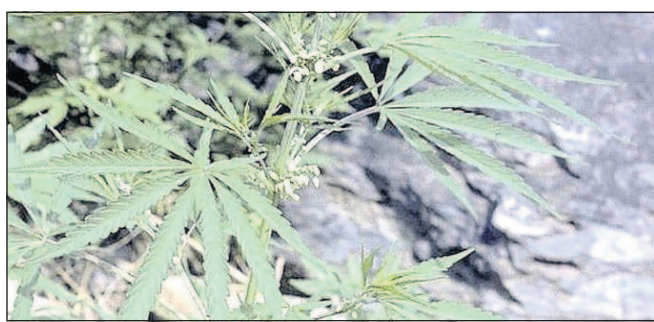


Washington

Washington's hemp plan suddenly hazy

Lawmakers move ahead of federal law

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press



Courtesy of Richard A. Howard/USDA NRCS

Washington lawmakers have passed a bill to remove hemp plants from the state's list of controlled substances. The move is at odds with federal law and could undercut the state's fledgling hemp program by opening the door for unlicensed cultivation, according to the state Department of Agriculture.

its program under the limited freedom granted to states in the 2014 Farm Bill to "research" hemp. The Drug Enforcement Administration reaffirmed last summer that despite loosening attitudes, cannabis plants — whether the grower calls them hemp or marijuana — remain subject to the federal Controlled Substances Act.

Federal lawmakers, including Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden, have introduced legislation to remove hemp from the Schedule I controlled substance list under the law.

State legislators apparently acted under the supposition that hemp was no longer a federally controlled substance.

"Under federal law, hemp is not considered a controlled substance. This bill would put our state in accord with that," said Senate Law and Justice Committee Chairman Mike Padden, R-Spokane Valley.

Through a spokesman, Padden referred questions about the statement to the bill's sponsor, Rep. Matt Shea, also a Spokane Valley Republican. Shea told Padden's committee last month that taking hemp off the state's controlled

substance list would "harmonize" state and federal laws.

In an email, Shea defended Padden's statement as accurate, pointing to a 2004 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision. The court struck down DEA regulations that banned hemp foodstuffs even if they contained only non-psychoactive trace amounts of THC.

DEA required Washington state to apply for a permit to import hemp seeds for planting. DEA instructed WSDA to secure the seeds and supervise their planting.

"Clearly, the legislators do not understand federal law, which is very clear," said private hemp consultant Joy Beckerman. "They think they know better than the Department of Agriculture."

Beckerman has advised policymakers to stay within the Farm Bill, partly to keep hemp farmers eligible for USDA programs, financial services and federal water. "Now we're in the wild West," she said.

WSDA policy adviser Steve Fuller had cautioned senators about removing hemp from the state's banned substances list.

Farm Bureau to feds: Don't bring grizzlies to N. Cascades

Federal study says harm to ag 'inconsequential'

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

The federal government should abandon plans to turn loose grizzly bears in the North Cascades, according to the Washington Farm Bureau.

Ranchers and farmers already have enough trouble with coyotes, cougars and wolves, the organization's director of government relations, Tom Davis, said.

"It's death by a thousand cuts. An active grizzly population is another assault on farm families," he said.

The Farm Bureau submitted comments this week on a proposal by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife to introduce grizzly bears over 9,800 square miles across seven counties. The last confirmed sighting of a grizzly bear in the region was in 1996.

Restoring grizzlies would allow Pacific Northwest residents to again experience grizzly bears in their native habitat, according to a preliminary federal report on the proposal's economic and environmental consequences.

The report says the harm to agriculture and livestock production would be "inconsequential," especially since ranchers would be eligible for compensation. The Farm Bureau, however, says its members nearest where the bears would be released are concerned about their safety, livelihoods and communities.

"Every time a ranch family or family leaves it's another attack on the local economy. And it just does not make sense for the rest of an econ-



Courtesy of National Park Service/Jake Bortscheller

A grizzly bear approaches a backpacker in the Katmai National Park and Preserve in Alaska. The Washington Farm Bureau says the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should drop a proposal to import grizzlies into the North Cascades.

omy based on outdoor recreation," Davis said.

Washington law forbids the state from importing grizzly bears. Nevertheless, federal officials have proposed trapping grizzlies in Montana and Canada and releasing them on federal lands in Washington.

Another option, favored by the Farm Bureau, is the "no-action alternative." Since the agencies say grizzly bears are unlikely to return to Washington on their own, the Farm Bureau is essentially asking federal officials to give up returning grizzly bears to the North Cascades.

"Absolutely," Davis said. The agencies will take comments on the draft environmental impact statement until April 28.

Under one scenario, federal wildlife managers would release up to 10 bears over two summers, watch for two years and either release 10 more bears or take a more-aggressive course. That would mean releasing five to sev-

en bears a year for five to 10 years. The goal would be to have 200 bears within 60 to 100 years.

In a more aggressive option, wildlife managers would not cap the number of bears released each year. The goal would be to have 200 bears within roughly 25 years.

More than 220,000 cattle graze in the recovery region, according to the report. Even with 200 bears, only one cow and two sheep a year would be attacked by grizzlies, and maybe not that many, according to an estimate in the study.

"I think we were hearing the same thing about wolves before they were firmly entrenched in the state," Davis said.

In 2011, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife estimated that once the state had 100 wolves, there would be two to 12 confirmed attacks on cattle each year. The state reached that mark last year, and WDFW confirmed 10 depredations.

Updated state rules for restricted-use herbicides released for comments

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press file
Washington State University weed science professor Drew Lyon.

The Washington State Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on proposed restricted-use herbicide rules.

The new guidelines would be simpler for farmers to navigate, said Drew Lyon, a Washington State University weed science professor.

Each county in Eastern Washington currently has its own specially designated areas, meaning that a farmer needs to know the rules for the particular area he is spraying.

The proposal will create one set of rules, Lyon said.

That's true wherever you happen to be," he said.

The changes modernize the rules and get rid of redundancies, Lyon said.

Lyon believes it's a good change, but advises farmers to look over the proposal and let the state know what they think, Lyon said. "They need to get comments from growers."

A task force of industry members and WSU researchers helped develop the proposed changes, he said.

"I think it's a good-faith effort, and now people who have to live by these rules should take a look and see what they think of them," Lyon said.

"I think it should help, because everyone should be aware of what they have to do," Lyon said.

"Basically, if you get within a certain distance of an orchard or a vineyard, you have to follow certain guidelines.

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