

Outdoor Rec / Local

More to the beaver story ...



THE OUTDOOR COLUMN
By Todd Arriola

I wrote an article in the Friday, December 22, 2017 issue of *The Baker County Press*, about a beaver that had been trapped at some point, had somehow freed itself with the trap still attached to a hind leg, and had been put out of its misery with an air rifle, near Charles Risley’s property on Kirkway Drive, directly east of the Powder River. However, one mystery remained: who’d trapped the beaver in the first place?

In an attempt to find an answer to that question, I spoke to Oregon State Police (OSP) Wildlife Trooper Sergeant Isaac Cyr, of the Baker City OSP office, at the intersection of 10th Street and Pocahontas Road.

Cyr wasn’t involved with the initial response, but he was called in to determine whether there were any State wildlife violations.

As part of Cyr’s investigation, he performed a necropsy (autopsy) on the beaver, and ran a metal detector over the carcass,

but he didn’t locate any projectile. He said he could tell that a projectile of some sort had entered the rear of the skull, and exited out the front, but a distinction between an air rifle pellet and a rimfire or centerfire rifle bullet couldn’t be made with just that evidence. (Risley stated to Baker City Police (BCPD) officers that he’d used an air rifle, and he showed them the rifle. The BCPD didn’t charge Risley with any violation).

Echoing Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) District Biologist Brian Ratliff’s assessment of the beaver at the scene, Cyr said, “That beaver had gangrene, so, that trap had been on there for quite some time. It was in a condition where, had I responded to it, I would have shot it myself, for humane reasons. Had he not shot it, we would have, because it needed to be put down.”

Cyr didn’t find any violations, from a wildlife law standpoint.

Cyr showed me the trap itself, a solid-looking steel, coil spring model, with a jaw that has a spread, or inside diameter, of 6.5 inches (a No. 4 size) when set, manufactured by the Duke Company, of West

Point, Mississippi. Cyr had to remove enough rust with a wire wheel grinder in order to reveal that information during the investigation, but he couldn’t find any form of identification, such as a unique brand number, which is issued by ODFW, to each properly licensed trapper.

The reason the beaver had been able to escape with the trap to begin with became obvious, once Cyr showed me the chain—a dog leash-type spring loaded metal clip was attached to the end of it, which meant that the trap chain could have been pulled loose from its anchor point without much difficulty.

Cyr said, “To me, someone who knew what they were doing with trapping would never use something like that.”

In order to legally use the trap itself, Cyr said, and according to ODFW regulations, for a trap of this size, there needs to be a space between the jaw, when the trap is sprung, of at least 3/16 of an inch.

The trap doesn’t have that spacing, but he said that the general remedy for a trap of this type is to weld a bead on either side of the jaw, creating that spacing (the spacing is required in case a bird springs the trap, for example, instead of the intended target, and it can free its leg, or legs).

Regardless, Cyr said, trapping isn’t normally allowed within City limits anyway, let alone using

that type of trap (while Cyr said he thinks the trap was set within City limits, and he’s seen traps set along the river, there was no way to determine the original location, and the investigation didn’t associate Risley with the trap).

A cage type trap, meant to capture the animal alive, would be authorized, with the proper permission and permit from ODFW.

Cyr said that Risley had issues in the past with damage to his property from beavers, and at that time, he did have a permit from ODFW to address that issue, along with a cage trap.

Chief Wyn Lohner forwarded the BCPD report to District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff for further review, since, according to Lohner, the only potential charge probably would have been Recklessly Endangering—the Leo Adler Memorial Pathway sits to the west of the Powder River, across from Risley’s property at that location, with a 60-acre farm field, owned by Charlotte Ward, to the west of that.

Shirtcliff said, considering all of the evidence, “We reviewed it, and determined no charges would be filed.”

A fitting end to an interesting scenario, though the mystery still remains of who originally set the trap, and where.

Whatever the case, there usually is more to every story ...

Buck taken illegally



Submitted Photo.

This buck was poached in Umatilla County.

After a lengthy investigation involving Troopers of the Oregon State Police (OSP) Fish & Wildlife Division in Pendleton, a Pendleton area man was arrested on January 6, 2018 for multiple misdemeanor charges related to the illegal taking of wildlife on private and public lands within Umatilla County.

In September of 2017 an OSP Fish & Wildlife Trooper received information about alleged illegal hunting activities. As the investigation progressed, the primary suspect was identified as Joseph Reide St. Pierre, age 18, from Pendleton, who was alleged to be illegally Hunting, Taking, and Wasting Wildlife on both Public and Private Properties in Umatilla County.

Information obtained during the investigation alleged that St. Pierre was involved in the Unlawful Taking of Wildlife as far back as the fall of 2016, to include a large mule deer buck, 3 large whitetail bucks, and two antlerless elk.

On Saturday January 6th, 2018 St. Pierre was lodged at the Umatilla County jail for probable cause and arraigned on Monday January 8, 2018 for the following charges;

- Unlawful Take of Buck Deer Closed Season-4 counts
- Unlawful Waste of Game animal-2 counts
- Hunting on the Cultivated Lands of Another- 3 counts
- Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm Across a Public Way -2counts
- Hunting prohibited method: Shotgun with shot restrictions- 1 count
- Unlawful Take of Antlerless Elk -- 2 counts
- Exceeding Annual Bag Limit Elk- 1 Count
- Criminal Trespass In The Second Degree-1 counts
- Criminal Trespass While in Possession of a Firearm-1 count
- Unlawful Discharge of a Firearm from a Motor Vehicle-1 count
- Hunting with the Assistance of Artificial light- 1-count
- Assisting of Aiding another in committing wildlife violation, Unlawful Taking of Buck Deer-2 counts

Anyone with information related to this investigation is asked to call the Turn-in-Poacher TIP hotline at 1-800-452-7888 or contact Trooper Tom Juzeler or Senior Trooper Ryan Sharp at the Pendleton office of the Oregon State Police 541-278-4090.

Information on the T.I.P. Reward Program:

The Oregon Hunters Association offers rewards to persons, through their T.I.P. fund, for information leading to the issuance of a citation to a person(s), or an arrest made of a person(s) for illegal possession, killing, or taking of bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose, elk, deer, antelope, bear, cougar, wolf, furbearers and/or upland game birds and water fowl. T.I.P. rewards can also be paid for the illegal taking, netting, snagging, and/or dynamiting of game fish, and/or shell fish, and for the destruction of habitat.

In addition rewards may be paid for information leading to the issuance of a citation to a person(s), or an arrest made of a person(s) who have illegally obtained Oregon hunting/angling license or tags. People who “work” the system and falsely apply for resident license or tags are not legally hunting or angling and are considered poachers.

Rewards:

Bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose \$1000 ; Elk, deer, antelope \$500; Bear, cougar, wolf \$300; Habitat destruction \$300; Illegally obtaining Oregon hunting or angling license or tags \$200; Game fish, shellfish \$100; Upland birds, waterfowl \$100; Furbearers \$100.

New car fees in effect

New Oregon vehicle registration, title and trip permit fees took effect Jan. 1, 2018, providing funding for a major investment in the state’s transportation system. Oregon residents with vehicle tags expiring on or after Jan. 1 are already seeing new registration fees in their renewal reminders. The fee for a two-year passenger vehicle registration renewal – DMV’s most common vehicle transaction – increased from \$86 to \$112.

In addition to this vehicle registration fee increase, the package is funded by increases in other transportation-related fees that take effect Jan. 1, 2018. These include increases on motor fuel taxes and fees for title transfers and commercial motor vehicles. The new law created a 0.5 percent privilege tax on new vehicle purchases, which will be collected by the Oregon Department of Revenue. The law also includes a \$15 fee on new adult bicycles that cost \$200 or more.

BLM’s wild horse gather ahead

As part of the Bureau of Land Management’s commitment to keeping public landscapes healthy and productive, the Vale District announced plans to conduct a helicopter gather of wild horses within the Cold Springs and Hog Creek Herd Management Areas beginning in January/February 2018.

The Cold Springs HMA is located approximately 45 miles southwest of Vale, Ore., 25 miles southwest of Harper, Ore., and 45 miles southeast of Juntura, Ore., in Malheur County.

The Appropriate Management Level (AML) – the number of horses the range can sustainably support in conjunction with other animals and resource uses – is 75 to 150 horses for this area. The current population is over 175.

The Hog Creek HMA is located approximately 20 miles west of Vale, Ore., and five miles west of the town of Harper, Ore., in Malheur County. The

AML for this area is 30 to 50 horses and the current population is over 60.

Heavy to severe wild horse grazing jeopardizes the health of rangelands, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and ultimately animal health and condition.

Both gathers will reduce the wild horse population to levels within AML and immediately reduce resource impacts.

Each gather will likely last less than one week, though exact start and end dates will be determined by the weather and contractor’s availability. BLM will host public viewing days during the helicopter gathers.

The public is welcome to attend the gathers and must read the Field Observation Protocol information before visiting. Observation will be held daily during the gathers, with a maximum number of 15 people attending each day. If you are interested in observing the gathers, you

must contact Larisa Bogardus at the BLM Lakeview District Office, (541) 947-6237 or lbogardus@blm.gov, to have your name added to the viewing list.

Observation will be offered on a first-come first-served basis for each day of the gathers. Observers must personally check in with the BLM official at the meeting site (Vale District BLM Office –100 Oregon St. Vale, OR 97918) to be considered.

Observers will be led by caravan to and from the gather site by BLM employees. Personal, high clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles are REQUIRED. If you do not have adequate transportation to the observation area, you may attempt to carpool with other observers (at their discretion), but this option is not guaranteed.

Access to and distance from the capture site location will be determined jointly by the contractor and the BLM’s Contracting

Officer’s Representative prior to gather operations. Safety of the horses, crew and public, is our top priority.

Viewing opportunities and gather reports will be shared here: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/herd-management/gathers-and-removals/oregon-washington>.

The supporting planning documents for the Cold Springs and Hog Creek gathers are available on BLM’s ePlanning website at: https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/nepa/nepa_register.do

Animals selected for removal from the range will be transported to Oregon’s Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines to be prepared for adoption.

For viewing, the public may visit the Corral Facility anytime between regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Two arrested after cutting forest products

On January 5th, 2018, Baker County 911 received a transferred call from Union County regarding possible stranded/overdue family members. Darrell Adams initially reported his 22 year old son, Alex Adams and his 26 year old cousin, Levi Logsdon, had gone to the Pondosa hot springs and not returned. Darrell added he had spoken to the two, and they were near a sign that indicated they were 9 miles up Big Creek Road off of Highway 203. Darrell advised the two had been at the location for a couple of days. It was also Logsdon

frequently this location, and had been called in the previous month to Union County as an overdue motorist. Union County activated Search and Rescue and located Logsdon, who turned down any assistance. A deputy contacted Darrell Adams and advised resources would be deployed in the morning.

On the morning of January 6th, 2018, a Deputy from the Baker County Sheriff’s Office, along with law enforcement from the U.S. Forest Service, conducted a search of the area as described by Darrell Adams. At one point

during the search, investigators came across Darrell, who was also searching. They were unable to locate either Alex or Levi.

On the morning of January 7th, 2018, personnel from the Baker County Sheriff’s Office again deployed to the area and began searching for the two men. During the course of the search, Levi Logsdon’s truck and an associated trailer were located. Both the truck and trailer were loaded with several cords of freshly cut firewood. At the location of the vehicles was also a small warming fire, which was

still burning. In the early afternoon hours, both Alex Adams and Levi Logsdon (along with Logsdon’s four dogs), where located in the woods (by following their tracks in the snow), paralleling the main service road. Both men were eventually arrested. Alex Adams was arrested by the Baker County Sheriff’s Office and charged with a Probation Violation. Levi Logsdon was arrested by the United States Forest Service and was charged with Unlawful Cutting/Transporting of Special Forest Products.