

National Wildlife Federation Urges Americans to Buy Duck Stamps in Support of Wildlife Refuge:



As the standoff at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon continues, the National Wildlife Federation and its state affiliates are urging Americans to show their support for protecting wildlife habitats and public lands by buying Federal Duck Stamps.

"Whether a hunter, angler, birder, hiker, or wildlife enthusiast, every American benefits from the amazing public lands that have been protected for generations for the benefit of all Americans," said Collin O'Mara, president and chief executive officer of the National Wildlife Federation. "By purchasing Federal Duck Stamps, we can show our strong support for conserving wildlife, enhancing wildlife refuges, and ensuring that America's public lands remain accessible to all Americans."

The Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is home to over 320 species of birds like snow geese and sandhill cranes, 58 species of mammals including

mule deer, pronghorn, and bobcats, fish like native redband trout, and amphibians and reptiles such as Western rattlesnakes. Established in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt, the Refuge spans 187,000 acres (292 square miles) and is home to one of the largest freshwater marsh ecosystems in the western United States.

The occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge follows multiple unsuccessful state-level and Congressional efforts to privatize public lands, which are currently accessible to all Americans. These efforts have failed to gain traction in state legislatures across the West because, according to research by Colorado College, more than 95 percent of Western voters support keeping public lands in public hands.

Those interested in purchasing duck stamps may visit: <http://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp.php>

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Baker and Grant County Livestock Producers Reminded to Report Forage Losses by Feb. 1

USDA LFP Covers Eligible Grazing Losses Due to Drought and Wildfire

Baker-Grant County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director Trent Luschen reminds livestock producers who suffered grazing losses that occurred throughout 2015 due to drought or wildfire that they have until Feb. 1, 2016, to report their losses and to enroll in the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP).

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately-owned or cash-leased land or fire on federally-managed land. Producers in Baker and Grant County are eligible to apply for 2015 LFP benefits on small grain, native pasture, improved pasture. Livestock producers are encouraged to contact the Baker-Grant County FSA Office with any questions regarding specific forage crops that are eligible.

"Prolonged drought and wildfire conditions have created a need for livestock disaster assistance programs in Baker and Grant County," said Luschen. "I encourage all affected livestock producers to contact the Baker-Grant County FSA Office to schedule an appointment to enroll in the program before the Feb. 1 deadline."

Livestock producers must complete the LFP application and required supporting documentation no later than Feb. 1, 2016, for losses that occurred throughout 2015. Producers who already have appointments scheduled require no additional action to meet the deadline.

Eligible livestock includes alpacas, beef cattle, buffalo, beefalo, dairy cattle, deer, elk, emus, equine, goats, llamas, poultry, reindeer, sheep or swine that have been or would have been grazing the eligible grazing land or pastureland.

For more information about LFP, contact the Baker-Grant County FSA Office at 541-523-7121 x 2. To find a local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. Visit www.usda.gov/disaster to learn more about FSA disaster assistance programs.

Oregon Small Woodlands Association to Hold State Meeting Here

Celebrating their 75th Anniversary, the Oregon Small Woodlands Association plans to hold their annual state meeting here in Baker County on June 23-25.

At that time, the Oregon Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year will be honored. Lyle and Dean Defrees owners of The Defrees Ranch, LLC, were selected for this award.

Natural Resource Committee Continues Work

The Natural Resource Committee met on Tuesday, Jan. 26 at 3 p.m. and continued its work on the Natural Resource plan. After a long discussion between Ken Anderson and other members, no changes were made to the minerals section. Additional footnotes from Jan Alexander's hard work will be added as she researched allowable time frames for approving a Mining Plan of operation.

The committee agreed on a more finalized version of the Water and Water Rights section, and Lyle Defrees handed out a very comprehensive advisory report about last summer's fires, authored by himself and Eileen Gyllenberg. It will be used to educate the committee on the topic of Forestry health and wildfires so the committee can make the most educated recommendations for those sections under Forestry.

Commissioner Harvey reported on the status of Coordination and he says things are going very well. Harvey has a large printed and bound document regarding the best practices for Government to Government Coordination and says they are planning on giving seminars for outside government leaders to attend, including to other County Commissioners, in the near future.

According to an NRAC committee member, Harvey said Baker County started its coordination efforts by meeting with the Oregon Department of Forestry. Harvey said it was a very good, very positive meeting that allowed them to compare their forest health policies, which turned out to be very similar.

Harvey reported that he then met with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Again, it was a very positive meeting. They really began networking from there when Fish and Wildlife asked Baker County to help them coordinate with the BLM.

Meeting with the BLM proved to be just as good, and they have already initiated plans for a larger salvage logging project in Baker Canyon.

Baker Commissioners have had several good meetings with the Forest Service regarding project planning, however, project initiation is a little slower with them.

MARR FLAT: HOME OF THE PINK BARN

Scott Baxter is an award-winning photographer from Scottsdale, Ariz., creator of the Top Hand Project, a collection of 35 Palladium prints of working cowboys from eight western states.

A four-day visit to Marr Flat in northeast Oregon produced a photo essay of the people and landscapes that are featured in the current issue of RANGE magazine. Baxter is a frequent contributor to RANGE, a publication devoted to people who live and work on the land, and recipient of three consecutive Freedom of the Press awards.

"Wallowa County is in the northeast corner of Oregon and home to the Marr Flat Cattle Company," Baxter writes. "Todd and Angie Nash manage the operation owned by the Don Buhler family. Marr Flat runs about 800 head of cattle on 80,000 acres."

Todd and Angie live in Joseph where Todd started the local Stockgrowers Rodeo, the World Championship rockjack building contest, and where he chairs the wolf committee for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

Rockjacks are a common sight on ranches throughout eastern Oregon. Because of the lack of topsoil, fences are built on volcanic bedrock, and a hole cannot be dug or drilled into the volcanic layer. Piles of rocks are used to prop the barbed wire fences.

©Scott Baxter/RANGE
The Dorrance Homestead sits amidst the beauty of the Marr Flat Cattle Company in Wallowa County, Oregon. The barn, built in 1915, was called the Pink Barn because the family cut the red paint with milk to save money. Notes were written on the walls from the 1930s; cattle counts included signatures.

