

Oregon

Wolves kill a calf in Oregon's Wallowa County



Wolves killed and ate most of a 150-pound calf in Oregon's Wallowa County April 7.

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Wolves killed and ate most of a 150-pound calf April 7 in Northeast Oregon's Wallowa County, according to Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

A livestock owner notified ODFW after finding the calf's remains and a dead cow nearby. Wolf tracks, the size and location of bite and scrape marks and tracking collar data showed wolves were responsible, according

to an ODFW report. Most of the tissue and the hindquarters of the calf were missing. The cow was unmarked except for a severe eye injury; its death wasn't attributed to wolves.

Tracking collar data showed a wolf designated OR-50 was at the kill site at 6 a.m. on April 7. The wolf is part of the newly designated Harl Butte Pack.

The attack happened on private land near the Imnaha River.

ODFW recently issued

its annual wolf report, which showed what biologists said was weak population growth in 2016. The report showed Oregon had a confirmed minimum of 112 wolves at the end of 2016, only two more than the previous year.

ODFW officials say bad winter weather made it hard to count wolves this past year, and believe there are more than the survey shows. Other factors for the low population gain may include the disease parvovirus, which could have taken a toll on pups; blood

samples taken from captured wolves showed a high exposure rate to severe infections. Also, at least seven wolves were killed in 2016: four of them were shot by ODFW for repeated livestock attacks, one was shot while caught in the act of attacking livestock, and two were killed in circumstances under investigation by Oregon State Police.

Meanwhile, the ODFW Commission is reviewing the state's wolf management plan this year. The first hearing is April 21 in Klamath Falls.

Oregon wetland exemption moves forward

Bill would allow hay exporter to replace burned-down barns

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — While bringing a hay exporter one step closer to rebuilding his burned-down barns, Oregon lawmakers are preparing for a broader discussion about wetland regulations.

After fire destroyed his two barns last year, state regulators informed hay exporter Jesse Bounds that rebuilding the structures violated Oregon fill-removal law because his 12-acre property near Junction City was a wetland.

The parcel wasn't identified as a wetland on federal, state or county maps, but the Department of State Land nonetheless determined the project required a wetland fill-removal permit due to soil characteristics and other features.

Under state law, the fact that Bounds had received county approval for rebuilding the barn was irrelevant.

The House Agriculture Committee has now approved a bill that would change Oregon fill-removal law to rectify the situation for Bounds and farmers who find themselves in a similar dilemma.

On April 13, the committee unanimously sent House Bill 2785 to the House floor with a "do pass" recommendation.

Under HB 2785, fill-removal requirements would not apply when replacing a dwelling or agricultural building on farmland, as long as the structure receives county approval, existed before 2017 and would be on the same parcel.

Committee Chairman Brian Clem, D-Salem, said the bill is "just a tiny starting place" for dealing with conflicts that may arise from Oregon's wetland rules.

Wetlands are "treasured in this state" but it's been too long since lawmakers looked at how they're defined and the process for resolving fill-removal disputes, Clem said.

"Sorry to spring this on



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Jesse Bounds runs a straw-compressing facility in Junction City, Ore., that state regulators claim was rebuilt on a wetland after a fire. A bill addressing his situation is headed to the House floor.

you, but prepare to deal with wetlands for another year," he said.

For example, lawmakers should consider the creation of authoritative maps for identifying wetlands and whether fill-removal enforcement should remain complaint-driven, as it is now, Clem said.

Another bill that was considered by the House Agriculture Committee, House Bill 2786, proposed a more extensive solution by exempting

properties from fill-removal law unless they're included in the State Wetland Inventory.

The Oregon Farm Bureau and the Oregonians in Action property rights group supported HB 2786, arguing that landowners need a reliable method to determine if they're subject to wetland rules, other than waiting for a complaint to DSL.

However, opponents of the bill claimed the State Wetland Inventory set the definition for "wetland" too narrowly, since it doesn't include many wetlands.

Clem said that HB 2786 would die this legislative session but he planned to convene a workgroup on the wetland issue in February 2018.

Two committee members who were first elected to the House last year — Rep. David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford, and Rep. Karin Power, D-Milwaukie — volunteered to work toward a longer-term solution on the wetland question.

Clem attributed their requests to "freshman enthusiasm."

"Wow, you are a glutton for punishment," he said.

Bill exempting some rural Oregon counties from land use goals survives key test

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — An bill exempting slow-growing counties from Oregon's land use goals is staying alive this legislative session, though it's probably headed for revisions.

Local governments would be exempt from statewide goals intended to preserve farmland and contain growth under Senate Bill 432, as long as they have 50,000 or fewer residents and haven't expanded since the last federal census.

The Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee has unanimously referred SB 432 to the Senate Rules Committee without recommendation.

The action allows the bill to survive an April 18 legislative deadline that doesn't apply to the Senate Rules Committee.

Lawmakers need time to change SB 432 to ensure it doesn't have a negative impact on the sage grouse in Eastern Oregon, said Sen. Mike Dembrow, D-Portland.

"This bill needs work," Dembrow said. The greater sage grouse was a candidate for federal protection under the Endangered Species Act, but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided that listing the bird as threatened was unwarranted.

The agency's decision was based in part on Oregon land use regulations as well as voluntary conservation efforts by ranchers.

Landowners would be able to build new homes

while preserving historic ones under House Bill 3012, which was unanimously approved by the House Agriculture Committee.

New homes would be allowed on parcels of at least two acres in rural residential zones if the landowners convert historic houses built between 1850 and 1945 to "accessory dwelling units."

However, another broader proposal related to "accessory dwelling units" in rural areas has died this legislative session.

House Bill 1024 would permit such dwellings to be built on the same parcels as existing homes in rural residential zones, regardless of their historic status, allowing some new development that would otherwise be restricted under Oregon's land use laws.

The bill is not ready to move forward this year but will probably be the subject of a work group, said Sen. Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis, chair of the Senate Committee on Human Services.

With roughly 700,000 acres of land potentially affected by SB 1024, opponents worried the bill could create conflicts with farmland, rural roads and wildfire prevention.

"It was just too broad a brush," said Mary Kyle McCurdy, deputy director of the 1,000 Friends of Oregon conservation group.

McCurdy said she appreciated efforts by supporters of SB 1024 to develop "sideboards" limiting the bill's scope, despite the lack of an ultimate compromise.

Malheur County economic development bill goes to Ways and Means panel

By CLAIRE WITHYCOMBE
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A bill to issue \$10 million in lottery bonds to fund economic and workforce development projects in Malheur County passed out of committee Monday.

It heads next to Ways and Means, the Oregon Legislature's bicameral budget-writing committee, where it will face more vetting.

The legislation would create a specific fund and advisory board. Seven voting members appointed by the governor would make grants and loans intended to spur economic development. An eighth nonvoting member would be director of the Oregon Business Development Department, which would administer the funds and provide staff for the board.

Since it was introduced as legislation in February, the area of the proposed region has been expanded to "better reflect" the communities in the Treasure Valley, said Speaker of the House Tina Kotek, D-Portland, a sponsor of the bill along with State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario.

The proposal will face competition for limited state bond funds.

While the voting members of the board would make decisions about how the money

is awarded, if passed, the bill would place another economic development program under the administrative umbrella of the Oregon Business Development Department.

In a recent audit, the Oregon Secretary of State's Office found the department didn't report on some outcomes of economic development incentives and loan programs, and could be better at reporting information to the public and lawmakers about awards to specific businesses.

The prevailing argument in favor of the legislation seems to be that southeastern Oregon faces a competitive disadvantage vis-a-vis Idaho, which has fewer regulations such as land use restrictions and a lower minimum wage.

Under an amendment to the bill, the board could identify policies that place the region at a competitive disadvantage; the bill would allow the board to request a waiver from the appropriate commission, board or agency on the specific issue, which would in turn be evaluated during a public hearing.

Paul Skeen, of Nyssa, the president of the Malheur County Onion Growers Association, said the measure would allow the area's onion growers to be more competitive.

GOT MILKERS?

Celebrate June Dairy Month

in Capital Press' 33RD Annual Dairy Industry SPECIAL SECTION June 2ND, 2017

Our annual Dairy Special Section spotlights dairy operations and operators in California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. It features an in depth look at the situations and successes - needs and concerns of this dynamic industry.

To reach our print and online readers, contact your sales representative or call 1-800-882-6789.

Ad space reservation is by Friday, May 5th.

Capital Press The West's Ag Weekly

PO Box 2048 • Salem, OR 97308

(503) 364-4798

(800) 882-6789

Fax: (503) 364-2692 or (503) 370-4383

www.capitalpress.com



Salmon, Shrimp & Crab
Bio-active soil & foliar fertilizer
in a delicious 200 mesh liquid for
healthy soil & beautiful produce
www.pacificgro.com

