

Business & Ag

GOODRICH CREEK NEIGHBORS WATCH RARE PERFORMANCE

Cougar and coyote face off

By Kerry McQuisten
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Kathy Sherman of Baker City says her barking dogs and the sound of a coyote yipping first alerted her and her husband, David, one morning in December, to “something” outside their Goodrich Creek house.

That something turned out to be a “huge” cougar crouched down low in the large field just 50 yards from the home, which is located at the base of the Elkhorns.

“I told David he just had to come and look at this,” said Sherman. “We couldn’t believe it. That was one big boy. You usually don’t see them that big. I’ll bet he was 160 pounds.”

Until David saw the cat with his own eyes, he couldn’t believe a cougar would just lay out by the fence in the open that way. But one was.

Moments later, the Shermans watched the second animal—the coyote that had yipped—walk farther down from the trees into the snowy field and face off against the cougar.

“The cougar crouched down there by the trees, standing off a few yards away from that cougar. Then the cougar started to slink off by it back up into the trees. Then that coyote would break and run up into the trees after him.”

This dance between predators continued not for just a few seconds, but for minutes.

“We wondered if the cougar could have pups up there on the mountain,” she said.

When asked if she thought the two animals might be playing, she answered with an empathic, “Oh no. They were serious. It wasn’t friendly.”

While they continued to watch, the cougar came running back out of the trees and into the field, followed by the coyote. The pair maintained their distance, but continued to repeat the chase pattern.

During this time, the phone rang, and on the other end was neighbor Kristi Sandefur asking if the Shermans were seeing the same thing she was watching.

The Sandefurs’ home is situated just on the other side of the field from the

Sherman’s property.

Sandefur and the Shermans discussed shooting the cougar; however, the Shermans didn’t have a large enough firearm handy and Sandefur herself was unfamiliar with the rifle she had on hand, Sherman said.

According to Sherman, Sandefur was concerned about her pen of horses only a few feet from the edge of that field, and about her daughter’s safety feeding and watering those horses.

Sandefur confirmed the Sherman’s story.

“It was a Tuesday morning,” she said. “I was in my office at 7:15. We have Andalusian horses, and we also have dogs.”

Sandefur said the horses started acting upset in the pen. From her deck on the second floor of her home, she noticed that her horses were divided up “into two tight herds,” not strung out standing along the fence as was normal.

Then she heard the coyote yip.

“So from the deck,” she said, “I can see the lay of the land. I see this coyote running into the pasture from the west. It was running, spinning through the air, and almost running backwards. It was just raising heck.”

Then Sandefur also saw “something” coming behind the coyote just 30-40 yards behind.

“I knew from the color that it was no coyote,” she said. After grabbing her binoculars, she said to herself, “Oh my gosh, it’s a cat.”

Sandefur added, “That’s one brazen cat.”

At one point, she watched the cougar walk without speeding up or slowing down, across the field.

Since that time, she has also noticed repeated disturbances in the behavior of her horses and in the wildlife around their home.

A large group of wild turkeys is known to inhabit the area. “I watched the turkeys all sitting together in a circle. They weren’t moving or making a sound,” she said.

Surprisingly, when Sandefur told the story to the sitter who sometimes watches the house for her and her husband, Eric, the housesitter had a cougar story of her own.



Kerry McQuisten / The Baker County Press

Kathy Sherman at left plays with a friend in her backyard before snow fell. The fence and trees behind her line one side of the field in which the cougar was seen.



Submitted Photo.

Kristi Sandefur sits with her horses just yards away from where she witnessed the cougar. More about her horses and ranch can be found online at www.goodrichandalusians.com.

Apparently, back during Thanksgiving, the housesitter had been driving up to the Sandefurs’ house, when she came upon the cougar sitting in the middle of the road eating one of those turkeys. As the story goes, at first the cougar showed no signs of wanting to move, but eventually took his kill and ambled off the road.

Sandefur contacted the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and was told that the cougar hadn’t yet done enough for them to take action.

The Shermans said they were told the same.

“I got on the phone to Lenny Spooner,” Sandefur said. “He’s an avid hunter.”

Spooner, who is also the pastor at the church Sandefurs attend, was able to see the coyotes, but by the

time he arrived, the cougar had gone.

Just two days ago, added Sherman, “We saw three more coyotes come out of the trees just raising hell. We think this cougar is just hanging out around here—is still hanging out in the area.”

Cougar tags are available for those who wish to hunt the animals, though in her case, Sandefur did stress she wouldn’t be very keen on the idea of giving strangers permission to hunt the big cat on the family’s property.

It is illegal in Oregon to hunt cougars using hounds.

Should a cat threaten or endanger a human, though, it is legal to shoot the animal, and report it to ODFW, which requires the cougar to be turned over to their office for analysis

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, December 26, 2014 — Eastern Oregon

Prices trended generally steady compared to the same quality last week with weak demand from the dairies and particularly the export market which has seen very little trading with more stringent regulations coming from China. Trade activity was very light with the holidays coming up and inclement weather hindering some trade. Several producers have sold all that they plan to sell for this season while some have product they are holding onto until after the new year to sell. (USDA repeated this report from last week due to the holiday.)

(Tons/Price range/Avg.)

Alfalfa: Small Square

Good/Premium 125 210.00-210.00 210.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, December 17, 2014

Vale, Oregon

(No sale December 24 due to holiday.)

Cattle sold through the auction: 1,428

Steer Calves

300-400# Bulk 350.00 - 373.00 Top 380.00
400-500# Bulk 273.00 - 338.00 Top 352.50
500-600# Bulk 243.00 - 269.00 Top 294.00

Heifer Calves

300-400# Bulk 271.00 - 323.00 Top 335.00
400-500# Bulk 231.00 - 278.00 Top 285.00
500-600# Bulk 223.00 - 260.00 Top 263.00

Yearling Steers

600-700# Bulk 219.00 - 239.00 Top 240.00
700-800# Bulk 205.00 - 214.00 Top 216.00
800-900# Bulk N/A Top N/A
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

Yearling Heifers

600-700# Bulk 170.00 - 213.50 Top 214.00
700-800# Bulk 168.00 - 182.00 Top 192.50
800-900# Bulk 153.00 - 171.00 Top 172.00
900-1,000# Bulk N/A Top N/A

Thin Shelly Cows 69.00 - 88.00
Butcher Cows 89.00 - 104.00
Butcher Bulls 93.00 - 117.00
Stock Cows 1,325.00 - 1,785.00

ProducersLivestock.com

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

Delivered to Elgin

Doug Fir / Larch 6”+ \$370/m
White Fir/Sp 6”+ \$380/m
LPP 6”+ \$350/m

Delivered to La Grande

P. Pine 6-11” \$290/m
12-17” \$340/m
18-23” \$390/m
24”+ \$420/m

Delivered to Pilot Rock

12-17” \$390/m
18-23” \$440/m
24”+ \$480/m

Delivered pulp

\$28/ton to Elgin
\$28/ton to La Grande
Courtesy of Arvid Andersen,
Andersen Forestry Consulting

Community Bank raises \$20K for charity

The annual Charity Drive was conducted in all of Community Bank’s full-service branch locations November through December 17th.

The program is an effort to collect donations in branches to benefit charities in that same area. This season a grand total of \$19,816.05 in donations and bank matches were dispersed to charities assisting local citizens in need.

Community Bank matches up to \$500 per branch at \$.50 on the dollar. The goal this year was to raise a minimum of \$1,000 at each branch location in order to have the maximum bank match achieved and to provide

at least \$1500 for each charity. The goal was reached in 6 of the bank’s 13 participating branches: La Grande Downtown, Elgin, Wallowa, Enterprise, Joseph, and Milton-Freewater.

Following are the amounts the charity organizations are receiving the week of Christmas as a result of the Charity Drive. Amounts are rounded to the nearest dollar and include funds raised in the branch and the Community Bank match:

Community Connection Food Bank (Enterprise & Joseph branches): \$4,634; Wallowa Food Bank (Wallowa branch): \$2,804; Elgin Food Bank (Elgin branch): \$2,752; Neighbor

to Neighbor Ministries Food Bank (La Grande downtown & Valley branches): \$2,149; Baker City Food Banks (Baker City branch): \$886.50; Altrusa Feed the Child Program (Pendleton branch): \$346; Martha’s House (Hermiston branch): \$90; Neighborhood Center Food Bank (Heppner branch): \$484; Milton-Freewater City Light and Power Energy Assistance Program through the Salvation Army (Milton-Freewater branch): \$3,824; Walla Walla’s Senior Center, Center at the Park (College Place & Walla Walla branches): \$1,846.

Since 2010 the Community Bank Charity Drive has provided over \$95,000

to charities in the region. Community Bank would like to thank all the people and clubs that donated to the fund raising efforts.

“We are thankful for what these organizations do for our communities and glad to assist them with additional support,” says Tom Moran, Community Bank President/CEO, “We couldn’t do it without our generous customers and communities - so thank you for your help.”

The Clarkston branch of Community Bank opted to facilitate a distinct one day fundraising event for the Lewis Clark Animal Shelter which raised over \$1,000 in donations at their location.

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: \$1,182.80

Silver: \$15.67

Platinum: \$1,208.63

Palladium: \$797.60

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

Corn: \$397.00/bu/USD

Wheat: \$589.75/bu/USD

Soybeans: \$1023.50/bu/USD

Oats: \$303.75/bu/USD

Rough Rice: \$11.75/cwt/USD

Canola: \$439.80 CAD/mwt

Live Cattle: \$165.08/lb./USD

Feeder Cattle: \$217.95/lb./USD

Lean Hogs: \$81.03/lb./USD

Bloomberg.com