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GRIZZLY

WORRIES

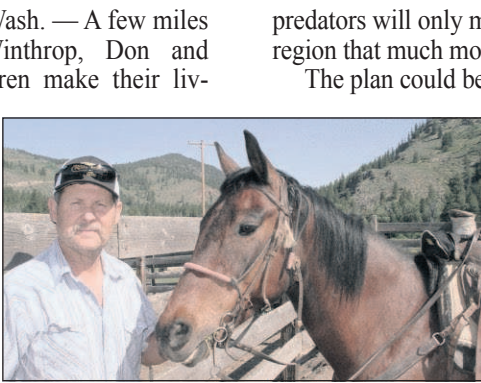
Plan to bring grizzly bears back to North Cascade Range has many area ranchers, residents concerned

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

WINTHROP, Wash. — A few miles north of Winthrop, Don and Chris Lundgren make their living raising purebred Charolais cattle and hosting overnight guests for trail rides on horses or snowmobiles — depending on the season — at their Chewack River Ranch.

It's a good life, a hard-working life, in the rugged beauty of Washington's North Cascade Range.

But a plan by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reintroduce grizzly bears into the region has the Lundgrens and other ranchers, orchardists, back-country outfitters and residents experiencing emotions ranging from concern to anger. They worry the huge



Don Lundgren at his Chewack River Ranch near Winthrop, Wash. He says he has problems with cougars and wolves and doesn't need grizzlies.

predators will only make carving a livelihood out of the region that much more difficult.

The plan could be decided by year's end. It got a big boost with the surprise endorsement March 23 of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who oversees both federal agencies.

Ranchers say they were shocked, baffled and angered by Zinke's position and felt betrayed by the Trump administration, which they believed was on their side on the grizzly issue. Now many feel abandoned politically, that their voices don't matter and are apprehensive about their future.

Some say putting people's lives and livelihoods at risk is just plain stupid.

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Grizzly bear

Binomial name: *Ursus arctos horribilis*

Height: 3 1/2 feet at the shoulder, 7-8 feet tall standing upright

Weight: 300-800 pounds depending on age, sex and season

Average life span: 20 -25 years

Appearance: Unlike black bears, grizzlies have a concave face, rounded ears, high-humped shoulders and long, curved claws. Their fur ranges in color from light brown to nearly black.

Diet: Omnivores, about 80 to 90 percent of their diet consists of green vegetation, wild fruits and berries, nuts, and bulbs or roots of certain plants. A portion of their diet may include insects, fish and small mammals. Grizzlies will sometimes take larger game such as elk or moose calves and have been known to take livestock.

Behaviors: A grizzly must eat enough to build up huge stores of fat to sustain it through hibernation. They typically den in November and emerge in April.

Known for: Their impressive size and strength. Grizzlies can sprint 50 yards in 3 seconds, faster than a race horse.

Range: Today the grizzly bear is found in about 2 percent of its historic range in the lower 48 states; in pockets of Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Washington. Large populations remain in Alaska and Western Canada.



Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

Climatologists bet on El Nino, warm months ahead



Don Jenkins/Capital Press

The federal Climate Prediction Center reported May 17 that an El Nino will probably form by next winter, suggesting an increased chance that there will be less melting snow for summer irrigation in 2019.

Pacific Ocean heating up

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

The odds now strongly favor an El Nino forming in the Pacific Ocean, federal climatologists said Thursday, tilting the long-range weather outlook toward a warm 2018-19 winter in the Northwest.

The cool waters that ruled the seas along the equator since last fall have warmed to normal or just-below normal temperatures. The federal Climate Prediction Center, a branch of the National Weather Service, puts the chances that waters will heat to

El Nino levels by December at 70 percent.

El Nino winters are generally warmer and drier in the northern U.S. But it's not a sure bet, Washington State Climatologist Nick Bond said.

"It's completely possible we'll have a cold winter, but more likely it will be on the warmer side," he said. "The odds of having a little below normal snowpack are higher than usual."

A month ago, the prediction center put the odds of an El Nino by winter at just under 50 percent. The center said the increasing odds heavily influenced its updated outlook,

especially for the fall and winter.

The forecast favors higher-than-average temperatures in California, Idaho, Oregon and Washington from now until August 2019.

Washington, Oregon and the western half of Idaho are expected to receive below-average precipitation through February 2019.

California and Eastern Idaho have equal chances of below-, above- or average precipitation during that time, according to the prediction center.

Last May, the prediction center said the odds slightly favored an El Nino. Instead, a La Nina, a cooling of the ocean, formed. "It shows you

have to keep an eye on things," Bond said.

The center predicted an El Nino in May 2014 and was correct that time. The following winter was mild and led to Washington's "snowpack drought" of 2015 when precipitation was plentiful but it fell in the mountains as rain instead of snow.

"It's possible it could happen again, but that was so extreme, it's really unlikely," Bond said.

El Nino persisted and grew stronger for the winter of 2015-16. Average temperatures statewide were above normal, but enough precipitation fell to erase the drought.

Clemency decision may be imminent for imprisoned Oregon ranchers

Dwight and Steven Hammond sentenced to five years for arson conviction

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A decision may be imminent on presidential clemency for two Oregon ranchers serving five-year minimum mandatory sentences for arson, according to farm groups seeking their release.

Dwight Hammond, 76, and his son,

Steven Hammond, 49, were convicted in 2012 of setting fire to rangeland near their ranch in Burns, Ore., for which they were initially sentenced to prison terms of three months and one year, respectively.

However, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned those more lenient sentences at the urg-

ing of the U.S. government, finding the ranchers had to complete the full five-year minimum terms for arson required by federal law.

The Hammonds reported to prison in early 2016 to begin serving the remainder of their time, but protests

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Steven Hammond



Dwight Hammond



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