



ROYLENE



Courtesy photo
Roylene Comes At Night, Washington State Conservationist, and her husband, Michael, have been married three years.



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press
Washington State Conservationist Roylene Comes At Night at rancher Ben Merrill's pasture in Cheney, Wash.

ROYLENE COMES AT NIGHT

Title: Washington State Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Age: 52

Hometown: Browning, Mont.

Current location: Spokane

Married: Husband Michael Comes At Night, dogs Cody and Rex, mom Cynthia, brother Ron and sister-in-law Michelle, nephews and nieces Brett, Quinn, Rylee and Jada

Education: Bachelor's degree in range management, minor in soils from Montana State University

Hobbies and interests: Sun-dancing, hiking, biking and walking.

Website:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/wa/home/>

Washington state conservationist helps connect farmers, others to the land

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

SPOKANE VALLEY, Wash. — Roylene Comes At Night, the Washington state conservationist, wanted to talk about soil.

It was 2014, and she asked Lynn Bahrych, then a member of the Washington State Conservation Commission, to develop a new educational campaign focusing on soil health.

At the time, soil health wasn't widely discussed by farmers — or anyone else, Bahrych said.

"It's just not a really sexy topic, you

know, talking about dirt," Bahrych said. "People would sort of say, 'Really, is this a problem?' And of course it is. It's the source of our food and fiber, it keeps our water clean and our air clean."

Today, soil health is top-of-mind for most of Washington's farmers and ranchers, in part because of those efforts.

The initial program provided grants for small, innovative pilot projects. It led to the state developing its current soil health initiative, Bahrych said.

"... Roylene got the ball rolling," Bahrych

said. "All of the soil health efforts and awareness in our state from 2014 to now, really she got that going. She made it work and it's going strong, right now."

Roylene is quick to share any credit with others such as Bahrych.

"I am still very awed at the fact that a small program could lead to a larger effect ...," Roylene said. "I have a philosophy that I only need to plant the seeds, nurture them, and then stand back and watch them grow."

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Matthew Weaver/
Capital Press
Cheney, Wash., farmer Ben Merrill and Washington State Conservationist Roylene Comes At Night share a laugh.



Courtesy photo
Roylene Comes At Night works with landowners in 1996. Over her 30-plus-year career, she has held positions across all levels of the organization, from field and area offices, and now at the state level.

Idaho rancher loses 143 sheep in 'pileup' caused by wolf attack

By **BRAD CARLSON**
Capital Press

BOISE — A mid-May wolf attack resulted in the deaths of 143 ewes and lambs in Idaho, the state Rangeland Resources Commission reports.

Two adult wolves attacked a band of sheep grazing on the back side



Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission File
An example of a sheep pileup that resulted in deaths. More than 140 sheep died in a pileup caused by wolves.

of Shaw Mountain east of Boise and pushed them into a "pileup" in a steep gully, according to the commission.

"The wolves scared the hell out of them and pushed them into that little canyon and piled them in there," rancher Frank Shirts said in a commission news release. The wolves "didn't consume anything. The sheep just suffocated in the pileup and died."

The mid-May attack occurred during the day, a rarity. Herders saw the two wolves running into

the band and saw the sheep fall into the gully. Two herders chased off the wolves. Two Great Pyrenees dogs guarding the sheep were not injured.

The sheep were among about 2,500 ewes and lambs that crossed State Highway 55 north of Eagle in mid-March. They grazed the Boise foothills, following green-up to higher pastures.

Shirts said the wolf-predation loss is his largest ever. He said he

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California drought expected to raise energy costs in Northwest

By **DON JENKINS**
Capital Press

The wholesale price of electricity will rise in the Northwest this summer as drought-stricken California buys energy from neighboring states to offset a nearly 50% reduction in hydropower, the U.S. Energy Information Administration projects in a new report.

California can cover about half of the 6 million megawatt-hour cut in hydropower by ramping up natural gas plants but will need to purchase electricity on Western power markets to make up the rest, according to the EIA.

California's demand for electricity will in turn put pressure on power supplies elsewhere. The EIA estimates the Golden State's drought will push up peak-demand wholesale prices by 5% in Idaho, Oregon and Washington to an average of \$59 per megawatt-hour.

"California has a diverse electricity fuel mix and is highly interconnected with the regional electric grid, but our study shows that a significant decrease in hydropower generation this



Capital Press File
The U.S. Energy Information Administration projects a sharp decline this summer in the amount of electricity generated at Shasta Dam and other hydropower facilities in California.

summer could lead to higher electricity prices, among other effects," EIA Administrator Joe DeCarolis said in a statement.

The EIA's report supplemented a forecast on retail electricity prices. Assuming a cooler summer than last year, the EIA projected customers will pay about 4% more in the West than in 2021, though rates will vary widely by utility.

Wholesale prices are more volatile than retail rates, reflecting the ever-changing demand for and supply of energy, espe-

cially on the hottest summer days, according to the EIA.

Drought blankets California. About 60% of the state is in an "extreme" or "exceptional" drought, the two worst categories, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

California's snowpack was 54% of normal on April 1. With little snow to melt into already lower reservoirs, the state will generate 48% less hydroelectricity between June 1 and Sept. 30 than in a non-drought year,

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