

# Key committee approves Oregon wolf delisting

## Environmental groups fear bill will hamstring court challenge

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Press

SALEM — The removal of wolves from Oregon's list of endangered species has been approved by a key legislative committee, potentially jeopardizing a lawsuit that challenges the delisting.

Last year, Oregon wildlife regulators found that wolves had sufficiently recovered to delist them under the state's version of the Endangered Species Act.

Because wolves remain protected by the federal Endangered Species Act across much of western Oregon, the state delisting only has effect in the eastern portion of the state.

Several environmental groups, which worry that delisting will eventually lead

to wolf hunting, filed a legal complaint accusing the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission of ignoring the best available science.

That lawsuit prompted two lawmakers from Eastern Oregon to propose House Bill 4040, which would ratify the commission's delisting decision as having properly followed the state's endangered species law.

That bill passed the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources 8-1 last week and is now heading for a vote on the House floor with a "do pass" recommendation.

State Rep. Brad Witt, D-Clatskanie, the committee's chairman, noted that the bill was amended from its original version to eliminate language that would require wolf populations to decline substantially before the species could be re-listed as endangered.

Rep. Sal Esquivel, R-Medford, said that worries the delisting will lead to "automatic slaughter" of wolves are unfounded.

"This does not mean we're



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

**OR-3, a three-year-old male wolf from the Imnaha pack, is shown in this image captured from video taken by a state employee in 2011 in Wallowa County. The state House will vote on a bill ratifying the removal of wolves from the state's endangered species list.**

going to hunt wolves to extinction again," he said.

Rep. Chris Gorsek, D-Troutdale, was the committee's only member to vote against the bill.

While he doesn't have a problem with the delisting, Gorsek said he was concerned about the precedent set by the

Legislature inserting itself into the process.

Environmental groups that are fighting the delisting in court — Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands and the Center for Biological Diversity — fear that a ratification by the Legislature will hamstring their lawsuit.

Sean Stevens, executive director of Oregon Wild, recently argued that if the commission's decision was scientifically sound, there is no reason to pass the bill.

While the plaintiffs groups seek judicial review to determine if the commission acted correctly, they have not asked for

an injunction and so the delisting will remain effective while the litigation is pending, he said.

Laurel Hines, a member of Oregon Wild, said that wolf management in Oregon has emphasized the protection of the livestock industry, so conservationists should be allowed to proceed with the lawsuit to protect their interests.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association disagrees with the claim that the bill will preclude environmental groups from obtaining judicial review, said Rocky Dallum, the group's political advocate.

The bill would not prevent the plaintiffs from filing a lawsuit, and since their complaint has already been filed, its merits will still be decided in state court, Dallum said.

A judge may find the commission acted properly regardless of the Legislature's action, or may decide that the question about the delisting's legality was answered by the bill, if it passes, he said.

"It's up to a judge to decide whether the case is moot," Dallum said.

## 'Coffee with a Cop' returns this month

The Daily Astorian

Community members are invited this month to meet in an informal, neutral space with Astoria Police officers to discuss local issues, build relationships and drink coffee.

The "Coffee with a Cop" program will take place at 6 p.m. Feb. 24 at Peter Pan Market at 712 Niagara Ave.

The program provides a unique opportunity for community members to ask questions and learn more about the department's work in neighborhoods, according to police.

The majority of contacts law enforcement has with the public happen during emergencies or emotional situations. Those situations are not

always the most effective times for relationship building with the community, police say, and some community members may feel that officers are unapproachable on the street.

"Coffee with a Cop" breaks down barriers and allows for a relaxed, one-on-one interaction.

The program is a national initiative supported by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Similar events are being held across the county. The program aims to advance the practice of community policing through improving relationships between police officers and community members one cup of coffee at a time.

## New WIC cards offer convenience

The Daily Astorian

The Women, Infants and Children program is offering qualified families a more convenient way to shop for food using a new electronic benefit transaction card.

The new cards will be available to families in Clatsop County beginning Feb. 16.

Participants currently use paper vouchers to buy healthy foods. With the new card, shopping will be easier and families will be able to better track their monthly food balance. Participants will have access to a new WICShopper smartphone application that allows them to scan a food product's barcode to determine if it is a WIC-allowed food.

Women, Infants and Children provides services at more than 100 clinic sites throughout Oregon and serves 161,000 lower-income preg-

nant women, infants and children under age 5.

Families shop at more than 500 Oregon grocery stores, pharmacies, farm stands and farmers markets, and spend \$64.7 million a year with their food benefits.

In Clatsop County, 1,221 women, infants and children use the program and \$723,749 was spent last year in local stores and \$4,804 in farmers markets for healthy foods.

Clatsop County Women, Infants and Children has been offering participant-centered nutrition education, healthy food and breastfeeding support, as well as serving as a gateway for preventative health, for more than 40 years.

Those interested in enrolling in the program can schedule an appointment by calling 503-325-8500 or visiting the Clatsop County Public Health Department in Astoria.

## Warrenton recognizes two police officers

### Gooding, former Warrenton officer Gaebel died over weekend

By ERICK BENGEL  
The Daily Astorian

WARRENTON — The shooting death of Sgt. Jason Gooding of the Seaside Police Department last week cast a cloud over Tuesday's City Commission meeting.

Immediately following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mayor Mark Kujala and the commissioners led attendees in a moment of silence to honor the fallen officer, whose portrait was displayed on the monitor.

Warrenton Police Chief Mathew Workman — who, along with Astoria Police Chief Brad Johnston, the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police, has been helping out in Seaside every day since Gooding's death — said he knows what the Seaside Police Department is going through.

"Obviously, when you lose somebody in your department, it's extremely difficult to go back," Workman said.

In 1993, while Workman was

at a department in Nebraska, an officer that took a call for him was shot and killed, "so I always have that residual feeling that that could have been me, or should have been me," he said.

"These things strike not only us as police officers but the community as well, because we're the ones that are going out there with the badge and the gun and the training, and somebody's willing to kill us, then they're probably willing to kill somebody else," he said.

Workman thanked the North Coast community for the outpouring of support.

"Even though we're mourning and going through this tragedy, we don't turn a blind eye to that," he said. "It really gives us a good feeling about how people feel about law enforcement, especially in this contentious time when it seems like there's only negative things in law enforcement, negative things in the media on the broad scale, so we really want to say 'thank you' to everybody."

Commissioner Tom Dyer,



Sgt. Jason Gooding



City Manager Kurt Fritsch

an officer with the Oregon State Police, said he's been through a few officer deaths during his career.

"It is amazing, the support the public gives us when we have a tragedy like this," Dyer said. "It does make a difference to the officers that are involved, and it extends for a long period of time."

He added that even the simple act of waving to an officer can be uplifting.

The commission said it would make a donation to the Oregon Fallen Badge Foundation, a nonprofit collecting money specifically for Gooding's family.

"That's a gesture that we can all make to try to support this family — a family that has two young girls that no longer have a father," Kujala said. "It's a horrible and tragic situation, and one that shouldn't have happened."

### Retired officer dies

It was a hard weekend for the Warrenton Police Department for another reason: They lost one of their own.

James Gaebel, who worked for the department from 1997 to 2007 immediately after retiring from a nearly 30-year career with the Portland Police

Bureau, died Sunday at age 71 at Hopewell House Hospice in Portland after getting transferred from Oregon Health & Science University Hospital.

That Gaebel spent an additional 10 years on the Warrenton beat after three decades in Portland "just showed his passion for being a public servant and being in law enforcement," Kujala said. "And we really appreciate what he did while he was here."

His wife, Lylla Gaebel, a former Warrenton city commissioner and Clatsop County commissioner, has said she would appreciate that any donations be made to Hopewell because of the treatment her husband received.

Services are pending but are planned for the first week of March.

In other business Tuesday:

- The commission held a first reading on an ordinance describing the areas within the city open to migratory game bird hunting.

- After an extensive, multi-week evaluation of City Manager Kurt Fritsch's performance, the commission voted to increase his annual salary by \$4,000, retroactive to July, in the form of a contribution to his 401(a) retirement plan.

## Applications available for arts and cultural grants

The Daily Astorian

Applications for arts and cultural program grants are available at the city.

Past recipients of the grants

are required to document spending for this fiscal year.

The applications for new funding are due Feb. 29.

More information is available at <http://www.astoria.or.us>

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