

# Outdoor Rec / Local

## Signs of Fathers Day—literally



**THE OUTDOOR COLUMN**  
By Todd Arriola

This past Father's Day Sunday, facilitated by the clear weather, a sign structure was installed on the Arriola Ranch, compliments of two individuals, father and son, Frank and Rod Burnetto, of Portland, whom my father, in the direct and appropriate Basque way, dubbed "The Squirrel Hunters."

This sign—or, rather, signs, since there are actually two—sits on a nearly bomb-proof, square metal tube frame, all of it custom-built by the Burnettos, several years ago. The metal signs, one a "rocking E," and the other, "AY," both Arriola cattle

brands, sat in the Burnettos' cabin in Bridgeport for a few years, before the push to finally install them last weekend. The Burnettos began construction on their cabin over 15 years ago, and have been regular visitors and hunters in the Bridgeport area since that time, bringing family and friends, from time to time, including last Father's Day. They've gifted my father some interesting items over the years, including the awesome-looking signs, and a beautiful, custom-stocked rifle, engraved with his name—Pat Arriola—as "the steward of the land."

As their nickname suggests, they made a point of seeking out as targets each year those animals which, frankly, no farmer or rancher, to my knowledge, has fallen in love with at any point in time. No,

they're not trigger-happy, bloodthirsty savages—just practical, helpful (and entertaining) individuals, who fit in well, whether at their home west of the Cascades, or in eastern Oregon.

That particular weekend, I had attempted to mow my mother's and grandmother's lawns, but the rainy weather on Saturday wouldn't allow it, making the return journey out there on Sunday a necessity, which worked well, as it turned out. Sunday morning, while I mowed my mother's lawn, Dad and the Burnettos worked out a plan to mount the signs, and I joined the crew after I finished mowing.

A hole was drilled near the top of a large post, one of two which hold and secure the main corral gate, both timber set in place 35 years ago, from the former radar tower atop Dooley Mountain. Assisted by mighty Basque strength (i.e., Dad used a tractor with a bucket), the frame was lifted up, and Rod bolted the top part of it to the post. Rod marked the bottom hole, the frame was leveled, and the bottom

part was bolted to the post. Dad held us up in place, and I helped Rod mount the signs, which are oriented to be seen properly, if one is heading east, on Bridgeport Lane.

During the whole process, naturally, I snapped some photographs (I couldn't resist playing reporter), and post-installation, the entire crew basked in the glory of the accomplishment, which included, as expected, even more photographs, to mark the momentous occasion for posterity.

Unfortunately, I could not attend the evening dinner which included chili (and, possibly some such beverage as wine, or whiskey, and the resulting entertaining conversations), courtesy of the Burnettos, at their cabin. But, it was a constructive day, and I have no doubt that Dad and Mom were pleased with the project, though it was years in the making. I can assure the Burnettos, as they made their way back to Portland, they had no need to doubt whatsoever that their gift was the center piece of a great Father's Day...

## Ladies golf scores

Scores for the June 8 Ladies Golf Day at Quail Ridge are:

Golf Winners

1st Flight: 1st Myrna Evan, 2nd Lavelle Woodcock; 2nd Flight: 1st Kathy Hopkins; 3rd Flight: 1st (tie) Roxanne McAdams: Carol Irvine; Birdie Carp; Irvine Bridge Winners: 1st Margo Kenworthy; 2nd Dianne Ellingson; 3rd Marlene Cross

9-Week Bridge Winners are: 1st Joan Colton, 2nd Deni Smith, 3rd Janice Smull.

## SWCD looks at 'waning water woes' with projects



Submitted Photo.

One of four rubber tire troughs for off stream livestock watering.

Irrigation and livestock water: two things which are absolutely essential to the livelihood of local farmers and ranchers; but four straight years of drought do not help the cause. The Baker County SWCDs, consisting of Baker Valley, Keating, Burnt River, and Eagle Valley, put a major focus on water developments and improved irrigation efficiency this year; helping landowners develop springs, install pipelines and watering troughs, as well as install diversion structures and head gates.

Two small grants, one in the Baker Valley District, and the other in the Burnt River District, improved irrigation delivery by upgrading from flood to gated pipe. While flood irrigation can be very effective, it also increases the risk for erosion, sediment runoff, and does not allow for proper control or water management. Gated pipe will allow these two landowners to more evenly disperse irrigation water throughout their pastures while improving water quality by eliminating much of the tail water.

A Technical Assistance grant was recently completed in the Baker Valley District that also aims to improve irrigation efficiency and water delivery. The MaHarry-Blevins Ditch conveys water to the P-2 Pipeline, and is supplied by Wolf Creek Reservoir. About 1.5 miles of the ditch is open, and experiences considerable ditch loss by leaching through the banks, as well as through evaporation. After an Optimization Study was completed on the MaHarry-Blevins in 2013, it was determined that the ditch was losing up to six acre-feet per day, or 1,955,108 gallons of water per day! To account for ditch loss in the summer months, and to meet the irrigation needs of the producers, nearly twice as much water than needed must be released down the ditch. This project used grant funding to hire a licensed engineer to develop a 100% construction-ready design for installing a pipeline in the 1.5 miles of the open MaHarry-Blevins Ditch.

In the Burnt River District, due to maintenance deficiencies, pushup style dams were previously in use on two of the main diversion structures to divert water from Camp Creek. Two other diversions were in critical shape, and did not allow for adequate fish passage. Camp Creek was also experiencing severe bank erosion and a reduction of stabilizing woody vegetation, therefore releasing sediment into the Camp Creek system. This large restoration project replaced four pushup dams with four concrete sill/wing-wall diversion structures. Head gates were also installed at each diversion, as well as streambed material to aid in fish passage. To minimize stream bank erosion, 44 juniper skeletons were installed along the worst sections of cut banks. Along the same section, 26 willow clumps and 18 vertical bundles were planted to help reestablish woody vegetation. There was 5,000 feet of wildlife friendly fence installed to restrict livestock access to Camp Creek, thus protecting the newly stabilized riparian area.

Upland restoration, although not tied directly, still plays a key role in water quality in Baker County. A large restoration project is just wrapping up in the Keating District, which focused on off stream watering and improved livestock distribution. A lack of a reliable water source can cause livestock to congregate in certain areas, typically overgrazing those areas and opening up niches for invasive species, like medusahead rye. Medusahead crowds and competes with native grasses and forbs, deteriorating forage for livestock, as well as habitat for wildlife such as Sage Grouse. This conservation project developed four springs on the property, and installed pipeline to convey water to four individual watering troughs. The newly developed springs were enclosed with wildlife friendly fence to aid in protecting the springs from trampling. A 4,500 foot cross fence was also installed as a part of this project, creating two separate pastures to aid in livestock distribution. These activities will greatly improve rangeland health and native species in the area, while allowing the landowner to better manage grazing on his private ground.

## Winds spur hazard tree removal

A wind event this spring caused several dozen hazard trees to fall across Forest Road 39 and 3960 between Indian Crossing and Blackhorse campgrounds. Coverdale campground, located in the middle, was impacted the most heavily and both roads were not passable due to the downed trees.

Forest Service Recreation and Fire Crews pulled together immediately in order to remove the downed hazard trees. Fire Crews focused on removing the trees from the roadways while the Recreation Crew focused

on the Developed Recreation Sites. "I'm happy to say we were able to pull together and take care of this public safety event quickly and with as little impact to the public as possible," said Deputy District Ranger, Jake Lubera.

Hazard trees are defined as having a likelihood of property damage or personal injury from tree failure. For the U.S. Forest Service it is an issue primarily in developed recreation areas.

A program of hazard tree management is necessary to reduce the risk of property damage, injuries

and fatalities due to tree failures in developed areas. This event emphasizes the need to do more preventative hazard tree removal across the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

There are several places that are in need of hazard tree reduction near developed areas.

Plans like the Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project are intended to address this problem. The Lostine Corridor projects project seeks to increase public safety in conjunction with improving forest health and resiliency in a high-use public area

leading into the Eagle Cap Wilderness. More information on this project is available at [www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48592](http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48592)

One startling fact about the blowdown events along the Imnaha is that almost all of the trees were broken off roughly 15 feet from the ground.

This occurred to the trees no matter what size they were, from very small to very large.

This type of blow-down suggests that the trees were suffering from bark beetle infestation prior to the windstorms.

## Commercial drivers licensing procedure is changing

If you are seeking an Oregon commercial driver license (CDL), some changes are under way at DMV that will take effect this year.

The changes are required to comply with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations. Oregon is adopting these changes by switching from a CDL "instruction permit" system to a new "commercial learner permit" program. The new commercial learner permit is

more like a CDL in that it has a class, endorsements and restrictions.

The law took effect July 8, 2015, and Oregon is making the changes in phases. To ease the transition, Oregon DMV is changing its CDL drive test appointment scheduling policy and procedure this summer:

- Effective June 28, 2016, customers must have a valid Oregon CDL instruction permit and applicable commercial

knowledge test scores on record with DMV before scheduling a CDL drive test appointment occurring on or after Sept. 26, 2016.

- On or after Sept. 26, 2016, customers must have either a valid Oregon CDL instruction permit and applicable knowledge test scores on record or a valid Oregon commercial learner permit before scheduling a CDL drive test appointment.

These changes are being

made to enforce the requirement, beginning Sept. 26, that applicants must hold a valid Oregon CDL instruction permit or commercial learner permit in order to take a commercial driver skills test. Additional information about Oregon's transition to the commercial learner permit will be distributed in future releases. For more information, visit [OregonDMV.com](http://OregonDMV.com).

## Owyhee Canyon fire assessment done

The Owyhee Canyon Fire burned 22,000 acres along the Owyhee River Canyon on June 5-8, 2016. Vale District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fire suppression personnel, along with the Jordan Valley Rangeland Fire Protection Association (RFPA) and contracted resources contained the fire.

Bureau policy requires BLM staff to create a draft plan for Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation of the area within seven days of containment. A more comprehensive final plan will be submitted by

June 28.

The initial plan states that of the 21,776 acres burned, 21,075 acres of it is BLM managed land and 701 acres is privately owned. The fire area is identified as general sage-grouse habitat as well as mule deer winter range. One sage-grouse lek (a mating area for sage-grouse) was identified as being within the burn perimeter. The fire also burned 4,120 acres of the Owyhee Canyon Wilderness Study Area (WSA), one livestock grazing allotment and damaged 16

miles of livestock management fences.

The burned areas will adversely affect sage-grouse and other sage-obligate species. Invasive species such as Scotch and bull thistle, whitetop species, Russian knapweed, and rush skeletonweed have all been documented in the area. With the burning of competing native vegetation, these species are highly likely to spread into the affected area unless they are treated.

Potential treatments include: Inventory and treatment of noxious

weeds in and around the fire perimeter; Repair of fences, gates and livestock management infrastructure; Temporary deferment or closure of affected grazing allotments; Construction of temporary fences to keep livestock out of the affected area; Herbicide application to prepare for planting and/or to remove invasive annual species competition; Sagebrush restoration; and Ongoing monitoring to determine treatment effectiveness and appropriate time to reopen grazing allotments.