

Outdoor Recreation

Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race—a 200-mile adventure



THE OUTDOOR COLUMN
By Todd Arriola

As I traveled on a highway outside of Baker (yes, I call it that) the other day, I felt thankful, courtesy of the nonstop sideways force of the wind and snow, for the false protection I felt, in my warm cocoon of rubber, plastic and steel. I noticed many of our K-9 friends, bearing this “extreme” weather, which led to my thoughts regarding the topic for this week: the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race, slated to take place next Wednesday through Saturday.

The race, in its 12th year, is the West’s only Iditarod and Yukon Quest qualifier, according to host Eagle Cap Extreme (ECE), and it includes in its 200-mile course the Wallowa Mountains, running from the starting point at the Fergi Ski Area, about nine miles southeast of Joseph.

In addition to the 200-mile course, which is a 12 Dog Race and Iditarod and Yukon Quest Qualifier, there’s a 100-mile, 8 Dog Race, a 62-mile, 6 Dog Mid-Distance Pot Race, and a 20-mile Junior Race, for 14 to 17 year-old mushers, using 4 to 6 dogs. Sorry, Measure 91 fans, but the Pot Race is defined as a race that pays out winnings which consist exclusively of the race’s entry fees, with 50% going

to first place, 30% to second, and 20% to third, this year.

While the race doesn’t actually begin until noon on Thursday at the Fergi Ski Area, Wednesday does kick off the event with free “Vet Checks,” held on Main Street in Joseph at 9 a.m., followed by 1 p.m. checks in Enterprise. The Vet Checks are described as “...a fun way to meet the mushers and interact with the dogs!” according to ECE.

At 6 p.m. Wednesday, the Musher Potluck will be held at the Joseph Community Center.

Speaking of mushers, the following are included as competitors in the race:

Aaron Peck, 36, a rancher from County Grande Prairie, Alberta Canada, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category; Alea Robinson, 20, a college student from Eagle River, Alaska, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category; Jessie Royer, 39, a rancher from Darby, Montana, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Bryce Mumford, 35, a United States Postal Service (USPS) Mail Carrier from Preston, Idaho, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Scott White, a custom home builder from Woodville, Washington, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Mark Stamm, a boat repairman/builder from Riverside, Washington, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Jennifer Campeau, 42, a technical recruiter from Rocky Mountain House, Alberta, Canada, who will be running Alaskan, Sepala, and Siberian Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Josi Thyr, 22, an insurance agent from Cataldo, Idaho, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Jason Campeau, 41, a Chief Operating Officer (COO) from Okotoks, Alberta, Canada, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Brett Bruggerman, a dentist from Great Falls, Montana, and winner of last year’s 200-mile race, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 200-mile category;

Laurie Warren, 52, a mule trainer from Council, Idaho, who will be running Alaskan Huskies in the 100-mile category; Hugo Antonucci, a retiree from Adin, California, who will be running Alaskan and Siberian Huskies in the 100-mile category;

April Cox, 45, a clerk, musher and breeder from Adin, California, who will be running Siberian Huskies in the 100-mile category;

Connie Star, 60, a mental health counselor from Cle Elum, Washington, who will be running Siberian and Alaskan Huskies, and a “Malberian,” in the 62-mile category;

Carleen Brehmer, 20, a college student from Meridian, Idaho, who will be running Siberian and Seppala Huskies in the 62-mile category;

Laura Crocker, 77, a retiree from Trail, Oregon, who will be running Sibe-

rian Huskies in the 62-mile category;

Jane Devlin, 52, a professional dog trainer from Bend, Oregon, who will be running Siberian Huskies in the 62-mile category, and;

Alyssa Martin, 26, a hair stylist from Truckee, California, who will be running Siberian Huskies, a German Shepherd, a Karelian Bear Dog mix, and a Malamute mix in the 62-mile category.

At the conclusion of the race, an Awards Banquet is scheduled for Saturday, January 23, at 5:30 p.m., at the Joseph Community Center. The winner of this year’s 200-mile race will receive \$1,700, while \$925 goes to 2nd place, \$575 to 3rd, \$300 to 4th, \$200 to 5th, \$150 to 6th, and \$75 to each placing 7th through 10th.

The winner of the 100-mile race will receive \$850, while \$500 goes to 2nd place, \$300 to 3rd, \$175 to 4th, \$125 to 5th, \$75 to both 6th and 7th, and \$50 to each placing 8th through 10th. In both the 62-mile and 22-mile category, 1st place receives 50% of the pot, 2nd place receives 30%, and 3rd place receives 20%. For the Best Cared for Team for both the 200-mile and 100-mile races, there is an award of \$250. Check out eaglecapextreme.com for banquet tickets, and other information.

“The all-volunteer race receives high marks for professionalism and for being very well-run. We focus on making the mushers’ experience as safe, comfortable and fun as possible. The mushers and their dogs really love their fans, especially all the school kids that make a special field trip to see the event,” according to ECE.

Lawsuit filed against wolf delisting

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“During the push to delist wolves, ODFW ignored a legal requirement to review its now outdated wolf plan. Ambiguity that led to wolf killing and conflict has returned and replaced requirements for transparency and accountability that provided certainty for all stakeholders... the state had a legal mandate to consider the best available science when reviewing the status of the wolves. ODFW put forward a formal recommendation to delist wolves before the public deadline they set for scientists and others to provide input...” according to Oregon Wild.

Michelle Dennehy, ODFW Wildlife Communications Coordinator, said, “ODFW is confident the department followed statutory and legal requirements in its process, and that the Commission acted legally when it delisted wolves from the state ESA.

“Our scientific analysis was based on documented and verifiable information, and used a peer reviewed population viability model (this included review from the scientist who developed the model, along with other prominent wolf experts...)”

“The Commission’s decision to delist was based on the five factors under the ESA law: wolves’ rapidly expanding range in Oregon; the species’ growing population; the stability of the habitat; that over-use of wolves is not likely to occur, and; the protections (Wolf Management Plan) in place, regardless of any ESA listing.”

The packet presented at the Commission meeting on November 9th included a scientific review of ODFW’s 40-page “Assessment of Population Viability of Wolves in Oregon,” a technical report of an updated individual-based population model which uses wolf data collected in Oregon through July 2015, according to ODFW.

ODFW sent the assessment for review to eight scientists, and received four responses, from: Dr. Joe Bull, University of Copenhagen, who is the co-author of the published model modified by ODFW to conduct population viability analysis (PVA) of wolves in Oregon; Dr. Jon Horne, Research Biologist for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Dr. Katie Dugger, Assistant Leader, U.S. Geological Survey, Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit; and, Dr. Ryan Long, Assistant Professor, University of Idaho.

“Dr. Bull’s review of our model was positive and did not identify any major issues with our approach or conclusions,” according to ODFW. Bull said, “Overall I think the application of the model makes sense, as do the conclusions drawn, although I had some questions which I think need addressing. Also, I think the language around the way the results are presented needs modifying in some cases to reflect the degree to which conclusions can be drawn from a modeling exercise like this.”

Horne said, “All in all a very well-done and thorough analysis. But there were a couple of very big issues. I didn’t take much time to say all the good stuff I was thinking or really read the Discussion (a segment of the document) so in the interest of time, here you go.”

According to ODFW, “While his (Horne’s) review had the most suggestions regarding our modeling approach, he never indicated our model was fundamentally flawed, nor were our conclusions inappropriate.”

“Dr. Dugger had an overall favorable impression of our analysis,” according to ODFW. She said, “This was a substantial effort to predict wolf population growth in Oregon relative to conservation and management objectives. You used a rigorous modeling approach and what appears to be the best data available. Most of my attached comments suggest that you increase transparency of the modeling process by including more information regarding 1) the source(s) of the data you used in your model (i.e., full citations should be provided somewhere for vital rates in Table 1), and 2) when data was not available, how/ why you decided to use the specific vital rates or values you chose (i.e., based on info for another species, “expert opinion,” or just a “best guess?”). In some cases, a better explanation of assumptions (and why you made them) would be helpful, too.”

“Dr. Long provided the most positive review of our PVA,” according to ODFW. He said, “This was absolutely a hell of a modeling effort, and I enjoyed reading it, so, thanks for the opportunity. I have a handful of comments and/or questions scattered throughout, but certainly nothing major. As with any model like this, it would be easy to spend a bunch of time trying to pick apart your choices for parameterizing various components of the model, and ask a bunch of detailed questions about why you did one thing or another. There really doesn’t seem to be much point in that here, though. This is a rigorous, well thought-out modeling effort that appears to take full advantage of every bit of relevant data you could get your hands on. As you explain multiple times in the report, your results are likely conservative, and frankly, I find them very convincing.”

Spring break ski camp at Anthony Lakes

Back again for 2016 is the annual Anthony Lakes Spring Break Camp for Kids. This five-day, all inclusive camp is open to the first 100 skiers/riders ages 7-18.

Each child will receive for five consecutive days a lift tickets, rentals and lessons for just \$80.

To register or for more information on times and dates, please email chelsea@anthonylakes.com or mail to Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

Day-use free during MLK Day

Portland, Ore. - The U.S. Forest Service will waive fees at day-use recreation sites in Oregon and Washington on January 18th in honor of Martin Luther King Day.

“Our fee-free days touch on every season and serve as an enticement to new and repeat visitors to come out and enjoy their national forests and grasslands,” said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “These public lands offer rich experiences for everyone, from the avid sportsman to the casual hiker or nature observer.”

This fee waiver includes many picnic areas, boat launches, trailheads and visitor centers. Concession operations will continue to charge fees unless the permit holder wishes to participate. Fees for camping, cabin rentals, heritage expeditions, or other permits still apply. The fee waiver does not apply to SnoParks although they might be located on national public lands. The SnoPark permit program is sponsored by the States of Oregon and Washington.

No fees are charged at any time on 98 percent of

national forests and grasslands, and approximately two-thirds of developed recreation sites in national forests and grasslands can be used for free. Check with your local forest or grassland or on Recreation.gov to see if your destination charges a fee. Go online to find a national forest or grassland near you.

Mark your calendars for the following Forest Service fee-free days in 2016:

- Martin Luther King Day, January 18, 2016
- President’s Day, February 15, 2016

- National Get Outdoors Day, June 11, 2016

- National Public Lands Day, September 24, 2016

- Veterans Day, November 11, 2016

The Pacific Northwest Region consists of 16 National Forests, 59 District Offices, a National Scenic Area, and a National Grassland comprising 24.7 million acres in Oregon and Washington and employing approximately 3,550 people. To learn more about the U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest, please visit www.fs.usda.gov/r6

ODFW releases new fishing regs

Anglers this year may have noticed that Oregon’s fishing regulations for 2016 are in a new magazine format publication.

Over the past year ODFW worked on streamlining and simplifying the angling regulations. ODFW has also expanded opportunities for trout and warmwater fishing and provided more consistent seasons and bag limits.

Anglers should notice plainer language and clearer descriptions of regulations. Content was

also rearranged so that license information and fish ID photos are in the back of the regulations. Updated full-color zone maps can be found at the end of each section.

Here are a few changes that anglers will see in the 2016 fishing regulations:

Expanded year round opportunities across the state for trout. In most areas where there were April openers, these rivers were expanded to be open year round.

Reduction in the number

of special regulations or exceptions. One thing to be aware of is that some of the waters that you fish may no longer be listed under the exceptions. This means that they are now covered under the zone regulations.

Changes in fees. In 2016 there are fee increases on many angling licenses. This is the first time the fees have increased in six years. A new youth license was created. For \$10 dollars youths ages 12-17 will get a hunting,

fishing, shellfish license, and Columbia River Basin endorsement.

ODFW contracted with J.F. Griffin Media to publish this year’s regulations.

They also provide an online version of the regulations that can be accessed from mobile devices, tablets and desktop computers.

This version includes the latest corrections and clarification to a few regulations that were causing confusion.