

Bills seek to ratify wolf delisting

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Two Oregon lawmakers plan to introduce bills that would ratify the decision by state wildlife officials to delist wolves as an endangered species.

The proposals, which will be considered during the upcoming legislative session in February, are planned by Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, and Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove, in reaction to a lawsuit filed by environmental groups.

In November 2015, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted to delist the wolves under the state's version of the Endangered Species Act after several criteria for their recovery had been met.

Under a management plan for wolves first created in 2005, the species could be delisted after having established four breeding pairs for three years and no longer facing a substantial risk of extinction in a significant portion of its range, among other criteria.

Wolves were delisted by the federal government in the easternmost portion of the state, but remain protected in the rest. Oregon wildlife officials have the jurisdiction over those wolves under the state ESA.

However, Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands and the Center for Biological Diversity recently challenged the state's delisting decision in court, arguing the decision unlawfully ignored the best available science about wolf recovery.

The bills, which will be



This 2014 file photo shows a female wolf from the Minam pack outside La Grande after it was fitted with a tracking collar. Two Republican state lawmakers are trying to thwart a lawsuit filed by environmental groups over a decision to remove the gray wolf from Oregon's Endangered Species Act list.

introduced in the House and Senate, will provide the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife — which is overseen by the commission — more ammunition in defending itself in court, Barreto said.

"We're shoring up what the commission has already decided," he said during a Jan. 14 hearing before the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Oregon has 81 documented wolves, but the actual population is likely in the range of 100-120 animals and a delisting is necessary for the ODFW to eventually manage the species, said Sen. Hansell. Such management could involve hunting to keep populations in check

Ranchers in Oregon have abided by restrictions on wolf management for the past 10 years, so now that the criteria for delisting have been met, the state government should uphold the wolf plan's credibility, said Rocky Dallum, political advocate for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

"The goal was to strike a balance between reestablishing wolves in Oregon and meeting the needs of those producers," he said.

During the decade that the plan has been in place, ranchers have felt a great deal of "heartburn" as state wildlife officials have refused to remove wolves that repeatedly prey on livestock, said Todd Nash, a rancher and chairman

of the OCA's wolf committee.

The wolf plan should be followed as planned rather than allowing the courts to take over the process, he said. "I want to bring some sanity to this and let the scientists and wildlife managers manage, instead of some conservation groups and a judge."

Environmental groups oppose the proposed legislation, claiming that it will unnecessarily interfere with the authority of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Currently, the species occupies only 12 percent of its potential habitat, said Sean Stevens, executive director of Oregon Wild. "The status of wolves in Oregon is still tenuous."

PENDLETON

Council to consider funding for Hill Meat expansion

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

Prevented from expanding its processing plant and adding up to 30 jobs by insufficient water supply, Hill Meat Co. could get some help from the city of Pendleton.

Pendleton City Council will consider an agreement between the company and the city that would give Hill Meat up to \$670,000 in grants from city and state sources to improve the facility's water and road infrastructure.

In order to obtain funding from the state, city staff are also asking the council to authorize applications for the state's immediate opportunity and special public works funds.

Small water lines have been the primary barrier to Hill Meat's expansion, with the four and six-inch lines that service the plant incapable of meeting modern fire suppression standards.

City staff estimate it would cost \$125,000 to make the proper improvements. The city also wants to install an electrical service upgrade and a back-up generator at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport industrial park where Hill Meat's facility is located, bringing the total cost to \$170,000.

The state special public works fund could cover 85 percent of the cost, meaning the city would only have to spend \$25,500 to cover the rest of the project.

The city's share of the grant would come out of the water fund, which has \$1.5 million budgeted for water line expansion at the airport.

If Hill Meat fails to create 30 jobs, it will have to pay back the city the difference, at rate of \$5,000 per job.

Hill Meat could also get help from the city and the state to improve its roads through a grant from the immediate opportunity fund.

Under the parameters of the grant, both the city and the state would kick in 50 percent of the \$500,000 cost of road improvements.

If the grant is approved, the city will pay by drawing from the \$880,000 it has left from an Oregon Department of Transportation grant it received several years ago for industrial roadway improvements.

Cell towers

A 100-foot cell tower on Dorion Avenue could lead the Pendleton City Council to pass a temporary moratorium on building such structures in city limits.

The council will consider the 120-day ban, with the option to extend it an additional six months, at a meeting Tuesday.

The tower was erected in November between Kwong's Cafe and Dave's Chevron and boosts signal for U.S. Cellular customers.

City Planner Evan MacKenzie said he received pushback from some city staff members when the cell tower's application was submitted. But because there are no restrictions on cell towers in the zones they're allowed in, he had no choice but to approve it.

While the city can't do anything about the Dorion cell tower, City Attorney Nancy Kerns wrote in a report that staff needs time to consider new rules.

"Staff feels that consideration should be given to further restrict this use, such as requiring approval of a conditional use by the Planning Commission," she wrote. "Reasonable consideration of this subject, coupled with the process of amendment of the Develop-

ment Code, will take several months."

Passing an ordinance, which the moratorium will require, usually necessitates a first reading at a prior meeting. To bypass that, staff is proposing the city council hold the first reading, the second reading and the vote at the same meeting.

In accordance with the city charter, that means the council will have to approve the ordinance unanimously.

Vert Auditorium

The Pendleton City Council could help one of the city's most venerable performance venues capture a greater share of the spotlight.

The city council will consider an arts committee recommendation to allocate \$6,000 from the arts fund to help pay for promotion of the Vert Auditorium.

The money would cover half the fee of Michelle Liberty, the marketing director of Walla Walla's PowerHouse Theatre. Liberty promised city staff she could bring in six events in 2016 if they paid her \$1,000 a month.

Pendleton Convention Center staff would be responsible for finding grants and other sources of revenue to pay for the other half of Liberty's fee, as well as make any necessary

upgrades to the auditorium.

The arts fund derives its revenue from a small earmark to a city tax on hotel rooms.

Controlled burn fees

The Pendleton Fire Department has done controlled burns for years. With Pendleton City Council approval, they could make some revenue from it.

Pendleton Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo will make a recommendation to the council on Tuesday that building owners pay a \$1 per square foot fee when they request a controlled burn, with a minimum fee of \$1,000 and a maximum of \$5,000.

Although controlled burns are a valuable hands-on training experience for firefighters, Ciraulo wrote in a report that it doesn't come without its costs.

"The department incurs significant overtime and other expenses in conducting controlled burns," he wrote. "The department desires to recoup some of the expenses in conducting these training fires."

Ciraulo expects the controlled burn fees to bring in between \$2,000 and \$10,000 per year.

The meeting will be at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Avenue, Tuesday at 7 p.m.

MILTON-FREEWATER

Jury finds Glasby guilty in kidnapping case

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

A Umatilla County jury Friday convicted Skyler Ian Glasby on multiple felonies for his role in kidnapping and beating a man for money last year in Milton-Freewater.

Glasby, 27, of Dayton, Washington, was on trial this week. The jury of eight women and four men left for deliberations Friday around 11:30 a.m., then returned to deliver the verdict at 2:20 p.m. Circuit Judge Lynn Hampton announced the findings.

The jury found Glasby guilty of first-degree kidnapping, second-degree kidnapping, second-degree robbery, second-degree assault, second-degree theft and third-degree escape and possession of the drug Hydrocodone. The jury also determined Glasby was the primary actor in the assault and a helper in the kidnapping.

The jury also found Glasby not guilty of first- and second-degree robbery and unlawful use of a weapon.

Glasby took the stand in his defense Thursday and told the jury there was no plot in the early morning hours Sept. 1, 2015, to kidnap, beat and rip off Andrew Litchfield, 31, of Walla Walla.

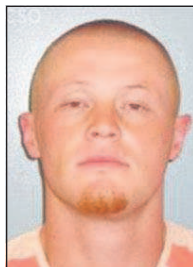
Instead, claimed Glasby, he went to the outskirts of Milton-Freewater and met friend and now co-defendant John Adam Phillips, 33, of Walla Walla, and Phillips' girlfriend, Samantha Kaye Noethe, 23, Kennewick.

Litchfield was with them, Glasby said, and had paid to have sex with Noethe in a motel room at Wildhorse Resort & Casino near Pendleton. Glasby said he went along to the gamble. But the prostitution deal went sideways, he said, ended with a confrontation and he bailed on the trip.

Noethe, though, told the jury there was a robbery scheme, and she and Phillips brought Glasby in on the plan and later split the cash with him.

Glasby sank in his chair after the verdict reading, put his head on his arms and wept. Sheriff's deputies removed Glasby from the courtroom during a short break. He looked at the handful of his friends and family, some crying. Glasby's eyes were red, and he said nothing as he shuffled out.

The court set his sentencing for Monday, Jan. 25. Phillips goes to trial on similar charges Tuesday. And Noethe goes to court Thursday for sentencing. She pleaded guilty in October to one count each of second-degree robbery and kidnapping.



Glasby

STANFIELD

Heifer shot, killed in pasture

\$6,000 reward offered for information

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
East Oregonian

Local rancher Terry Anderson awoke to a gruesome discovery Friday morning after learning someone shot, killed and butchered one of his cows in a field near Stanfield.

Anderson, who runs Anderson Land & Livestock Inc. out of Pilot Rock, said the 2-year-old heifer was slaughtered sometime Thursday night in a pasture along Feedville Road, where he raises cattle during the winter.

Judging by the tracks, Anderson believes at least three people were involved. A neighbor reported hearing commotion around 10:30 p.m., though Anderson said they didn't find the animal until morning.

"We found body parts strung out over the field," he said. "They basically mutilated it."

Anderson said the culprits were likely trying to make some money off the meat, but left most of

the carcass to waste. He said heifers like his usually sell for up to \$3,000.

Theft isn't unusual in the ranching industry, Anderson said, but this is the first time he's lost a cow on winter ground so close to the city. Incidents are more common in summer when herds are left to graze in the mountains, but this happened just 150 yards off a well-traveled road.

"It's tragic to lose an animal to a situation like this," he said.


Oregon State Police is leading the investigation, and Anderson has put up a \$5,000 reward for any information leading to an arrest and conviction. The Oregon Cattlemen's Association has offered an additional \$1,000 in the case.

"They knew exactly what they were doing," Anderson said. "We need to get this stopped." Anyone with information should contact OSP at 541-567-3215 or 1-800-452-7888.


Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

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2016 Weather Projection
Tuesday, 2/2 at 9:00am



The Peterson Farm Brothers
Wednesday, 2/3 at 9:00am



Randy Fortenbery
Prof. of Economics, WSU
Wednesday, 2/3 at 9:30am

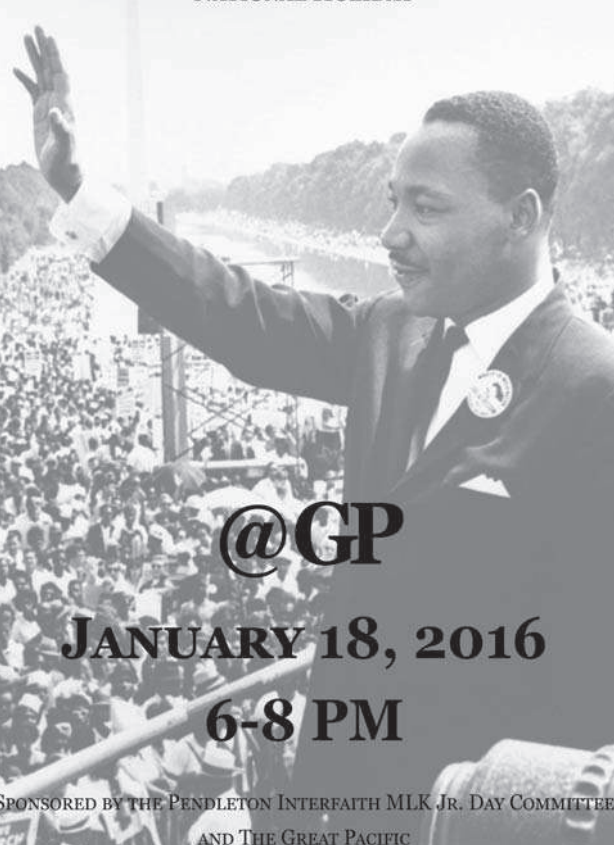
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