOR:

- Polyethylene Bags
- Polypropylene Bags
- Paper Bags
- Bulk Bags
- Stretch Films
- Hay Sleeves
- Mesh Produce Bags
- Plastic Pallet Covers
- Bag Closure Products
- General Warehouse Supplies

Competitive pricing!
Great quality products!
Service you expect and trust!

- Halsey, Oregon: 541-369-2850
- Eastern Washington, Ed Kropf: 509-936-2652 or ed@smith-packaging.com

www.smithpackagingservices.com

Celebrating 75 Years Conserving the Idaho Way

LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

Sprinkler Irrigation, No-Till Drills, Fences
Livestock Feeding Operations
Solar Stock Water Pump Systems

2.5%-3.5%
Terms 7-15 Years
Up to \$200,000

swc.idaho.gov | 208-332-1790