



Hives burned at Pope Canyon Queens.

Caroline Yelle

Beekeepers lose thousands of hives to California fires

By SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN
Capital Press

VACAVILLE, Calif. — As a wildfire headed toward their honey bee hives in Northern California in August, Caroline Yelle and Rick Shubert, co-owners of Pope Canyon Queens, tried to save them, but it was too late.

“The fires were so intense and quick we couldn’t get any of the bees out,” said Yelle. “We had 20 minutes to evacuate. At one point, we were driving through walls of flame and smoke too dense to see through.”

The fire’s rapid approach at 1 a.m., she said, had taken them by surprise. Yelle lost 550 of her 750 hives.

Beekeepers across the region say the LNU Lightning Complex fires that struck in late August caused severe losses. The fires incinerated thousands of hives, destroyed bee habitats and forage and may threaten local beekeepers’ ability to provide pollination services.

The region the fire struck, said Rich Bedoya, bee broker and owner of SustainaBee, is heavily populated with beekeepers — some 45 small to

mid-sized outfits and five or six big ones — because it’s close to almond orchard country.

“It’s a big hit,” said Yelle, who estimated she lost more than \$100,000 in bees and another \$100,000 in benefits from the hives.

Another beekeeper, Clay Ford of Clay’s Bees, said he lost 80% to 90% of his hives.

The night of the fires, Ford said, he was asleep at home. When he went to bed, the wildfires were in Napa County, hours away.

“When I woke up — just ashes. I didn’t expect the fire to spread so far,” he said.

This week, Ford is building new pallets and boxes.

“My bees will fly again,” he said.

Some beekeepers experienced fewer losses. Jonathan Hofland, beekeeper at Noble Apiaries in Dixon, said he lost only a dozen hives because his company keeps its own firefighting equipment.

On Aug. 19, Hofland said, his team put out the fires themselves. The state and local fire departments, he said, were overwhelmed with other priorities and “don’t tend to value the bees.”

John Foster, beekeeper at Busy Bee Pollination

in Esparto, agreed local fire agencies have been overstretched.

“When the fire was burning one of our buildings, there wasn’t a Cal Fire (truck) in sight,” he said.

Foster said he and his son had prepared for the fire by disking around their hives in advance with a tractor to remove brush and tall grass.

Foster runs 38,000 hives, some of which he lost in flames this August, but he said trimming the forage around the hives significantly reduced his losses.

“It’s still devastating,” he said. “I’ve been here 45 years and we’ve never had fires like this, not even these past three years. We’re just doing the best we can.”

Most beekeepers who talked to the Capital Press, including Foster, said they don’t have hive insurance because it’s too expensive.

Bedoya, the bee broker, said losses likely won’t have a substantial national impact on availability of bees for pollination next spring, but local farmers may feel the impact. The longer-term impacts, said Bedoya, the bee broker, are weakened bees and lost habitats.

Governors want more say in habitat rule for at-risk wildlife

By KEITH RIDLER
Associated Press

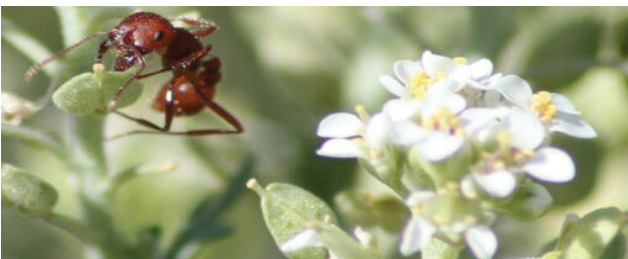
BOISE — Governors from 22 Western states and Pacific territories want a bigger say in how the Trump administration defines habitat for wildlife protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The new definition could have implications for how states manage imperiled animals and plants, the Western Governors Association said in a letter Thursday to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The governors insist they are “co-sovereigns with the federal government” and need an equal role in the decision.

The Trump administration is seeking to restrict what land and waterways can be protected as habitat for wildlife facing extinction, one of the latest ways it’s sought to roll back environmental safeguards.

The government is trying to redefine what habitat means for the purposes of enforcing the Endangered Species Act, the landmark law that has dictated wildlife protections in the U.S. since 1973. It released a proposed rule in early August.

Governors said they’re having to express their views through a public comment process on the



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Slickspot peppergrass is a rare plant.

proposed rule, saying that isn’t enough input and they want the federal government to consult with states.

“It is important for federal agencies and state wildlife managers to maintain a close working relationship to ensure that any new interpretation or application of the term does not result in unintended consequences for state management of species,” according to the letter signed by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat who is the chairwoman of Western Governors Association, and Idaho Gov. Brad Little, a Republican who’s vice chairman.

Once an imperiled species is listed under the act, federal officials designate critical habitat that it needs to survive. That can include where a species lives and areas where they don’t live but are deemed essential for survival. Such designations can come into conflict with private landowners and those using public lands for recreation, grazing or energy development.

The U.S. Supreme Court called into question the definition of “critical habitat” in a 2018 ruling. The Trump administration this year put forward a definition it says will “balance effective, science-based conservation with common-sense policy designed to bring the ESA into the 21st century.”

Critics say the administration’s definition appears to rule out land or water that needs restoration work or sites that could become suitable for imperiled wildlife in the future, particularly when climate change is considered.

Since taking office, President Donald Trump has sought to scale back environmental protections in favor of industry, ranging from shrinking national monuments to opening up areas for oil and gas drilling. He’s also lifted or suspended environmental regulations intended to prevent pollution during the coronavirus pandemic.

A Letter to our Communities: By the WBH Executive Team



A recent article in *the Astorian* has allowed Willapa Behavioral Health’s executive team to talk about our staff’s amazing work and shine some light on a few projects we are working on to serve the community better. Our staff has put a lot of effort into helping people endure these challenging and strange times. We are eternally grateful to our staff for their perseverance, fortitude, and wisdom.



Employee Morale at WBH The article painted a picture of low morale at WBH. We know that many of our current employees are fond of their work environment. We know, through HR exit interviews, that many of our former employees remain fond of the time they spent working for WBH, and they left the company for reasons other than an unsatisfactory work environment.

Employee morale is paramount at WBH. For this reason, the company uses an employee satisfaction and survey tool called *officevibe*. With *officevibe*, employees can anonymously voice their concerns, dissatisfactions, and positive feedback through daily surveys. Mr. Marquis is highly responsive to the anonymous feedback, and he is very interested in understanding staff members’ submissions when they are critical of company policies or leadership and management styles. WBH also uses an anonymous hotline where employees can report issues within the organization.

The WBH Board of Directors The article mentioned our Board of Directors, specifically the addition of three board members from Oregon. These three members represent clients who reside in Clatsop County and receive services from WBH. Our board members’ focus is to oversee the vitality of WBH. We are one team with one goal.

New Additions at WBH We have two new primary care providers who are taking over Dr. Cundiff’s role. We have sent letters to clients to inform them about what to expect with this transition in providers; we strive to make this transition seamless.

Vitality of WBH Operations Our finances are stable. In the past year, we have expanded our facilities and operations throughout Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties. Infrastructure investments impact short-term profitability, but the payoff is a long-term investment in our clients’ quality of care and operational effectiveness.

Mr. Marquis led an expansion to open a Montesano office. This office offers Wraparound with Intensive Services (WiSe), Mental Health (MH) services, and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) services to the Montesano, WA area, and surrounding communities. There is a high need for services, and if we do not expand, we will not be able to serve the people who are still waiting for help.

On January 1st, 2019, WBH had just under 60 employees. As of today, we are just shy of 100 employees. Our monthly employee turnover average is 2%, and we have not laid off any employees since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place in March of this year.

Productivity Goals Productivity goals were put into effect 11/2 years ago to measure productivity and reward employees for hitting their goals. It is necessary for all companies, whether behavioral health, hospitals, restaurants, or clothing stores, to have financial tracking and goals. It creates a roadmap to keep the company solvent and headed in a healthy direction.

WBH Goes Mobile Our mobile unit has been on the road for three weeks. There have been many people involved in getting it up and running to include our practice manager, mental health counselors, substance use counselors, and substance use peer supports. Our mobile unit is new territory for WBH. We are still improving this process through trial and error, but we see a great need. When asked how their outing went last week, Troy Achord, a WBH employee, could not hide his excitement and passion for the experience. He stated that he had requested to start something like the mobile unit years ago. After last week’s road trip, Troy’s coworkers described him sitting with people at the mobile site and listening to their stories. We have employees who find a passion, and an administration willing to support that passion.

Gratitude We want to express gratitude for our employees as they work through these challenging times. Our front office and registration staff manage the schedules, the scared clients who do not know what to expect, and the extensive paperwork that comes with treatment. Our medical staff helps our clients find the right medications and relief for their mental or physical issues. Our therapists are not immune to stress and anxiety during these challenging times. Still, they passionately help clients navigate their stress and anxiety utilizing Zoom technology, phone calls, or opportunities to meet in-person. Our mobile crisis team is on call 24/7. They tirelessly respond to the urgent needs of community members, hospitals, and law enforcement. They assist those who are suicidal, homicidal, or experiencing a rough moment that they cannot conquer on their own; they give comfort and follow up assistance to those in need, helping guide them to resources and treatment. Our SUD counselors are fighting against a climate conducive to relapse; they never give up on their clients. Our peers meet people where they are and use their shared experiences to help lift and encourage their clients. Our case managers help clients maintain their lives and learn daily skills to help relieve their stress. Our maintenance and cleaning crew have been so helpful and instrumental in keeping our buildings maintained, beautiful, and functional. Our information technology specialist plays a vital role keeping our technology systems current and upgrading our systems to meet mission demands. Our program managers build processes and protocols to help manage client needs. So many others perform pivotal administrative roles in the shadows, assisting WBH to serve our community. Lastly, we offer thanks and gratitude to our communities for your continuing support.

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