



WHERE AG GETS



RESPECT IN THE



LEGISLATURE

At least **25 of Idaho's 105 lawmakers** are involved in farming



By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

BOISE — When agriculture talks, the Idaho Legislature understands.

That's because legislators in Idaho have a wealth of knowledge about farming and ranching that few other Western state legislatures enjoy. At least 25 of the state's 105 representatives and senators are current or retired farmers or ranchers or actively involved in agribusiness, according to a list compiled by Food Producers of Idaho and reviewed by Capital Press.

When it comes to understanding farm-related legislation, "It certainly makes it easier if there is a basic understanding of agriculture to start with," said Sen. Bert Brackett, a Republican rancher from Rogerson.

With 24 percent of the Legislature, ranchers and farmers also hold many leadership positions.

The Speaker of the House, Rep. Scott Bedke, R-Oakley, is a rancher, and the House Majority leader, Rep. Mike Moyle, R-Star, is a farmer and rancher, as are Gov. Butch Otter and Lt. Gov. Brad Little.

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ODFW Commission set to begin revision of wolf plan

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Oregon's work of managing wolves in balance with the varied interests of people takes another turn this month when the state wildlife commission meets Dec. 8 to review a draft management plan.

Representatives of livestock, hunting and conservation groups get the first word when the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission meets in Salem. The public can attend, but testimony won't be taken until the commission meets again Jan. 19. Comments also may be made by email to odfw.commission@state.or.us.

A "working copy" of the revised Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, which includes



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

A 72-pound female wolf of the Minam Pack, after being radio-collared on June 3. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission is beginning to consider an update of the state's plan for managing wolves.

edits made by ODFW staff, is available at <http://bit.ly/IOPoneb>.

Wildlife issues in the West, especially those hinged to endangered species concerns, are a thicket of often-opposing points of view. In the

case of Oregon's wolves, the ODFW Commission's complicated task is laid out in the plan's straightforward language: "To ensure the conservation of gray wolves as required by Oregon law while protecting the social and economic interests of all Oregonians."

Oregon adopted a wolf plan in 2005, updated it in 2010 and began the current revision in 2016 after taking wolves in Eastern Oregon off the endangered species list.

A few highlights from the current revision:

- The plan suggests 300 wolves as the "minimum population management threshold" through 2022. The figure is based on current data and computer modeling. Oregon had 112 documented wolves at the end of 2016, but wildlife officials

believe Eastern Oregon could have 300 wolves as early as 2018, based on current population growth rates.

- Since being documented in Oregon in 2008, wolves have expanded in population and territory and now can be found within 10,741 square miles of the state.

- They primarily use forested habitat but follow prey to more open habitat in season, such as when elk move to lower elevation areas in winter. Tracking data from collared wolves showed they are on public land — primarily Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service land — 60 percent of the time, on private land 38 percent of the time, and on tribal land 2 percent of the time.

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Deadline set for Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument decision

Litigation will resume Jan. 15 unless Trump administration resolves dispute

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

The Trump administration has agreed to resume litigation over the expansion of Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument on Jan. 15 unless the dispute is resolved beforehand.

The monument's size was increased from about 66,000 acres to 114,000 acres by the Obama administration in early 2017, spurring several lawsuits against the proclamation.

When the Trump administration decided to reconsider the expansion, those lawsuits were stayed by a federal judge pending the potential reduction

of the monument's boundaries. On Dec. 5, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke released recommendations for revising the Cascade-Siskiyou's borders to "address issues" related to O&C Lands and commercial logging.

However, the recommendations did not specify the number or location of the acres involved.

Two plaintiffs — the Association of O&C Counties and the American Forest Resource Council — say they have grown impatient with the delay.

The groups recently attempted to revive the active litigation of their lawsuits but have now agreed to the Jan. 15 deadline as long as the Trump administration seeks no further postponements.

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