



## WOLF NUMBERS DOWN TO 20

The future of Oregon's gray wolf is on the line. Again.

With the state wolf population decreased to 20, after a recent illegal shooting of a male member of the Wenaha pack, coinciding with the introduction of an updated five-year wolf management plan, stakeholders of all viewpoints are concerned.

"Wolves are not like any other animals, as they have such an important pack dynamic," Rob Klavins, roadless wildlands advocate for Oregon Wild, said. "Upsetting this structure could create much more problems than those avoided by killing a wolf."

On Sept. 30, a federal official discovered the body of the 3-year-old radio-collared wolf in the Umatilla National Forest. Although not the alpha male, this wolf was one of four adults in the Wenaha pack. The U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife determined that the wolf was killed by gunshot and announced a \$2,500 reward to information leading to the arrest of those involved.

Oregon Wild, along with other state wildlife conservation groups and concerned northeast Oregon residents, added another \$7,500 to the reward after hearing of the incident.

"Oregon's budding wolf population can't sustain this," Josh Laughlin, campaign manager for reward contributor Cascadia Wildlands, said. "As a conservation organization, we want to see wolves on the landscape where they once were and are meant to be."

This is the third incident of wolf poaching since the species returned to northeast Oregon 10 years ago, after the government eradicated the entire state population in the 1930s.

While wildlife conservationists encourage any increase in the small population, many ranchers feel threatened by the wolves' presence near their cattle ranches. The Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan update on Oct. 1 upset ranchers as it tightened restrictions on the right to lethally stop a wolf from harming livestock.

However, most ranchers hope to find a balance between sustaining the wolf and livestock populations. Bill Hoyt, president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said the OCA denounces the most recent poaching incident.

"The thing most people don't realize is that we use the data from the radio collared wolves to track their influence on our livestock," OCA President Bill Hoyt said. "We're trying to coexist with these animals."

Laughlin echoed Hoyt's hope for a cooperative future.

"We need to create an atmosphere of acceptance and an open dialogue with all involved," Laughlin said. "It's both an exciting and challenging time." — Alex Zielinski

## SLANT

- Is there really a **progressive majority** or "Gang of Three" on the Board of Lane County Commissioners? This myth originated in R-G news coverage and editorials and is perpetuated in every often stenographic R-G story that talks about the "progressive majority." It turns out the five commissioners reach consensus on just about every decision. They debate and negotiate extensively before anything goes to a vote. In 2009 there were 159 issues that went to a vote, and only two votes were split decisions. So far in 2010, the pattern continues as commissioners have voted in agreement on every issue but one. However, the voting record does show a difference in attendance at board meetings. Commissioners Faye Stewart and Bill Dwyer missed a lot of board meetings in 2009 and 2010.

- Everybody knows that **football ratings** are meaningless. Even Chip Kelly says, maybe honestly, that he doesn't pay any attention to Oregon's. After all, we're only halfway through the season. And look at some of the teams that have gone into that six-game winning streak. Portland State? Gimme a break. Nevertheless, isn't it fun to be Number One? All across the country people are saying, "Oregon?" So enjoy it while it lasts. Some tough teams are coming up.

- Are you thinking of voting for **Art Robinson** for Congress? You might want to reconsider. There are distinct advantages for Oregon's economy in having an effective advocate for Oregon in Washington, D.C. We've all heard stories about Oregon doctors not accepting new Medicare patients because the federal payments were too small. Last year DeFazio insisted on more equitable Medicare reimbursements for Oregon doctors. He even defied Obama and threatened to hold up his vote on health care reform. As Obama

promised, the increased reimbursements came through last week, improving access to health care for 137,000 seniors in our region. What would Art Robinson do if elected? Work to kill Medicare. Do you really want Grandma to have to buy health insurance on the open market today?

DeFazio also wrangled \$13.5 million in federal funds to finish rebuilding a vital 133-mile rail link between Coquille and Eugene. What would Robinson do if elected? Keep such project funding in private hands, essentially delaying repairs for decades, if not forever. DeFazio understands how government-funded infrastructure bolsters private enterprise.

- Remember all the hoopla last year about Measures 66 and 67 making **Oregon a bad place to do business**? We see those same arguments today as conservatives complain that our taxes and regulations are killing our state economy. But a new study by *Forbes* magazine shows Oregon rising to sixth-best state in the country for business and careers. Last year Oregon was ranked 10th. The *Forbes* study looks at business costs, labor pool, regulatory environment, current economic climate, growth prospects and quality of life. We're ranked high (fourth) on our labor supply. But what about our high unemployment and poverty rates? Oregon is a highly desirable place to live, so jobless folks are hanging around rather than migrating to North Dakota, where there is abundant work. Companies looking to relocate or expand appreciate not only our quality of life but also our educated and trained workforce. The *Forbes* study indicates we are positioned better than most other states for eventual economic recovery.

- **City Manager Jon Ruiz** is pushing Envision Eugene in the R-G and elsewhere as a sensible alternative to years of expensive and time-consuming lawsuits over Urban Growth Boundary

expansion decisions. This form of mediation with broad community input is a noble process, but the outcome is predictable: some kind of compromise involving UGB expansion and infill. We generally favor conciliation and compromise, but our environment and quality of life are already compromised by sprawl and destruction of productive farmland. Look at our low density. We really have no shortage of buildable residential, commercial and industrial land. State law requires that we identify an adequate land supply for future growth, but we can do that through proactive planning for infill, reclaiming brownfield sites such as old railyards, and growing up, instead of out. There's no true leadership in doing the same old sprawl planning, year after year, driven in large part by the greed of land speculators.

- **Some welcomed grants** have come to local environmental nonprofits lately. Congrats to the Oregon Toxics Alliance for a \$63,350 "capacity building" grant over the next two years from the Meyer Memorial Trust. And Nearby Nature, an education nonprofit "dedicated to fostering appreciation of the outdoor world and providing tools for ecological living," landed a \$10,000 grant from Staples Foundation for environmental education programs. Eugene is home to hundreds of nonprofits doing exceptional work, usually on shoestring budgets. It's good to see some love flowing their way, whether it's from volunteers or foundations.

- Just a reminder : Friends and coworkers of the late *EW* art director **Kevin Dougherty** are gathering at *EW* between 4 and 6 pm Thursday, Oct. 21, for a casual get-together on the anniversary of his passing.

*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