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Issues persist in management of federal lands

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian

After 41 days, 25 indictments and one man killed, the armed occupation of a federal wildlife refuge near Burns has come to an end.

The underlying issues of rangeland management, however, won't be going away anytime soon.

John O'Keeffe, president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said things are far from perfect between ranchers across the West, the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. Environmental regulations are making it harder to get rangeland improvement projects done quickly. Wildfires are getting bigger and hotter, scorching hundreds of thousands of acres. Noxious weeds continue to spread, choking out native vegetation for grazing.

Yet O'Keeffe was quick to condemn the militants who came mostly from out of state to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, where they protested the sentences of Harney County ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond and called for federal land to be returned to private citizens.

"What happened in Burns is outsiders coming in and occupying a refuge illegally," O'Keeffe said. "We have a lot of issues to



AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

Members of the group that occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters stand guard Jan. 4 near Burns.

sort out with the agencies, but we absolutely intend to do it through legal channels."

O'Keeffe runs cattle on about 75,000 acres of public land near the tiny community of Adel in isolated south-central Oregon — an average size family ranch, he says. His operation includes grazing permits with both the BLM and Fremont-Winema National Forest.

Ranchers understand the need to support multiple uses on public land, such as recreation and wildlife habitat, O'Keeffe said. But he worries further restrictions might become too much to take.

"There's no guarantees," O'Keeffe said. "Should these government regulations become too burdensome, ranchers could go away. That would create a whole new set of problems."

Building relationships

The BLM manages grazing permits and leases on roughly 14 million acres in Oregon and Washington. That breaks down to a total of 951,000 permits for the region.

Of those, about 20 belong to Jacob Ferguson.

Ferguson is a rangeland management specialist for BLM Vale District in southeast Oregon. His area encompasses 850,000 acres south of Jordan Valley and east of the Owyhee River. From May through October, he travels usually once per week to visit his permittees and monitor conditions on the ground.

"We try to see it all," Ferguson said.

Despite only being on the job for two years, Ferguson said he's developed good relationships with ranchers around the area. He knows most of his permittees on a first-name basis, and they meet regularly in the field to review grazing plans and check forage

See **LAND/12A**

"Yelling at the BLM is like yelling at a fireman when your house is on fire. They can't make on-the-ground annual changes, because it opens them up to challenges and litigation."

— **Andy Bentz**, former Malheur County sheriff

Rancher Jerry Miller, 79, delivers hay to his cattle Jan. 9 on his ranch, in Crane.

AP Photo/Rick Bowmer



PHS grad looks for cancer clues

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

C.J. Cambier spends his days hanging out with zebrafish and hungry macrophage cells.

The Stanford University research scientist uses the tropical fish to study immune responses and their role in cancer. Macrophage cells are the stars of this scientific drama — the good guys. The ravenous macrophages devour infected, dead or damaged cells with Pac-Man-like efficiency. With his research, Cambier, 31, hopes to shed light on inflammatory mechanisms driving disease.

That's the dumbed-down explanation of what Cambier does. The full description requires one to have a medical dictionary at the ready.

Recently, the 2003 Pendleton High School graduate got noticed for his work. The Damon Runyon



Contributed photo

C.J. Cambier researches misguided immune responses, many of which contribute to the development of cancer. The PHS grad, who now works in a lab at Stanford University, recently won a prestigious fellowship from the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation.

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Hantavirus diagnosed in Umatilla County

Disease spread by rodents

East Oregonian

Hantavirus is here.

The sometimes fatal rodent-borne virus has been diagnosed in a Umatilla County resident for the first time ever. The county health department wouldn't give details about the victim to protect the person's privacy, but the case prompted Umatilla County's Public Health Officer Dr. Jon Hitzman to issue a warning.

"Hantavirus is a rare but serious disease spread by rodents," Hitzman said. "This disease can frequently become fatal, but there are steps you can take to reduce your exposure."

The virus lurks in enclosed areas such as barns, outbuildings and sheds where mice nest.

Since hantavirus was first identified in 1993, 588 cases showed up nationally, 21 of them in Oregon. About two thirds of cases in Oregon were contracted through direct contact with rodents or rodent droppings. Other cases came through indirect exposure while camping or farming.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, rodents such as deer mice, cotton rats and rice rats serve as a reservoir for the virus. The rodents shed the virus in their urine, droppings or saliva. Hantavirus can be transmitted to humans when they breathe in contaminated air.

The illness sickens its human victims about six weeks after expo-

See **VIRUS/10A**

VALENTINE'S DAY Love won't take care of itself

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

We go to doctors for checkups and mechanics for tuneups, but we slack on prevention when it comes to relationships. Licensed marriage and family therapist Carolyn Garrett of Pendleton suggested love also requires tuneups.

"Be proactive in your relationship," she said. "Check up on your couples relationship before you need to be reactive."

Garrett has been in practice almost 20 years. She said expectations change, and couples need to talk about those expectations they may have previously agreed on.

She said there are tools to check on your relationship, such as Couplecheckup.com, where you sign up and pay a nominal fee to take an assessment to better understand your relationship.

She also said there are basic steps to keep love going.

First off, Garrett said, is to learn from your mistakes so you don't repeat them. And when communication is difficult or hits a roadblock, she said, people in relationships can rate their levels



Garrett

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