

Outdoor Rec / Local

BCVIBE

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Kee said that without this migration, given the natural death and birth rates in the community, the population is expected to begin to decline within a couple of years.

He said that is the reason the group met, to discuss the target range of people to attract to and retain in the county, males and females in the age group of 25 to 45, a group which he said which helps make the community more vibrant, possibly bringing their own jobs with them or creating new ones.

Kee said that the general discussion of bringing more people to the community, “creative class workers,” began two years ago, and Davis was (and is) a key part of that discussion, regarding different methods and incentives. Kee used Hoover Gettle, and her husband, Andrew, as examples of members of the target group he and others wish to attract to the community, as well as the individuals who own and operate the Lone Pine Cafe.

Kee explained further that this age group represents people also looking to buy homes, and raise families. “BCVIBE will create an action plan to support both sides of this equation, by bringing representatives from art, culture, and historic organizations, to the table,

with business, marketing, and tourism. This dynamic group will craft an overarching vision of Baker City, as an energetic hub of artisan-based enterprise...” Kee said, stating that the group would need to figure out how it wishes to have Baker City marketed, including hiring a part-time Facilitator, to accomplish the ultimate goal.

Davis said that she noted the biggest issue is that the economy is “just flat,” with economic development hurdles.

She said there are positive models around the country, which could provide a guide for solutions in Baker City, and Baker County. She spoke about the “creative class workers,” people who aren’t necessarily looking for a technical job, for example, but who are looking first at a community they find attractive, in order to bring their knowledge, skills, and money.

She spoke about the households in Baker County, 78% of which are either one- or two-person households. “What does that say? No families...” she said. Davis echoed the statistics showing a declining population, and she compiled her own survey, of around 200 people, in the 25 to 45 age group, in order to determine what the group members are looking for in a community.

Davis said that the number one issue across the

full spectrum of respondents was affordable housing, stating that they’re tired of renting. She said that the group is also looking for visual appeal-attractive outdoor spaces, and well-maintained public areas. An attractive, and welcoming downtown area is on the list, as well as a healthy, artisan community. She explained, artisan means, to her, “...unique, a sense of place, as opposed to the cookie-cutter culture. Things that are hand-made, locally sourced and produced, co-op markets, locally roasted coffees, bakeries... locally-sourced food” etc.

She pointed out employment issues, also referencing her survey, stating that a majority of respondents chose the option, “I would prefer to move to a community, where there was existing employment, and the community already reflected my lifestyle,” as opposed to, “I consider myself to be more of a pioneer, an entrepreneur. I would like to be able to move to a community, where I would be involved actively, and help with its development.”

Davis did note, however, that 30% of the respondents chose the second option.

Davis said that these, and other details, need to be kept in mind, when devising a strategy for what the group desires BCVIBE to be, and marketing Baker County. She said that

through grant funding, \$5,000 currently, a part-time Facilitator position is possible, and there is potential funding for projects, if the group were to plan any.

Kee spoke of the urgency to get the process started, and Lewis began a discussion about the many vacant buildings downtown, including issues with condition and rent. Parker, Savage, Vegter, and others continued with the discussion, and Savage mentioned that a list could be compiled, of rentable spaces, with all associated details. Parker stated that people have shown interest in renting some downtown spaces, but there have been problems with being able to rent from a few reluctant owners of the properties. Members of the group, including Larry, said that incentives could be offered to building owners downtown, to bring in more business, as he notices constantly the empty spaces.

Lowe stated that the move of the Farmers Market, from the highly visible Geiser-Pollman Park, over to the Events Center, was a bad decision, and it’s something that needs to change, speaking about details about Baker City and Baker County to showcase, in this case, local produce.

Savage compiled a list of individuals, including Kee, Vegter, and Nelson to work on the scope of work for the Facilitator, and other details.

ODFW WEEKLY RECREATION REPORT

FREE Northeast Family Fishing Events

April 2, Hermiston, McNary Channel Ponds, 10 a.m. to noon.

May 14, Hermiston, McNary Channel Ponds, 10 a.m. to noon

June 4, Heppner, Cutsforth Pond, 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

June 4, Ukiyah, Twin Pond, 7 a.m. to noon

July 9, Pendleton, Jubilee Lake, 9 a.m. to noon

ODFW rolls out ‘trophy trout’ program at five Oregon fishing venues

Thousands of extra-large hatchery rainbow trout will be released in several Oregon fishing holes this spring as the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife rolls out an enhanced “Trophy Trout” program this year to add a little juice to the spring trout season. More than 10,000 two-pound rainbows ranging from one to three pounds will be released at five locations around the state starting from now through May. Trophy Trout locations for 2016 are: Phillips Reservoir in Baker County, Willow Creek Reservoir in Morrow County, Timothy Lake in Clackamas County, Trojan Pond in Columbia County, and Garrison Lake in Curry County.

Baker County Viewing

Bighorn sheep can be seen in the Burnt River Canyon west of Durkee or along the Snake River Road south of Richland. The best viewing is in the early morning and late in the evening.

Bald and golden eagles can be seen along the Snake River. Take the Snake River Road between Richland and Huntington.

Deer can be seen throughout the valley. Early in the morning and late in the afternoon are good times to view wildlife. Driving through the foothills of the Baker valley and through the Keating valley can turn up good numbers of deer. 2/23/16

Elkhorn Wildlife Area. Elkhorn Wildlife Area is known for the Rocky Mountain elk and mule deer herds that frequent the area during the winter. When snow covers the ground, ODFW staff feed elk and deer to encourage them to stay in the higher elevations and out of agricultural fields.

There are two good viewing sites. The Anthony Creek site is located about eight miles west of I-84 on North Powder River Lane. From I-84 take the North Powder Exit (Exit 285). About 150 elk can be seen here on any given day. From the overlook on Auburn Road, watch hundreds of elk and mule deer. It is on the south side of Old Auburn Road, which branches off Highway 7 about six miles south of Baker City.

Northeast Zone Hunting

Wolves are protected by state law and it is unlawful to shoot them. Coyote hunters in northeastern Oregon need to take extra care to identify their target as wolves can look like coyotes, especially wolf pups in the mid-summer and fall. Please report any wolf sightings or wolf sign to La Grande office (541) 963-2138.

BAKER COUNTY

Cougars can be found throughout Baker County but hunters should target areas with high concentrations of deer and elk. Setting up on a fresh kill or using distress calls can all be productive techniques. Hunters are required to check in the hide of any cougar taken, with skull and proof of sex attached. Remember to pick up a 2016 tag.

Coyote numbers are good throughout the district. Try calling in early morning and late afternoon. Remember to ask for permission before hunting on private properties.

GRANT COUNTY

Cougar hunting remains open. Remember you need 2016 tag to hunt as of Jan. 1. Successful hunters should remember that check-in of the hide with skull and proof of sex attached is mandatory; see the regulations for details. Remember to pick up a 2016 tag.

Coyote numbers are good in most of the district. Coyotes may respond to distress calls. Try calling in the early morning and late evening.

UMATILLA COUNTY

Cougar are well distributed in forested areas of the Walla Walla, Mt. Emily, and Ukiyah units. Hunters will have best success by finding a fresh naturally made kill and sitting on it, or by using predator calls. Some success has come from following tracks until the cougar is located. Remember you need 2016 tag to hunt as of Jan. 1.

Coyote are numerous throughout the County and hunters should have good success calling. Remember to ask permission before hunting on private lands.

UNION COUNTY

Cougars are common in Union County. Focus on game rich areas with long ridgelines or saddles that cats typically travel. Setting up downwind of a deer or elk killed by a cougar can be productive. Nonresident hunters can include a cougar tag with others tags for only \$14.50. All cougars taken must be checked in within 10 days of harvest; call for an appointment before check in. Remember to pick up a tag for 2016.

WALLOWA COUNTY

Coyote: Good numbers of coyotes can be found throughout Wallowa County. Calling coyotes with rabbit distress type calls has been effective for hunters. It is important to choose areas with abundant coyote sign and little human activity.

Cougar numbers are moderate throughout Wallowa County. Most lions are taken incidental to other hunting; however, calling with fawn bleat, or locating a cougar kill and waiting for a cat to return are often successful techniques. Remember you need 2016 tag to hunt as of Jan. 1.

Spring prescribed burns ahead

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will begin implementing its prescribed burning program as the snow melts and drier weather conditions prevail. Prescribed fire managers are planning to implement hazardous fuel reduction burns beginning at many project sights.

Prescribed fire is a major component of the Cohesive Wildfire Strategy to meet the goals of restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes and creating fire adapted communities. Prescribed burning is done to reduce dead and down fuels, selectively thin understory trees in dense forested stands, stimulate fire tolerant plant species, enhance forage and browse, reduce the risk of large stand-replacement fires, create strategic fuels breaks in the urban interface, and restore fire under controlled conditions as a disturbance factor in these landscapes.

Prescribed burns can range from ten acres to thousands of acres in size. Prescribed burns often are accomplished with combined resources of local rural fire departments, contractors, and State and other federal fire agencies.

Fire history studies have shown that fire was a dominant natural process in the Blue Mountains, maintaining a more open and park-like condition throughout the low- to mid-elevation forests.

Low-intensity surface-fires burned throughout these drier forests and grasslands perpetuating open, park-like stands of fire tolerant tree species such as ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and larch.

Hazardous fuel reduction is not without impacts.

Smoke associated with prescribed burning is a major concern and the hardest to forecast in the implementation planning process. Prescribed fire managers work closely with the Oregon State Smoke Forecast Center in accordance with the Oregon Smoke Management Plan to determine when, where, and how much is burned on a daily basis. Smoke dispersion models are used to look at the volume of smoke, the direction of spread and the mixing height prior to each burn.

If a burn is forecasted to produce smoke that will be a significant impact to a community or sensitive area it is rescheduled until there is a more favorable weather forecast.

Burning is part of the series of fuel reduction treatments intended to decrease the damage done by wildfires, including reducing the amount of smoke that typically impacts communities during the fire season. The intent is to keep smoke out of populated areas. Burning under controlled conditions reduces surface and ladder fuels setting the stage to limit future high intensity unplanned fires and the smoke that they would produce. Many areas are burned on 10 to 15 year rotations to limit fuels accumulations and enhance forage and browse important to wildlife.

Wallowa-Whitman forest managers have been successfully conducting prescribed burning operations for fuel reduction for over 20 years, and plan to continue into the foreseeable future. In the last five years the forest has increased prescribed burning by 20 percent. Twenty

thousand acres of hazardous fuels were treated last year by fire or mechanical treatments.

Actual acres within a project area may vary due to fuel conditions, smoke dispersion, wind patterns, and other variables. Acres may be higher or lower in some project areas than listed. Weather patterns, fuel conditions, and smoke dispersion will determine exactly where and when units are ignited within the project areas. It is anticipated that not all areas will be within prescription and will not be implemented this spring, while other project areas may have additional acres within prescription that may be implemented.

The Wallowa-Whitman plans to burn approximately 8000 acres across the forest this spring. For more information about the Wallowa Whitman prescribed burning program, you may contact Mark Johnson at 541-523-1210, or visit the forest web site at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/Fire-Aviation> to view the spring 2016, burn unit maps.

Whitman Ranger District (WRD) – 541-523-4476 (Baker, Halfway, and Unity). The WRD plans to conduct prescribed burning on 3,000 acres this spring, which may include:

Foothills (250 acres) – 4 miles west of Baker City ,OR

Deer (500 acres) – 2 miles northeast of Sumpter, OR
Union Miners (500 acres) – 7 miles east of Sumpter, OR
Mile 9 (700 acres) – 5 miles west of Unity, OR

Goose (750 acres) – 17 miles northwest of Richland, OR

Pine Valley (500 acres) – 7 miles north/northwest of Halfway, OR

East Pine (150 acres) – 5 miles north of Halfway, OR

Barnard (500 acres) – 6 miles northwest of Halfway, OR

Baboon (250 acres) – 5 miles east of Sumpter, OR
California (750 acres) – 10 miles southwest of Sumpter, OR

Greenhorn (250 acres) – 1 mile southeast of Greenhorn, OR

Broman (1000 acres) – 8 miles northwest of Unity, OR
Woodtick (100 acres) – 7 miles northwest of Unity, OR

The Wallowa Fire Zone (WFZ) - 541-426-4978 (Wallowa Valley Ranger District, Hells Canyon NRA and Eagle Cap Ranger District).

The WFZ plans to conduct prescribed burning of up to 3,000 acres this spring, which may include:

Muddy Sled (1000 acres) – 20 miles north of Enterprise, OR

Puderbaugh (1000 acres) – 25 miles southeast of Joseph, OR

Cold Canal (500 acres) – 11 miles southeast of Joseph, OR

Ches Elk (500 acres) – 30 miles northeast of Enterprise, OR

B-Vine (1000 acres) – 30 miles north/northeast of Enterprise, OR

The Grande Ronde Fire Zone (GRFZ) – 541-963-7186 (La Grande Ranger District). The GRFZ plans to conduct prescribed burning on up to 2000 acres this spring, which may include:

Bald Angel (2080 acres) – 5 Miles northeast of Medical Springs, OR

Blue Fly (524 acres) – 12 miles south of Starkey, OR
Mc Meadow(720 acres) – 10 miles west of Starkey, OR

Little Bear (303 acres) – 10 east of Union, OR

Trail (222 acres) – 7 miles west of La Grande, OR
Bird Track (1491 acres) – 7 miles west of La Grande, OR

Rooster (630 acres) – 24 miles south of La Grande, OR

Smith (340 acres) – 7 miles east of Medical Springs, OR