

People & Places

Helping prevent depredation

By CRAIG REED
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — Alyssa Mahaney has a toolbox full of non-lethal methods and strategies that she wants to share with livestock producers in hopes of reducing conflicts between predators and ranch animals.

Mahaney is the new conflict prevention specialist with USDA Wildlife Services for southwestern Oregon. She began her new job in early October.

In a collaborative effort, funding for the position is being provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Defenders of Wildlife, the Natural Resources Defense Council and by the wolf advisory committees in Klamath and Jackson counties.

“My mission is to protect agriculture, and human health and safety, through non-lethal wildlife conservation efforts,” said Mahaney, a 32-year-old with a wildlife management degree. She will complete her master’s degree in sustainable management of natural resources in mid-December.

She did an internship in Maine, tagging, collaring and monitoring bears, and worked for Wildlife Services in Pennsylvania. She moved to Grants Pass, Ore., a year ago to be closer to family in that town and in Roseburg.

“I think everything has a place on this earth, including wolves,” Mahaney said. “I would just like to do everything possible to mediate conflict so everybody can co-exist. I feel strongly about protecting both sides, conserving both livestock and wildlife.”

There have been wolf-cattle conflicts in the past couple of years in both Jackson and Klamath counties with confirmed fatalities of yearling calves by the Rogue wolfpack. The Indigo group of wolves, with a recent litter of four pups, has been confirmed in Douglas County.

“This position is something I’ve been pushing for,” said Paul Wolf, the southwest district supervisor for Wildlife Services. “Because wolves are moving westward, I’m trying to get out front of them by trying to take a proactive approach to help cattle producers in my district.”

“When producers start having predator issues, we have to make sure we’re doing everything in our power to lessen the impact,” he added. “We’re always trying to think outside the box, we’re constantly trying new things.”

Shawn Cantrell, the vice president for field conserva-



Craig Reed/For the Capital Press

Alyssa Mahaney, who was recently hired as a conflict prevention specialist for southwest Oregon, wraps up a roll of fladry that is used in areas where there have been predator-livestock conflicts. Mahaney will be encouraging the use of non-lethal materials and methods to livestock producers who are dealing with predator conflicts.

tion for Defenders of Wildlife, said his organization “is excited to help Wildlife Services pursue non-lethal tools.”

“Historically, Wildlife Services uses lethal as its primary tool, so we’re excited about this approach,” he said.

Mahaney’s toolbox includes turbo fladry, electric fencing, pyrotechnics (fireworks), strobe lights, air-filled tube characters, guard dogs, removing bone piles, range riding, husbandry practices and human presence.

Mahaney spent the first two weeks at her new job in Montana, shadowing and learning from a conflict specialist and a seasonal range rider who have been involved in conflict prevention in that state for the past three years. She also attended a co-existence summit.

Jennifer Sherry, a wildlife advocate with the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the model for the conflict prevention specialist was started in Montana. She said there’s been a growing interest in that state in people asking for and wanting to implement the non-lethal

methods in order to protect their cattle, goats or chickens from wildlife predators.

“We developed a partnership of people who were interested in trying to increase the use of non-lethal tools,” Sherry said. “Multiple groups can support this approach even though they might not agree on everything. The goal is to help producers implement the tools to help prevent losses for all parties.”

Sherry explained it is hard to gather exact data on the success of the prevention program in Montana. She said there have been cases where after multiple years of predation in an area, fladry was installed and livestock losses dropped to zero.

“That’s pretty compelling,” Sherry said. “We’ve had cameras show wolves walking the fladry line, but not crossing. Some of the carnivores are still there, but there were no losses.”

She admitted that there were ranchers who weren’t enthused by the prevention approach, but with the specialist on the ground and meeting the producers face-to-face, it was easier to get them to “give it a try and see what happens.”



Western Innovator

ALYSSA MAHANEY

Hometown: Presently Grants Pass, Ore.; native of Sherman Mills, Maine

Education: Bachelor of science in wildlife management, Anna Maria College; will complete work for a master’s degree in sustainable management of natural resources in mid-December through Unity College

tor for the Klamath Basin and all of California, is pleased to have Mahaney on the job in southwestern Oregon. Willy’s region has had predator issues with wolves preying on cattle in the Wood River Valley north of Upper Klamath Lake.

“Wolves are here, they are part of the landscape now,” Willy said. “The addition of Alyssa in her role really helps us provide another resource for a proactive approach. It helps us be on the ground sooner and to be more effective in prevention.”

“Alyssa has a tremendous outdoorsy background,” Willy added. “She’ll have the ability to build and maintain relationships with landowners at a different level than an agency. Hopefully with her help, future predations can be minimized.”

Sherry said in addition to Oregon, Idaho and Minnesota have inquired about Montana’s success with prevention specialists.

Cantrell said Defenders of Wildlife is advocating for federal funding for conflict prevention specialists in nine western states and three Great Lakes area states. He said there are two bills currently being discussed in Congress that would provide funding.

“We’re hopeful, but it’s a process,” Cantrell said of the congressional system. “The program in Montana has certainly caught the attention of other Wildlife Services directors. It was a pilot effort in Montana, now it’s in Oregon. This is an approach where we feel we can help wildlife, livestock producers and rural communities.”

Mahaney will provide quarterly reports on her activities involving the prevention of wildlife/livestock conflicts.

CALENDAR

tries. Contact: <https://www.dairy-west.com>

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY NOV. 13-16

Tri-State Grain Growers Convention: Davenport Grand Hotel, 333 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., Spokane, Wash. This is the annual convention of grain farmers in Washington, Oregon and Idaho and features a full slate of presentations and breakout sessions. Sponsored by the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, Idaho Grain Producers Association and the Oregon Wheat Growers League. Early bird registration ends Oct. 18. Contact: <http://www.wawg.org/convention>

THURSDAY, NOV. 14
WSU Extension Forest Health Seminar: 6-8 p.m. Hege-wald Center, 710 SW Rock Creek Drive, Stevenson, Wash. This seminar will help you understand forest health, what to look for, and what you may be able to do about it on your own property. To register, go to <https://bit.ly/2qxLw0G>. Contact: patrick.shults@wsu.edu, 360-740-1213

**THURSDAY-FRIDAY
NOV. 14-15**
Washington State Grape Society Annual Meeting: Church of the Nazarene, 500 N. Elm, Grandview, Wash. This is the Washington State Grape Society’s annual meeting and trade show. Contact: 509-585-5460 <https://www.grapesociety.org/annual-meeting.html>

FRIDAY, NOV. 15
Fall Forage Festival: 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Yamhill Heritage Center Museum, 11275 SW Durham Lane, McMinnville, Ore. Oregon Forage & Grassland Council and Oregon Hay and Forage Association are cooperating with OSU Extension Service to produce the annual Fall Forage Festival. \$15 for members and \$30 for non-members. Contact: Kate Hartnell 541-619-3529. RSVP to Jerome Magnuson jmagnuson@dfna.com. www.oregonforage.org/

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY
NOV. 15-17**
2019 Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference: Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel, 8235 NE Airport Way, Portland, Ore. A conference for young Farm Bureau members interested in improving their leadership and communication skills, learning about issues impacting Oregon agriculture, gaining ag business tips from industry experts, making new friends, and having a blast! Contact: Jacon Taylor, yfr@oregonfb.org 541-589-9694

SATURDAY, NOV. 16
Oregon Hay King Contest: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Yamhill Heritage Center Museum, 11275 SW Durham Lane, McMinnville, Ore. Bale delivery will start at 7:45 a.m. and judging will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for seven different classes. Free admission for the contest. Contact: Mylen Bohle at 541-447-6228 or mylen.bohnl@oregostate.edu

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY NOV. 19-20

Washington Farm Bureau 99th Annual Meeting & Trade Show: Wenatchee Convention Center, 121 N Wenatchee Ave., Wenatchee. Join us for information, inspiration, and fun. Have your voice heard as “the voice of agriculture.” Contact: Kathie Davies, kdavies@wsfb.com 360-528-2911 <https://wsfb.com/2019-wfb-99th-annual-meeting/>

THURSDAY, NOV. 21
Water Rights Boot Camp: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District, 7175 NE Evergreen Parkway No. 400, Hillsboro, Ore. Join Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District and attorney Laura A. Schroeder for a free seminar about water rights in the Willamette Valley. During the seminar, you’ll learn about dissecting your water right, protecting water rights, transfers, title issues, losing a water use or right and rights pre- & post-water code. Contact: Charlotte Trowbridge, 503-277-3709, charlotte.trowbridge@tualatinswcd.org

FRIDAY, NOV. 22
Denim and Diamonds Awards Dinner and Auction: 5 p.m. Salem Convention Center, 200 Commercial St. SE, Salem, Ore. This is Oregon AgLink’s annual awards dinner and fundraising auction to support the organization’s activities, including Adopt a Farmer, roadside crop signs and a multimedia campaign promoting Oregon agriculture. Contact: <http://www.aglink.org>



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Correction policy

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We want to publish corrections
to set the record straight.

THROUGH SUNDAY NOV. 10

American Agri-Women Convention: 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Embassy Suites by Hilton, 9000 SW Washington Square Road, Tigard, Ore. Hosted by the Oregon Women for Agriculture, the American Agri-Women Convention will bring members from around the nation. Contact: Oregon Women for Agriculture, 541-791-6031. <https://owaonline.org/2019-aaw-convention/>.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY NOV. 8-10

Tilth Conference 2019: Yakima Convention Center, 10 N. Eighth St., Yakima, Wash. Every year, the Tilth Conference brings together hundreds of farmers, producers, researchers and food system professionals for a week-end of learning, building relationships and sharing best practices. Contact: Kevin McAleese, kevinmcaleese@tilthalliance.org. <http://www.tilthconference.org>

MONDAY-WEDNESDAY NOV. 11-13

Idaho Cattle Association Annual Convention: Sun Valley Inn at Sun Valley Resort, Sun Valley, Idaho. The annual ICA event is focused on cattle-men’s needs, putting them face-to-face with some of the industry’s most renowned experts. Contact: 208-343-1615, www.idahocattle.org/

TUESDAY-THURSDAY NOV. 12-14

Willamette Valley Ag Expo: Linn County Fair and Expo Center, 3700 Knox Butte Rd. E, Albany, Ore. Produced by the nonprofit Wil-

lamette Valley Ag Association. The expo is over 250,000 sq. ft. of exhibitors, equipment, seminars, classes, food and fun. In addition to the exhibitors and classes, attendees can enjoy other attractions such as “Dine Around Oregon,” an antique farm equipment display and an educational area from Oregon Women for Agriculture. Parking is free. The hours are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Wednesday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday. Contact: Scott or Jill Ingalls, info@wvaexpo.com, 800-208-2168. <http://wvaexpo.com/>

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13

Big Idaho Potato Harvest Meeting: 8 a.m. Shoshone-Bannock Hotel and Event Center, 777 Bannock Trail, Fort Hall, Idaho. The event includes meetings of the Idaho Grower Shippers Association, United Potato Growers of Idaho, Southern Idaho Potato Cooperative and the raw-products group of the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry. They will be followed by presentations by Potatoes USA President and CEO Blair Richardson and National Potato Council CEO Kam Quarles and Idaho Potato Commission President and CEO Frank Muir. Contact: Jeweldean Hall, 208-334-2350. <https://idahopotato.com/industry/harvest-meeting>

WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY NOV. 13-14

Dairy West Annual Meeting: Centre on the Grove, 850 W. Front St., Boise. This is the annual meeting of Idaho and Utah dairy indus-