

news Briefs



WOLVES UNDER FIRE IN NW

While fighting Ducks have made headlines in Oregon, it's the fate of wolves that has local conservation groups concerned. Idaho recently opened hunting season on wolves, the first such hunt in the Northwest since gray wolves lost Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection earlier this year, and Oregon wildlife officials killed two wolves that were attacking livestock in Eastern Oregon Sept. 5. The young wolves were one of only three pairs currently known in Oregon. Two wolves were shot in Idaho on opening day of that state's hunt.

Local group Cascadia Wildlands is among 20 conservation groups represented by Earthjustice that filed for a preliminary injunction to halt the immediate slaughter of up to 220 gray wolves in Idaho and 75 wolves in Montana.

U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy ruled Sept. 9 that the hunt could continue, but he also added that the USFWS seems to have violated the ESA and protections to the wolves in the end may be restored.

Oregon has a state wolf recovery plan that is based on wolves re-entering Oregon — where they were historically present before being wiped out by humans — from neighboring states.

Killing of wolves in Oregon is allowed under the state plan if nonlethal methods have been exhausted. ODFW says it exhausted nonlethal methods for the two that ODFW killed, including hazing the wolves from the air and using electrified fences.

Josh Laughlin of Cascadia Wildlands says of Oregon's wolf killings, "This is a sobering reminder that livestock interests continue to trump native wildlife recovery.

It is especially tragic because these two wolves represent approximately 20 percent of the known gray wolves in Oregon, and their existence would've likely assisted in the makeup of a new pack."

Research in Yellowstone National Park has shown that the presence of wolves benefits the elk herds, which are thinned by the wolves, and also helps aspen stands and streamside vegetation in the park.

— Camilla Mortensen

DIRTY FIGHTING IN OIL CASE

Pablo Fajardo and the people of Lago Agrio's case against Texaco Chevron (see *EW* cover story, 8/13) took another twist last week when the oil company accused the judge in the case, Juan Núñez, and Ecuadorian officials, including the wife of President Rafael Correa, of taking bribes in the \$27 billion dollar case. Fajardo and the other attorneys in the case say no bribery has occurred and that the tapes have "not even a scintilla of evidence" that the judge was involved in bribes. They are calling for the U.S. Department of Justice and the government of Ecuador to investigate Chevron for its apparent role in working with those who tried to bribe government officials in Ecuador.



Pablo Fajardo

Fajardo, who spent 10 weeks in Eugene with the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide on a fellowship to learn English, is the lead attorney in the case, which holds Texaco

Chevron responsible for the massive environmental damage, as well as damage to local indigenous cultures, done by oil extraction in a remote area of the Amazon.

Chevron claims in a news release that they released information to the Ecuadorian government of "video recordings ... that show discussions of a prejudged verdict against the company by the judge and details of how the bribe would work." The company has copies of the letters, emails and videos obtained through secret use of watches and pens implanted with micro cameras, on its website and on YouTube.

The videos, which are in Spanish, show two men repeatedly attempting to get Judge Núñez to say he has already decided to rule against Chevron. According to the Amazon Defense Coalition, at one point as Núñez is leaving a meeting one of the men repeats that Chevron is guilty, and Núñez replies, "Yes, sir." But the judge is off

SLANT

• So after a fiasco that was a national embarrassment to the UO in Boise last week the UO has come down hard — and punished the unpaid kid. Of course **LeGarrette Blount** bears responsibility for his sucker punch on national television. But what about the UO's army of overpaid football coaches? Shouldn't a \$7 million contract plus bonuses require Chip Kelly to make sure his players don't become a national spectacle? Other coaches seem to be able to teach their players not to assault other players once the whistle blows. Why can't the UO's?

• **A marvelous Eugene Celebration** weekend, despite the weather or maybe because of it. Rain didn't dampen the enthusiasm of folks in the parade Saturday, and a good crowd bundled up to watch and cheer. The sunny Pet Parade (or "Stroll") Sunday was one of the best yet. The predictions of scattered rain might have kept more people in town on a final summer weekend that normally overloads mountain campgrounds and trails.

Capping off the long weekend Labor Day was a packed-to-capacity Cuthbert Amphitheatre concert with Bonnie Raitt and Taj Mahal that even included a Space Shuttle flyover. You can't blame people for getting up to dance when the bands are rocking, but the lack of a dance space down in front meant the aisles became the dance floor, interfering with foot traffic and blocking the view of the stage for hundreds of fans.

• **Paid petition gatherers** seeking to derail the Legislature's tax fairness plan were out in force for the Eugene Celebration. Last week in this column we wrote about the clueless clipboard gang and said they appear to be "mostly hungry Republicans." But apparently not all. Reader Greg Norman tells us he had a long conversation with one of the pests who told him "he was aware that he was gathering signatures for a ballot measure he doesn't support and that if it passes it affects him negatively." But this was his first job in six months and if he didn't collect enough signatures, he would lose his apartment. The conversation ended "with him needing time to shake his emotions before continuing," says Norman. "It's sad that our democracy has become a commodity to be bought and sold. Watching our politics is like pornography where the disenfranchised prostitute themselves to the satisfaction of the gluttonous. Is this really democracy?"

Meanwhile, the Oregon Tea Party Coalition is making outrageous statements predicting disaster if the tax changes go into effect. These statements that have no evidence to support them, such as: "When combined with the federal income tax, the total marginal income tax rates [in Oregon] will be the highest in the world, and Cascade Policy Institute estimates that the income tax and corporate tax increases will lead to 79,000 further job losses." Point in fact: Oregon is ranked 26th in the nation for overall state and local tax burden. We would need to double all of our state and local taxes to beat New Jersey and become number one in just the U.S. And the jobless projection is just a baseless number tossed out to inflame the anti-taxers.

• We hear **a new gay bar** will be opening soon in Eugene, the first since Neighbors closed in early 2006. Yippee! Stay tuned for details on location and opening date.

• **Crossing into Canada** for a holiday late this summer, we were so surprised to see such healthy, happy people NOT standing in endless lines ranting about the government control of their medical system. To the contrary. Canadian friends complained in their civil Canadian way about the level of misrepresentation coming out of the States about their government-run plan which has covered everybody for nearly 50 years. In the 1950s, Saskatchewan adopted health care for all under the strong leadership of Premier Tommy Douglas and the model spread to the entire country within 10 years. So, why, we were asked, do Americans consider themselves so exceptional when their health care is more expensive, has higher administrative costs, contributes to lower life expectancy, and is unavailable to 50 million people? Because of money buying misrepresentation and lies that flood the media.

• Many of us know **Edgar Peara**, the Unitarian peace worker and World War II vet who often shows up in uniform at peace rallies. His computer was hacked, and if you are one of the hundreds of people in his email files, you have probably gotten a message that he was robbed in Nigeria and needs money wired to him. It's just another Internet scam, but this one comes from his familiar email address. He says he's trying to get Yahoo to shut down his account, but it's taking way too long.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com

Lane Area Herbicide Spray Schedule

• **Near Gillespie Corners:** Avel Salgado of Oregon Forest Management Services (520-5941; 896-3757) will backpack spray 9 acres with Garlon 4 plus surfactant to target blackberries for Michael Atkinson, representing Morris Family Partnership of California (925-837-8734) starting Sept. 15th (ODF Notice #2009-781-50520).

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