

# Wolves kill llama, but which pack remains uncertain

**ODFW working to catch culprits after three llamas die in separate attacks**

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**  
Capital Press

Wolves did indeed kill another llama Jan. 30 on private land in rural Union County, Ore. That much is certain.

But wildlife officials are still trying to figure out which pack is responsible for the death, in an area where the population and distribution of wolves is ever changing.

According to the investigation report, wolves chased and killed the 300-pound adult llama, owned by retired rancher Howard Cantrell, on his property west of La Grande.

Two more of Cantrell's llamas were found dead last November. One of those incidents was initially ruled a "probable" depredation, but was retroactively changed to "confirmed" on Tuesday by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

The other incident was ruled a "possible or unknown" attack.

The challenge now is figuring out which wolves may be causing the problem.

Between the Mount Emily and Meacham wildlife units in the northern Blue Mountains, there are at least four known packs, including the Walla Walla, Mount Emily, Meacham and newly named Ruckel Ridge packs, along with more unnamed groups and pairs roaming the woods.

Hans Hayden, assistant district wildlife biologist for



George Plaven/Capital Press File

Howard Cantrell, who owns property near Five Points Creek west of La Grande, Ore., plans to move his llamas after a third was killed by wolves.

the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife in La Grande, said investigators believe the most recent llama death may have been caused by a group of three wolves led by the female OR-52.

That is just a hunch, though, and there is still uncertainty especially given the lack of GPS collars on any

wolves from the nearby Meacham pack, which preyed on cattle four times in eight days last August on a private pasture in neighboring Umatilla County.

Historically, the Meacham pack would come into the territory where Cantrell's property lies at the bottom of a steep canyon near Five Points

Creek, Hayden said. As more packs become established, that can also rearrange another pack's territory, he added.

"It's tough to keep tabs on them," Hayden said. "We're still learning how they use these landscapes. It's all pretty new."

In the meantime, Cantrell is looking to adopt out his remaining 12 llamas, fearing for their safety.

"They don't even know which wolves it is. They've got no collars on these wolves. They're coming in from different directions every night," Cantrell said. "This is ridiculous. The only solution I have is to take the llamas off my property."

OR-52 does have a collar, Hayden said, though it is not a GPS collar. It is a VHF, or "very high frequency" radio collar, which he said does not provide as much information

as a GPS collar but lasts longer and is more reliable.

Hayden said he has made numerous trips to Cantrell's property to check on the location of OR-52.

ODFW has also put up additional trail cameras around the area to catch a glimpse of which wolves are passing through.

Over the last few weeks, Hayden said the department has also installed flashing Foxlights and radio-activated alarm boxes to scare wolves from the property.

"We're trying to do everything we can to help (Cantrell) avoid another depredation," Hayden said.

ODFW is in the process of preparing its end-of-year 2017 wolf report, which will include the latest statewide pack and population figures. The report will be released in March.



John and Karen Hollingsworth/USFWS

An Elgin, Ore., trapper is accused of killing a wolf that had been caught in one of his traps. He will enter a plea March 27.

## Trapper cited in wolf poaching incident

**Juvenile wolf believed to be offspring of new breeding pair**

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**  
Capital Press

Authorities in Oregon say a 58-year-old wildlife trapper caught a juvenile female wolf late last year in rural Union County, then illegally shot and killed the animal.

David Sanders Jr., of Elgin, Ore., was arraigned Jan. 23 in Union County Circuit Court on charges of unlawfully taking wildlife — a "special status game animal" — and using unbranded traps, both misdemeanor offenses. A plea hearing is scheduled for March 27.

Sanders did not return a call from the Capital Press

seeking comment.

According to information released Wednesday, the case dates back to Dec. 18, 2017, when an Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife trooper was inspecting a trap line near Elgin and spotted a dead wolf next to one of the foothold traps.

Upon further investigation, the trooper determined the 63-pound wolf had "more than likely" been shot after being caught. X-rays and a necropsy revealed a small-caliber bullet in the wolf's spinal column.

Sanders was interviewed by state police, and admitted to killing the wolf after finding it in one of his traps, according to the investigators. The trap was also not marked or branded with his information, as required by law.

Based on its location, the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife believes the wolf was the offspring of a new

breeding pair in the Mt. Emily Wildlife Management Unit, born in April. The department is awaiting DNA results to confirm the wolf's identity.

Four wolves are known to have been inadvertently caught by licensed trappers since the species began returning to Oregon. In all previous cases, the trappers contacted ODFW and wildlife biologists were able to respond, collar and safely release the animal.

Wolves were removed from the state endangered species list in Eastern Oregon, though it remains illegal to shoot them except in specific cases, such as if a rancher finds a wolf attacking livestock or in defense of human life.

Another gray wolf was poached in November 2017 in Wallowa County, in addition to several reported incidents in southwest Oregon, where the species remains federally protected.

# Error reignites Oregon rural dwelling debate

**Lawmakers urged to correct error from previous year**

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
Capital Press

SALEM — An unintentional omission from an Oregon land use bill in 2017 has re-opened the debate over "accessory dwelling units" in rural areas this year.

Legislation aimed at easing Oregon's affordable housing crisis, Senate Bill 1051, was approved by lawmakers during the tail end of the previous legislative session.

Under one provision of that bill, ADUs — sometimes called "granny flats" — can be built in areas zoned for detached single-family dwellings in cities with more than 2,500 residents and counties with more than 15,000 residents.

That provision was only intended to apply within "urban growth boundaries," but that language was inadvertently dropped from the bill's text.

Unless the mistake is corrected, the bill would allow such dwellings in rural areas outside cities.

Critics of ADUs in rural areas argue that increasing such housing would strain existing groundwater sources, septic tanks and rural roads.

Lawmakers are now being urged to pass House Bill 4034, which would correct



File photo

An error in a 2017 land use bill would allow more "accessory dwelling units" on Oregon farmland, but lawmakers are being urged to correct the mistake this year.

the earlier "scrivener's error," by lobbyists from organizations that don't often agree on development issues: 1,000 Friends of Oregon, a conservation group, and the Oregon Home Builders Association.

The possibility of legislation aimed specifically at ADUs in rural areas is being discussed as part of a separate work group, said Jon Chandler, CEO of the OHBA, which usually advocates relaxing land use restrictions.

While the problem would seem easily fixed, the situation is awkward because two lawmakers on the House Agriculture Committee — Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, and David Brock Smith, R-Port Orford — said they weren't aware the "urban growth boundary" provision was omitted accidentally.

During a Feb. 6 hearing before the committee, Witt

said he supported the earlier legislation because he wanted to allow more accessory dwellings in rural areas and would be disappointed to see the provision changed.

"If you strike a deal, you ought to let us all know a deal has been struck," Witt said, referring to the urban growth boundary limitation.

Representatives of the Association of Oregon Counties and the Oregon Association of Realtors urged lawmakers not to restrict ADUs to cities.

Oregon is facing a housing crisis, so additional ADUs in rural areas would increase the housing supply without spending public money, said Mike Eliason, legislative director of AOR.

The law could be changed to allow counties to choose whether to allow ADUs in rural areas or to establish standards for their development, he said.

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