

# ODFW Commission hears wolf plan testimony

By KATY NESBITT  
For the Capital Press

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore. — In the heart of Southern Oregon's burgeoning wolf territory, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission April 21 took testimony on the state's draft wolf plan revision.

The meeting was dominated by input on the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan's five-year review. Wolf advocates pleaded for stricter conservation measures while ranchers asked for quicker determinations on suspected wolf-caused livestock losses and hunters pushed for controlled hunts when wolf populations threaten deer and elk populations.

Russ Morgan, Oregon's wolf coordinator, said conservation remains the focus of the wolf plan, but it also has management flexibility when it comes to problem wolves.

"We are using an adaptive approach as originally intended," Morgan said.

Capturing, collaring and monitoring collar data as wolf numbers increase and territo-



Katy Nesbitt/For the Capital Press

Veril Nelson of Roseburg, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association Western Oregon wolf committee chairman, testified on behalf of ranchers at the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting April 21 in Klamath Falls as Todd Nash, OCA's Eastern Oregon wolf committee chairman, looks on.

ries expand is becoming increasingly difficult, Morgan said, and monitoring requirements in the current plan are potentially unattainable or unnecessary.

"We are not getting away from collaring wolves but being more selective," Morgan said.

Bill Nicholson was one Southern Oregon rancher in attendance who said he's

lived with wolves on Wood River Valley ranch for a number of years, but 2016 was what he called the "breakout year" when four calves were confirmed as wolf kills last October.

"The only reason they stopped (killing) was because we shipped the cattle," Nicholson said.

The Rogue pack was blamed for the losses, but a

couple weeks ago a lone, collared wolf known as OR-25 was detected near his ranch. He said he isn't into lethal control, but wants more tools to prevent kills.

"In a week or two there will be 30,000 head of cattle in the upper (Wood River) valley and I think we are going to have a problem right away," Nicholson said.

One of the more controversial provisions in the wolf plan is the allowance of controlled hunts by certified hunters and trappers in cases where deer and elk populations are threatened by wolf predation. Advocates voiced their opposition over any kind of hunting to control wolf populations while members of Oregon Hunters Association pressed Morgan to keep controlled hunt provisions in the plan. Jim Akenson, the association's conservation director, said, "Hunting is a critical tool that needs to be integrated."

The number of confirmed wolf-caused livestock kills and injuries that can trigger lethal removal of wolves was also

hotly contested. Nick Cady of Eugene's Cascadia Wildlands said increasing the number of incidences from two to three was an improvement. Under the new proposed rules four of the 11 packs would be eligible to have some of their numbers killed. Most of the other advocates urged the number of confirmed depredations increase beyond three in a year before the state sanctions killing wolves.

Rob Klavins, of Oregon Wild, said he was optimistic when he read ODFW's press release concerning the plan, and supports some of the changes. But, he said, the plain wording of the draft fails to match the rhetoric used to describe it.

"On balance, we cannot support this draft wolf plan," he said. "And that's a big deal. Since 2005, Oregon Wild has supported Oregon's wolf plan."

Oregon Cattlemen's Association president John O'Keefe said he understands wolves are part of the landscape and here to stay, but it's time to recognize the burden on live-

stock producers.

"A lot has been asked of Oregon's livestock producers, mentally, financially and emotionally," O'Keefe said. "We want the changes to the plan to reflect these inequities."

O'Keefe cited research that claims partial pack removal is best soon after predation events.

"We are told if there are wolves present that don't prey on livestock leave them alone, but it is equally true with problem wolves," O'Keefe said.

Bill Gawlowski was the public-at-large representative on the stakeholder team that developed the 2005 wolf plan. He said that in light of funding constraints the wolf advocate groups represented at the April commission meeting raise money to offset management costs.

"I've counted the memberships listed today of these groups and counted their memberships that total 70,000. You might want to put your money where your mouth is," Gawlowski said.

## In 'minor miracle,' most cull onions in Idaho and Oregon disposed of

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

NYSSA, Ore. — The Idaho-Oregon onion industry has managed to dispose of virtually all of the estimated 100 million pounds of onions that were lost this winter when dozens of sheds collapsed under the weight of unprecedented snow and ice.

Both states extended their deadlines for disposal of cull onions from March 15 to April 15 this year and most of the onions were properly disposed of before that date, officials in both states said.

With the deadline looming last week and a lot of onions still not disposed of, the state of Oregon gave the Lytle Boulevard landfill in Malheur County emergency permission to build another trench to handle the onslaught of culls.

"They significantly ramped up (the amount of onions they were taking) and pretty much everything is disposed of at this point," Lindsay Eng, director of certification programs for the Oregon Department of Agriculture, said on April 20.

The onion maggot, which is frequently found in piles of cull onions, can devastate onion and other vegetable crops. Both states require culls to be properly disposed of by March 15 so they don't spread



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Hundreds of thousands of pounds of onions were ruined when this storage shed in Nyssa, Ore., collapsed under the weight of winter snow and ice. Other sheds in the region were similarly damaged.

to the new crop.

Cull onions can be disposed of in landfills or pits, by discing or plowing them into a field, feeding them to livestock or by chopping or shredding and cultivating them into fields.

The states' cull onion rules affect growers and packing sheds in Malheur County, Ore., and Ada, Canyon, Gem, Payette, Owyhee and Washington counties in Idaho.

If weather delays disposal, cull onions must be treated with an Environmental Protection Agency-labeled insecticide.

Disposing of 100 million pounds of onions was no easy task, said Casey Prentiss, an ODA field operations manager in Ontario who worked closely with the industry.

"It's kind of a minor miracle that we were able to get that amount of onions disposed of,"

he said. "It's been quite a feat."

Across the border, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture has investigators in the field following up with growers and processors to ensure they

have properly disposed of their culls, ISDA communications director Chanel Tewalt told Capital Press in an email.

"Given the extreme weather this winter, it was important to provide additional time for onion disposal but that flexibility has to be balanced with the recognition that mitigating pest hatches is a significant concern," she said. "We are working in concert with industry to balance the need for disposal with their ability to dispose of culls due to weather conditions."

Violators can be fined up to \$10,000 but the ISDA's goal is to work with the industry to address the issue and avoid an onion maggot outbreak, Tewalt said.

## Pear growers renew oldest marketing order

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press



Green d'Anjou pears at harvest in Washington's Wenatchee Valley. Northwest pear growers have overwhelmingly extended the oldest marketing order.

Northwest pear growers have voted to continue their federal marketing order, the oldest in the country.

Some 478 pear growers in Washington and Oregon, representing 90 percent of production volume, voted in the Feb. 15-March 1 referendum to renew the Fresh Pear Committee of Marketing Order 927 for six years, according to USDA. About 97 percent of the growers who voted approved the renewal.

The order began in 1939 and now assesses each grower 38.5 cents per box for promotions, 3.1 cents for research and 3.3 cents for administration and support of

industry organizations.

The assessments generate roughly \$8.5 million to \$9 million annually.

Organic growers have opted out of promotional assessments.

The order allows the industry to collect and distribute vital size, grade and availability information throughout the season.

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