

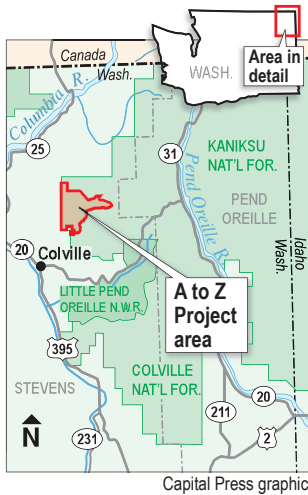
# Thinning project may move ahead

Court rejects arguments from Alliance for the Wild Rockies

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

An environmental group has failed to convince a federal appeals court that an injunction is warranted against a 12,800-acre thinning project in Washington's Colville National Forest.

The Alliance for the Wild Rockies hasn't proved that halting the A to Z Project is justified based on alleged violations of federal forest management and environ-



mental laws, according to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The plaintiff has "not demonstrated serious questions, much less a likelihood of success" in accusing the

U.S. Forest Service of botching its environmental analysis of the project, the 9th Circuit said.

The A to Z Project is intended to harvest commercial timber while changing the "trajectory" of the area from the "unhealthy path it is currently on to one that moves it toward a healthy and resilient forest," according to the Forest Service's analysis.

With the reduction in tree density, the forest will be less susceptible to wildfires and insect infestations, the agency said.

Rehabilitation of erosion-prone roads will also reduce sediment runoff into streams.

However, the Alliance for the Wild Rockies claimed

the Forest Service inadequately analyzed the impacts of logging on the fisher and the pine marten, which are fur-bearing mammals in the weasel family. The fisher is also a candidate for Endangered Species Act protections.

The agency determined that more than 2,000 acres of older trees and "core areas" for the pine marten will be excluded from logging, so it contends that the project won't interfere with the species' viability.

This conclusion was extended to the fisher, which has habitat preferences similar to the pine marten.

The plaintiff argued the Forest Service incorrectly considered the pine marten's

habitat as a proxy for the species instead of monitoring its actual population.

Similarly, the group claimed that pine marten habitat shouldn't serve as a proxy for the fisher population.

The 9th Circuit rejected both arguments, finding that the Forest Service was permitted to use such proxies in its analysis of the project.

The appellate court also ruled that road maintenance and reconstruction will prevent the project from causing sediment runoff at a rate that will harm fish.

Sediment runoff from grazing is also expected to decrease because vegetation is being allowed to regrow in overgrazed and riparian areas, the 9th Circuit said.



Courtesy of T&R Farms

Ron Reimann

## Water rights advocate dies in collision

Ron Reimann had 'overpowering sense of justice'

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

Eastern Washington farmer Ron Reimann believed in protecting growers' water rights, people who knew him say.

Reimann, 74, died July 30 when his side-by-side off-road vehicle was struck by a 2001 Chrysler van on a road near Kahlots, Wash., according to the Franklin County Sheriff's Office.

Reimann was one of 12 original board members for the Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association and a leader of the Washington State Potato Commission. He was also a commissioner for the Port of Pasco.

Reimann served as president of the irrigators association for the last eight years.

"Irrigated agriculture throughout Washington state is in much better shape as a result of his work," said Darryll Olsen, board representative of the irrigators association.

The association blocked efforts to reduce water rights for growers on the state and federal level, Olsen said.

"He had such an overpowering sense of justice and fairness," Olsen said. "He acted that way towards people, but he expected people to be protected as well."

Reimann served as chairman for the potato commission from 1994 to 1996 and remained active in the group, commission executive director Chris Voigt said.

And though Reimann was a great leader for the commission, Voigt believes his legacy will be water.

"He took great pride in making food on his farm and understood the value of irrigation for our country's food security," Voigt said.

The collision is still under investigation, according to the sheriff's office.

Reimann is survived by his wife, Rella, son, Reid, and granddaughter Anastasia. Services were Aug. 8.

# Idaho water resources agency takes on enforcement of rights on Lower Portneuf

By JOHN O'CONNELL  
Capital Press

POCATELLO, Idaho — Before July 27, administering water rights for the Lower Portneuf River was an informal process, involving gentlemen's agreements and neighborly handshakes.

But now, Idaho Department of Water Resources officials say management of Water District 29-D will be more typical and structured.

In the midst of a banner water year marked by plenty of water in most watersheds, the Idaho Department of Water Resources has instructed the district's watermaster, Randy Smith, to notify users of the first water call curtailments in the Lower Portneuf's history.

The water district was formed in 2011, but administration of water rights hadn't been feasible until now, based on the completion of the Snake River Basin Adjudication about three years ago, explained IDWR Water Compliance Bureau Chief Tim Luke.

"Now the adjudication is over and we have a unifying decree signed by the district court," so it's time to do it, Luke said.

Smith, a retired phone company worker who irrigates a couple of small alfalfa fields in Pocatello, initially notified irrigators with rights junior to 1903 to curtail their water use. Curtailment notices were broadened Aug. 6 to cover irrigators with rights junior to 1900.

The district includes 313 water rights junior to 1900, most of which are used to irrigate 10- to 15-acre pastures, lawns or small alfalfa fields.

In 2016, senior irrigators with the Surface Water Coalition reached a settlement with groundwater users whose wells were reducing Snake River spring flows.



John O'Connell/Capital Press

Randy Smith, watermaster of the Lower Portneuf River water district, stands along the banks of the Portneuf River at the pump he uses to irrigate alfalfa behind his Pocatello, Idaho, home. Smith has been asked to notify members of his district that they must curtail their water use for the first time, based on the Surface Water Coalition's water call.

The state is now looking at upstream surface users who have been diverting out of priority.

In normal water years, Luke said 1,900 Portneuf surface rights would be curtailed a month or two earlier than this season. He noted many water rights on the system's tributary streams are "self regulating" in dry years, as they dry up before the water rights expire.

"This is something new

going forward," Luke said. "It's not going to be easy starting off."

Smith anticipates many of his users will simply ignore the order, believing it's illogical to dry their land to deliver a pittance of water to users more than 100 miles away — especially during a year when it's not needed.

He understands state law gives priority to senior users, but vows his district's members will push for statutory

reforms to avoid waste. He doesn't plan to seek re-election as watermaster.

"The way it's always been in this district is, OK, I may have an older priority date and you may be junior, but you take a little bit and I've got enough to get me by," Smith said. "It's always been a neighborly thing, and now it's just a law thing."

Luke said the department is also laying the groundwork to eventually start actively

administering Water District 29-H, which will affect southeast Idaho irrigators who draw from Marsh Creek.

In addition to enforcing the coalition's call, Luke said Idaho Department of Water Resources plans to address some out-of-priority diversions affecting senior users within the same district.

Luke said it could take a year or two for the Marsh Creek district to become active.

## New canola association gains certification

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

The Pacific Northwest Canola Association has received its certificate of incorporation from Washington state as a multi-state nonprofit organization.

The association will include farmers in Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Montana, said Karen Sowers, Washington State University Extension outreach specialist for oilseeds.

"It's the first big step," Sowers said.

The association is formalizing its bylaws.

Under current draft bylaws, the association will offer four levels of membership, ranging from \$500 per year to \$5,000 per year, with a voting seat on the board of directors at the \$5,000 per year level.

Sowers is taking nominations of producer members for the board of directors. The nominees will be placed on a ballot. The association is seeking nominations of at least two growers from each state.

Sowers has an email contact list of 300 canola growers in the



E.J. Harris/EO Media Group File

The Pacific Northwest Canola Association is a step closer to reality.

four states.

Sowers said the association also welcomes farmers in their first year of growing canola or who are thinking about trying it.

"I guess there's not an 'ideal' candidate, just a passion for growing canola and knowing it makes sense in a rotation wherever you may be in the Pacific Northwest," she said.

Canola is priced about 19 cents per pound for GMO canola to 20.5 cents per pound for non-GMO canola.

Spring canola harvest began the week of Aug. 7. Sowers expects average yields. Early yields look good, but the sum-

mer heat is "pretty wicked," she said.

Most of the winter canola harvest is done, Sowers said. She expects average to above average yields, due to extended snow cover and spring moisture.

Sowers hopes to ramp up the search for an executive director in the fall. She said the association wants someone with a passion for and understanding of the region's canola industry.

Draft bylaws currently state the association will meet twice a year. Sowers hopes the association will be official by the end of the year.

## WESTERN PACKAGING

Your Future is Our Future...

### WE SPECIALIZE IN BULK BAGS!

<p><b>BAGS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seed Bags</li> <li>• Fertilizer Bags</li> <li>• Feed Bags</li> <li>• Potato Bags</li> <li>• Printed Bags</li> <li>• Plain Bags</li> <li>• Bulk Bags</li> <li>• Totes</li> <li>• Woven Polypropylene</li> <li>• Polyethylene</li> <li>• Pocket Bags</li> <li>• Roll Stock &amp; More!</li> </ul>	<p><b>HAY PRESS SUPPORT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hay Sleeves</li> <li>• Strap</li> <li>• Totes</li> <li>• Printed or Plain</li> <li>• Stretch Film (ALL GAUGES)</li> </ul> <p><b>WAREHOUSE PACKAGING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stretch Film</li> <li>• Pallet Sheets</li> <li>• Pallet Covers</li> </ul>	<p><b>LOCATIONS:</b></p> <p>Albany, Oregon (MAIN OFFICE) Ellensburg, Washington</p> <p><b>CONTACT INFORMATION:</b></p> <p>Phone: 855-928-3856 Fax: 541-497-6262 info@westernpackaging.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CUSTOMER SERVICE IS OUR TOP PRIORITY!</b></p>
--	---	---

[www.westernpackaging.com](http://www.westernpackaging.com)