

Shooting wolves hard call, but right one, agency director says

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

The Washington official who has the last word on whether to kill wolves says he struggled with making the call last summer, but decided that culling three packs that were attacking cattle was necessary and would not prevent wolves from recolonizing the state.

Fish and Wildlife Director Kelly Susewind spoke on a department video about being confronted with the decision in August during his first month on the job.

“I know the idea of killing wolves is deeply troubling for many Washingtonians, and I had to come to terms with it myself,” he said. “I had to come to terms with it within just the first few weeks of taking the job.”

The department posted the 4 minute, 37 second video on its YouTube channel Thursday. In it, Susewind says Fish and Wildlife is committed to wolf recovery and that “removing a small number of wolves to address conflicts will have no appreciable effect on wolf recovery in our state.”

Susewind moved from the Department of Ecology to take over as Fish and Wildlife director during another summer of wolf depredations on cattle, mostly in northeast Washington. Susewind had been Ecology’s top official on water-protection policies.

Within weeks of taking over at Fish and Wildlife, Susewind authorized shooting a wolf in the Togo pack in Ferry County. A Thurston County judge initially blocked the operation. Another judge allowed it to go forward at a hearing 11 days later attended by Susewind. In September and November, the department vigorously defended in court Susewind’s decision to remove wolves in the

Smackout and Old Profanity Territory packs. In all, the department shot four wolves in the three packs.

“The decisions I made to remove wolves from those packs were difficult, but I believe I made the right call,” he said. “One reason is I based those decisions on the state’s wolf plan and the department’s protocol. The department’s protocol was developed by a broad diversity of stakeholders.”

Fish and Wildlife conferred with its Wolf Advisory Group. Members of the group who represent environmental and animal-welfare organizations opposed culling wolves in the Old Profanity Territory pack. They complained that shooting wolves in that part of the Colville National Forest was occurring too frequently.

The Center for Biological Diversity and Cascadia Wildlands, two groups not represented on the advisory board, filed challenges to lethal-removal operations. The groups are continuing to press a lawsuit alleging that Fish and Wildlife broke the law by not subjecting its lethal-removal protocol to scientific and public review.

Lawsuit filed over hop contracts amid price drop

S.S. Steiner complains customer owes more than \$900,000

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Press

A major hop supplier has filed a lawsuit against one of its clients for allegedly refusing to honor contracts to buy hops amid dropping prices for the crop.

The complaint was filed by S.S. Steiner, a New York-based hop supplier for more than 170 years, against Yakima Hops & Brew, a company in Yakima, Wash.

S.S. Steiner claims to have begun supplying hops to the company in 2013, after which it signed contracts to buy hops and hop pellets through 2019.

“In 2017, hop prices began to fall, making spot prices for hops more attractive than the prices set under previously executed contracts for the purchase of hops,” the complaint said.

Beginning in autumn of 2017, Yakima Hops & Brew stopped accepting hops grown in the previous growing season until the



Capital Press File

Hops are dried at a processing facility. A hop supplier is embroiled in a contract dispute with a customer.

new crop became available, according to S.S. Steiner.

Previously, Yakima Hops & Brew abided by the “generally accepted practice” for hop buyers to accept earlier crops until newly harvested hops were pelletized, the complaint said.

The company paid for some hops grown in 2016 and 2017 but has an unpaid balance of about \$900,000 that it owes to S.S. Steiner, which has called into question whether it will honor commitments to buy hops grown in 2018 and 2019, the complaint said.

The lawsuit seeks payment of the \$900,000 plus storage fees and interest while the litigation remains

pending.

Capital Press was unable to reach Jeff Perkins, founder of Yakima Hops & Brew, as of press time.

Earlier this year, the U.S. inventory of unused hops hit a record level of 169 million pounds, up 20 percent from the previous year and the highest level seen in four decades. Shortly before the 2018 harvest, hop stocks had fallen to 114 million pounds, up 16 percent from the same time a year earlier.

Overall U.S. beer sales are expected to decline about 1 percent in 2018, while sales of craft brews — which require more hops — will probably rise less

than 5 percent, said Bart Watson, chief economist for the Brewers Association.

While craft brew sales have continued to grow, they’re down from the double-digit percentage rate to which brewers and hop suppliers had become accustomed a few years ago, Watson said. As a result, demand for hops isn’t as strong as contracts had anticipated.

“We’re in a situation where there are more hops than are needed in the future,” Watson said.

Prices for hops are “sticky” due to contracts, but it’s possible that some aroma hops meant for craft beers will be “juiced” for bitterness-imparting alpha acids, mitigating the oversupply, he said.

Germany, the world’s dominant producer of “alpha” hops, had a poor harvest in 2018 and there are projections of a shortage developing in the alpha market, Watson said.

Ann George, executive director of the Hop Growers of America, said there are “comfortable or more than comfortable” inventories of certain public varieties, such as Cascade and Centennial, but demand for certain private cultivars continues to tick up.

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In the Matter of the Estate of Steven H. Troeger, Deceased, No. 18PB08559 Notice IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned has been appointed personal representative of the above estate. All persons having claims against the estate are required to present them within four months after the date of first publication of this notice, to the personal representative, in care of Teresa Ozias, at the address appearing below, or they may be barred. ALL persons whose rights may be affected by the proceeding may obtain additional information from the records of the Court, the personal representative or the attorneys for the personal representative. DATED and first published this ____ day of December, 2018.

Robert H. Washburn
Personal Representative

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