

WOLVES: Cattlemen's association supports the kill

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In March alone, the group led by OR-4 has struck multiple times on private pastures in the Upper Swamp Creek area of Wallowa County. A calf was killed March 9; a sheep on March 25; two calves were attacked on March 26, with one dead and the other euthanized due to bite injuries; another calf was found dead March 28; and a sheep was found injured March 30, according to ODFW depredation reports.

Morgan said Imnaha Pack members commonly visit the area of the attacks but it's unusual for them to remain there, as the four have this time. That suggests there's been some change in the pack dynamics, he said.

Morgan said the agency is following guidelines of the state's wolf management plan, which is up for review this year.

He called the decision unfortunate, but said it is a necessary response to the pack's chronic livestock attacks.

"The (wolf) plan is about conservation, but it's also about management," Morgan said.

ODFW had not killed

any wolves since May 2011, when two Imnaha Pack members were dispatched for livestock attacks. The agency sought to kill two more pack members in September 2011, but conservation groups won a stay of the order from the Oregon Court of Appeals.

Oregon Wild, a Portland based conservation group with long involvement in wolf issues, opposes lethal control.

"ODFW should not be killing members of the Imnaha Pack, or any wolves for that matter, while the wolf plan remains under review and out of date," executive director Sean Stevens said in a prepared statement.

"Given ambiguity in the current wolf plan, increased poaching, premature (state endangered species) delisting and renewed calls from special interest groups for aggressive killing, the public has every reason to be concerned for Oregon's recovering wolf population."

Oregon Wild questioned whether the livestock producers involved have taken sufficient defensive measures against wolves.

Morgan said the sheep producer had three protection dogs with the sheep,

checked the livestock three times a day, employed a range rider to haze the wolves and used midnight spotlighting. The cattle producer delayed pasture rotation to keep cattle closer to a public road, pastured yearlings with cows, frequently checked calving cattle and used range rider patrols as well, Morgan said in a news release.

The onset of lambing and calving season made more attacks a possibility, he said.

"Even more cattle and sheep will be on these private lands soon as calving and lambing season continues, increasing the risk for even more losses from this group of depredating wolves," he said.

Cascadia Wildlands, a Eugene-based conservation group, said it was "deeply saddened" by the ODFW action but said it appears the state agency "has meaningfully deliberated over its decision."

The group said it doesn't condone using public taxpayer money to "kill wolves on behalf of private interests" but acknowledged the "situation appears to be escalating in Wallowa County." The group said lethal control is allowed

under the state's wolf plan.

The inclusion of OR-4 in the kill order is particularly difficult because he has sired many wolf pups over the years and "fueled wolf recovery across the state," said Josh Laughlin, executive director of Cascadia Wildlands. "His role and that of the other three wolves should be celebrated and remembered."

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association supports the kill order, acknowledging it is a "difficult" decision.

"It's an unfair situation for the livestock owners and the wolves themselves," said OCA wolf committee chair Todd Nash, a Wallowa County rancher.

"Wolves are doing what they naturally do, but have been put in a situation in Oregon where they are going to be in constant conflict with livestock and hunter's game," Nash said in a prepared statement.

Eliminating specific, problem animals so that multiple species can live together is sometimes necessary, Nash said.

The ODFW Commission this spring began review of the state's wolf management plan, an effort that may take nine months.

HERMISTON: District had 24 classrooms in 12 modular buildings as of Thursday

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In October 2015, the Hermiston School District had 5,501 students, compared to 5,297 the year prior.

To cope with the growing enrollment, Smith said the district has four options:

- Increase school spaces using construction
- Add modular buildings

"Double shift" schools to provide instruction for one group of students in the morning and one in the evening.

- Provide year-round education and serve students in shifts.

Each of the last options limit the need for new school buildings but increase staffing and maintenance costs. And adding modular buildings paints a picture Smith shudders at.

"The scary thing is if you do nothing at all and say we're going to use modulars to handle the growth, by 2023 we would have 56 modulars and 1,100 kids in modulars if the community slows down growth," Smith said. "At our current growth, we're looking at 80 modular classrooms and 1,400 kids who calls a modular home. That's 1 in 4 students."

With a few short-term exceptions, the district has consistently sought bonds and built new schools as overcrowding dictated.

In 1941 and 1947, students attended classes in church basements after population booms for the Umatilla Ordnance Depot and the McNary Dam, respectively.

In 1949, the district turned to double shifting its schools, where half of the students would attend classes in the morning and half in the afternoon or evening.

"To relieve this situation, the people of the district voted in 1949 to build new elementary schools. West Park was completed in time for the opening of school in the fall of 1950," then-superintendent Armand Larive wrote in a pamphlet in 1952. "Even that year, however, it was necessary to use the library basement for one classroom."

By 1951, enrollment had increased and church basements were used again. Soon new elementary schools were built. The trend continues through the decades. In 1980, the unfinished Highland Hills opened its doors early to help the district handle an unprecedented increase of 239 students more than the previous year. At the time, the district had a record-breaking enrollment of 3,100 students.

Sandstone Middle School was constructed with a bond passed in 1994. A bond in 1999 built Desert View Elementary School and rebuilt the 1952 Hermiston High School, expanding its capacity to 1,600. A 2008 bond rebuilt Armand Larive Middle School — doubling its capacity from 450 to 900 students — as well as each West Park and Sunset Elementary, each with a capacity of 600 students.

Now, eight years later, the district plans to approach voters in 2017 for another bond to finance an expansion of Hermiston High School, construction of a new elementary school on Theater Lane and the replacement of Rocky Heights Elementary. An expanded proposal also includes the replacement of



Smith

"Even if we build a brand new school for 600 students, you'll still have students in modulars."

— Wade Smith, Hermiston School District deputy superintendent

Highland Hills Elementary.

Each proposal addressed enrollment as well as the needs of aging facilities. Rocky Heights, for example, was designed for 350 students and currently has 500, many of them in modular classrooms. Although Rocky Heights has 10 modular classrooms, it still has only one combination gymnasium and cafeteria that must serve all 500 students with breakfast, lunch and physical education classes.

"Obviously, the bond would have a tax increase, but we've been very smart about how we've handled it, so it should be only a very small increase," Smith said. "The challenge is we already have a pretty high tax rate. My fear is if we don't look at this small price now and we do this 10 years down the road, it's going to be a much higher rate."

If voters approve the \$84 million proposal, that increase could be around 50 cents per \$100,000 of assessed property value.

As of Thursday, the Hermiston School District had 24 classrooms in 12 modular buildings across the district. The figure does not include three modular buildings being installed at Hermiston High School or the modular that will be installed at each Desert View Elementary and Sunset Elementary schools this summer. With an average class size of 22, those modular represent 748 students — more than 150 students above the population of a new elementary school.

"Even if we build a brand new school for 600 students, you'll still have students in modulars," Smith said. "People say, 'Didn't we just fix the schools a few years ago?' Well, it's been a few years, and this is one of the challenges of having a growing district."

Growth is not always a negative, however. Smith pointed to increased opportunities for students as enrollment grows, especially at the secondary level where students can participate in classes like Advanced Placement chemistry, which are only offered when enough students enroll in them.

"There are some very cool things you can do with increasing enrollment and provide a plethora of opportunities for kids," Smith said. "We have a lot of great opportunities because of our growth."

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SOLAR: Cost to generate power about 7.8 cents per kilowatt-hour

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across from McNary.

Moyer-Martin said she always felt there should be something dedicated to her mom's memory, but this was more than she could have imagined.

"The next thing I know, the solar station was named.

I was just over the moon," Moyer-Martin said. "It's very humbling."

Plans for the solar farm started last year, when UEC optioned to buy 80 acres of industrial land from the Port of Umatilla. Once the design was complete, construction came together quickly. All together, the panels take up about 6.5 acres of space.

Kevin Ince, UEC's finance manager, said this project is the first step toward securing more renewable resources in order to meet the state's standard for large utilities. Oregon defines a "large" utility as those that supply at least 3 percent of all electric sales statewide. UEC forecasts it will exceed that benchmark by this year.

"We continue to see rapid and aggressive load development. That really keeps us moving," Ince said.

As a "large" utility, UEC will need to procure at least 25 percent of its power from qualifying renewable sources — namely, new wind and solar projects — by 2038, according to Ince. If the transition happened today, that would mean 45 megawatts of power from renewables.

The Moyer-Tolles Solar Station represents just a tiny portion of what the



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The new Umatilla Electric Cooperative solar array is made up of 3,952 panels covering 6.5 acres east of Umatilla.

co-op will eventually need, but Ince said it provides a glimpse of what's to come.

"This is the first step toward a planned, calculated and strategic approach to meet the (renewable energy) mandate without burdening our membership with drastic and sudden increases in their energy rates," Ince said.

Solar energy is still comparatively expensive to produce. Estimates show the cost of generating power at the Moyer-Tolles Solar Station will be 7.8 cents per kilowatt-hour based on a 30-year lifespan for the facility. The total cost of producing all power at UEC is currently about 3.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. UEC purchases the bulk of its power wholesale from Bonneville Power Administration.

But the price of solar is coming down. In 2009, UEC built a 57.75-kilowatt demonstration solar array at its

offices in Hermiston for just a little over \$400,000. That works out to about \$6.92 per watt installed.

Compare that to a 1.3-megawatt facility at \$2.5 million today, which works out to about \$1.92 per watt — just about a 72 percent price reduction.

In addition to meeting the state's mandate, Ince said some co-op members want to see more of an investment in green energy. This project shows UEC is ready and willing to make that investment, he said.

"We want to be good stewards to the environment, and we want to provide value to our members," he said.

UEC serves 10,000 customers in northeast Oregon, including Umatilla, Morrow and Union counties.

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PENDLETON: District had 3,215 students as of Oct. 1

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and special education. But an more straightforward head counts show a decline in enrollment.

The district's internal enrollment report for Oct. 1 — the day the department of education uses for its report — shows the district had 3,215 students, a 70-student decline from the same date five years prior.

Pendleton's place in the state's funding formula is important. Superintendent Jon Peterson said the state pays the district about \$7,000 per student.

If the district loses 20 students from one school year to the next, the district takes a loss of \$140,000 in state funding. Peterson said that kind of financial hit might force the district to lay off two teachers.

Peterson said districts that gain students have more discretion over how to spend additional money. For instance, a district that gains 20 students could use the resulting windfall to hire more teachers or funnel the money to a different program. "It's kind of a double whammy when you have a declining enrollment district," he said.

As the district has trended downward in its student

enrollment, Peterson said Pendleton schools are generally understaffed and lack some of the programs students need.

Although the ups and downs of Pendleton's youth population are largely out of the hands of the district, Peterson said others with declining enrollment have taken steps to boost their numbers.

Peterson referenced the Baker Web Academy, a Baker School District-sponsored online charter school that serves students across the state. While the agreement nets Baker some extra money, Peterson said district officials have not had serious conversations about starting an online program.

Because the Pendleton district has substantially fewer students than it did 20 years ago, the \$55 million school bond passed by voters in 2013 didn't add new schools but rebuilt and repurposed buildings already in the district.

That included turning Hawthorne into an Early Learning Center where all the district's kindergartners attend, building newer Sherwood Heights and Washington elementary schools and converting Lincoln and West Hills into the district office and a career technical center.

Oregon woman to testify against man who shot deputy

KLAMATH FALLS (AP) — An Oregon court has dismissed charges against a Klamath Falls woman in exchange for her testimony against an acquaintance accused of shooting a sheriff's deputy.

Karey Pascoe, 35, had originally been charged with attempted murder, conspiracy to commit murder and assault, *The Herald and News* reported. She has been subpoenaed to testify at the May trial of William Parkerson, 31, who is accused of shooting former Klamath County Sheriff's Deputy Jason Weber in 2014.

Weber survived the incident and has since accepted a different job.

Pascoe said in an affidavit filed March 22 that she was driving Parkerson and another man to purchase drugs in Klamath Falls when she was pulled over. She said she had only known Parkerson for four days and had not met the other passenger until that day.

According to Pascoe's account, Weber pulled her over and the other passenger left the car and started running away. Parkerson then "jumped out of my car and shot Jason Weber," she wrote.

He returned to the car and told Pascoe to drive away, she said. When the vehicle ran out of gas about 15 miles outside Klamath Falls, the pair began walking on foot, Pascoe said.

"Mr. Parkerson told me to walk with him and we walked all over the place," she said. The affidavit goes on to say that Parkerson disposed of the weapon, and they were picked up by a passing driver the next morning.

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