

BLOOMIN' BLUES



Photo courtesy Bruce Barnes

Douglas' Dusty Maiden

One fair maiden

By BRUCE BARNES
For The East Oregonian**Name:** Douglas' Dusty Maiden**Scientific name:** *Chaenactis douglasii*

Douglas' Dusty Maiden is widespread in scattered locations throughout most of western North America, from British Columbia to California, to the Rocky Mountains. It is one of the many plants collected by David Douglas in the 1820s and sent back to England for propagation and study. This is the same David Douglas the Portland high school is named for. To say he discovered the plant would be somewhat misleading, as this plant was well known to the Indians throughout the West long before anyone else arrived here.

This plant is about a foot high, with branches spreading out from the base and the central stems. The leaves are fern-like, with many of the smallest leaf segments looking like tiny knobs. Being in the sunflower family, the flowers are tightly bundled in heads, but without the familiar outer one-petaled flowers on the rim of the head. The tiny flowers in the heads vary

from white to pinkish. The outer shell that is the base of the heads is usually sticky with a viscous coating.

The genus name, *Chaenactis*, is from the Greek "chaino" meaning to gape, and "aktis" meaning "ray," referring to broadly open flowers around the outer rim of the plant heads of some species of this genus. So even though the genus name doesn't describe this plant, at least we know the source of the name, which is more than one can say about the name "dusty maiden," for which I can find no explanation. Other common names used elsewhere in the west include pincushion, bride's bouquet, and false yarrow.

Various tribes had medicinal uses for this plant. Several used it for a poultice to reduce swelling and for aching limbs. They also used it as a wash for chapped hands, boils, and tumors and for headaches and colds. Others used it for insect and rattlesnake bites, and as a heart depressant and an emetic. One tribe used it as an eye wash.

Where to find: It is now in full bloom along the edge of the Mt. Emily road, about a mile before reaching the ridge.

Wallowa mountain receives national landmark designation

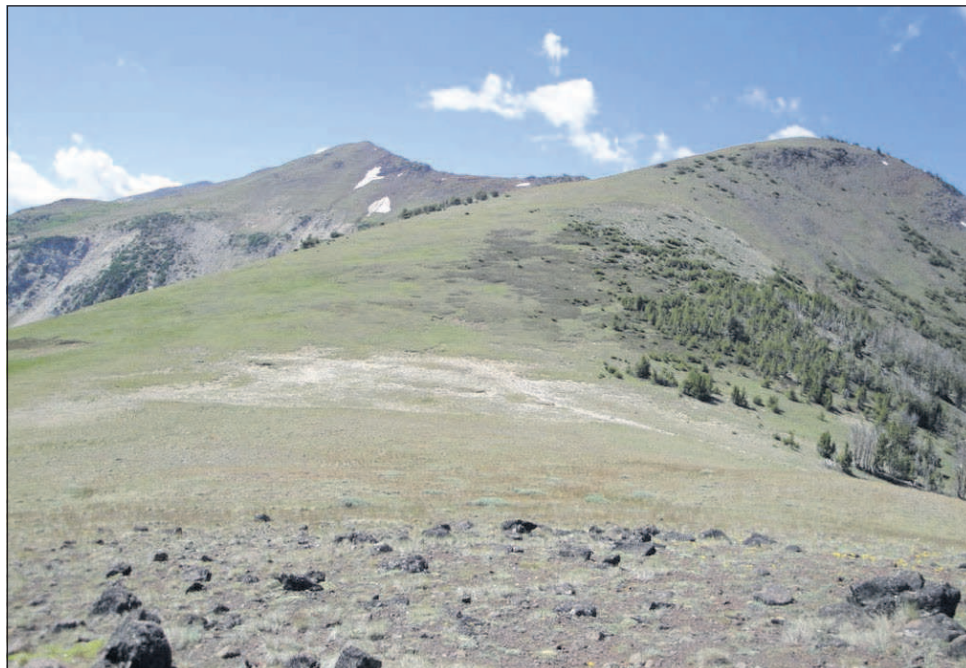
EO Media Group

The U.S. Department of the Interior on Tuesday officially designated Mountain Howard-East Peak near Wallowa Lake as a National Natural Landmark.

The 8,150-foot mountain received the designation because of its value as the finest montane (high-altitude) grassland on the Columbia Plateau as well as its botanical diversity. This includes housing a number of rare plant species as well as some endemic to the Wallowa Mountains.

In a press release, Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden stated: "As the Senate sponsor of the 'Recreation Not Red-Tape Act,' I am pleased any time one of Oregon's natural landmarks earns a well-deserved spotlight as a special place for Oregonians and visitors alike to get outdoors. Wallowa County should stand very proud that Mount Howard-East Peak has been recognized for both its unique montane grasslands and botanical diversity."

The National Natural Landmarks program is



Courtesy photo

Mount Howard, the 8,150-foot mountain near Wallowa Lake, was designated as a National Natural Landmark Tuesday.

administered by the National Park Service, while the Mt. Howard site is administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

The Mount Howard summit is the terminus of the 3,700-foot Wallowa Lake Tramway.

The National Natural Landmarks Program

recognizes and encourages the conservation of sites that contain outstanding biological and geological resources, regardless of land-ownership type, according to the National Parks Service website. It is the only national areas program of national scope that recognizes the

best examples of biological and geological features in both public and private ownership. NNLs are owned by a variety of land stewards and participation in the program is voluntary.

For more information about the program, visit www.nature.nps.gov/nnl.

Cougar creates stir in La Grande

By DICK MASON

The La Grande Observer

A La Grande jogger who spotted a cougar at the Union County Fairgrounds sparked a three-hour search by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife late Monday morning.

Sarah Welley was jogging past the Union County Fairgrounds at about 8:45 a.m. when she saw a dog chasing something.

She stopped to see what the canine was pursuing, and when she saw it was a cougar she recorded it with her smartphone.

Welley was across the street from the fairgrounds and was separated by a fence when she saw the cougar being chased south from the fairgrounds' main stage area. The mountain lion appeared to be anything but in an attack mode, Welley said.

"I did not feel threatened. It obviously was trying to figure out how to get out and leave," she said.

She watched the animal run about 100 yards to a fence near Interstate 84. The cougar appeared to desperately want to get past the fence but could not.

"I realized it could turn around and run after me, so I left," Welley said.

Minutes later, her half-minute cougar video was on the Internet. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife officials saw it and immediately began a three-hour search of the area, running from Orodell Road northwest of the fairgrounds to a half mile east of Riverside Park. No cougars or indications of them were spotted.

"We found no tracks or signs of deer kills," said ODFW biologist Leonard Erickson.

This indicates that the cougar may have just been passing through La Grande and already left.

"We may never see it again," Erickson said.

Still, Erickson advises people in the Orodell Road to Riverside Park area to be on alert.

"You always should be careful around big predators," the biologist said.

The last report the ODFW received of the cougar had it crossing Second Street heading east at about 9 a.m. Monday.

Erickson, who saw the video of the cougar at the fairgrounds, said the



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For video of the big cat visit our Facebook page

animal appeared to be an adult and did not seem to be hostile.

"It did not look aggressive. It looked panicked and confused like it wanted to get out," Erickson said. "It certainly did not want to be there."

Areas checked by ODFW during their search included the brushy Grande Ronde River corridor between the fairgrounds and Riverside Park. Erickson said this is the type of habitat a cougar might live in or travel in while passing through or if scared.

"It would be a logical place for it to use," Erickson said. Erickson carried a shotgun during the search. "It was for my own protection," he said.

ODFW biologist Hans Hayden, who assisted with the search, thinks it is unlikely the cougar will turn up in town again because it appeared to be a healthy adult in the video. Hayden said that normally cougars found in town are juveniles or adults who are old or in poor health.

Grizzly kills Montana mountain-biker

By MATT VOLZ
Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. — Wildlife officials set traps, installed wilderness cameras and scouted the woods by helicopter Thursday for the bear that attacked and killed a U.S. Forest Service employee as he rode a mountain bike along a trail outside Glacier National Park.

Brad Treat, 38, was knocked off his bike Wednesday after he and another rider apparently surprised the bear — a grizzly, according to initial and still-unconfirmed accounts — in the Flathead National Forest, authorities said. The other rider, whose name was not released, went to get help and was not hurt.

Bears that attack humans are killed if it is found that they displayed predatory behavior, such as stalking the person, or consumed their victim.

In this case, officials said it is too soon to say what will be done to the bear if it is found. They are trying to determine if it was a mother with cubs, whether it was protecting a food cache nearby or whether it simply reacted to the surprise appearance of the bikers, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks spokesman Ron Aasheim said.

"One of the things that is key to all this is whether it was a predatory act," Aasheim said. "I don't think there's any sense that this was predatory."

Wildlife officials set traps near the trail, flew low over the trees and hoped cameras would spot the bear. But finding it will be difficult because bears can range for miles and the area is dense with grizzlies, authorities said. There are an estimated 1,000 in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, which includes the park.

To confirm whether they have the right bear, wildlife officials typically collect DNA from the animal to compare it with evidence at the scene, analyze bite marks and other injuries on the victim, and examine the animal's claws, jaws and feces for human remains.

Wildlife officials said they are testing DNA to establish whether it was a grizzly or a black bear that killed Treat. Also, an autopsy was being



Chris Peterson/The Daily Inter Lake via AP

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks game warden Perry Brown prepares to hunt for a grizzly bear that killed Forest Service law enforcement officer Brad Treat near West Glacier, Mont., on Wednesday.

performed on the victim at the state crime lab, and the evidence gathered could help determine the size, age and sex of the bear, narrowing the search, Flathead County Sheriff Chuck Curry said.

Authorities closed the area, about 3 miles from Glacier's western entrance, as a precaution.

Grizzlies in the Lower 48 states have been designated a threatened species since the 1970s, but their numbers are increasing and so are run-ins between humans and bears.

Before Wednesday, at least six people had been mauled to death by bears in the Northern Rockies since 2010, but all those cases were in the Yellowstone National Park area, which is about 360 miles from Glacier and has at least 700 grizzlies.

Before Treat was killed, there had been 10 bear-related human deaths in Glacier since the park was created in 1910. The last was in 1998, when three bears killed and partially ate a park vendor employee while he was hiking.

Treat, a law enforcement officer

"I don't think there is any sense that this was predatory."

— Ron Aasheim, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks spokesman

with the Forest Service, was married and lived in nearby West Glacier.

He grew up in Kalispell, where he was a standout distance runner in high school, said his former coach, Paul Jorgensen.

Jorgensen recalled that Treat would usually be among the top finishes during cross-country meets but would stick close to the finish line to congratulate all the other runners as they came in. The coach liked that so much he asked the other athletes on the team to do the same thing.

"We all have fond memories of Brad Treat," Jorgensen said. "A lot of people really liked Brad. He was a favorite for many of the kids I coached and also as part of the high school."

BRIEFLY

Hikers rescued from Mount Hood

PORTLAND — A mother and daughter hiking pair have been rescued after spending the night on Mount Hood.

Tony Hobkirk, a volunteer rescuer with Pacific Northwest Search and Rescue, said by phone Tuesday that the hikers were in good condition but tired.

A man called authorities around 7 p.m. Monday to say his wife and daughter were missing. Their cellphones were dead.

Hobkirk says the mother and her adult daughter were planning to take a multi-day hike and were prepared to spend the night outdoors.

They encountered heavy waters at the bottom of Zig Zag Canyon and weren't able to cross them to continue their hike.

He says they had apparently planned to hike from Timberline Lodge to Cascade Locks on the Pacific Crest Trail.

Phoenix to consider closing hiking trails in extreme heat

PHOENIX (AP) — The city of Phoenix is considering closing its popular hiking and biking trails when temperatures get dangerously high in an effort to prevent heat deaths and injuries.

The Parks and Recreation board will consider a proposal by staff on Thursday to close down the city's 41 trailheads in extreme heat.

Parks and Recreation spokesman Gregg Bach said the department is proposing

to post signs that indicate the trails are closed for people when the temperature hits 110 degrees and for pets when it hits 100.

Bach said staff started seriously considering the proposal in the past week, after there were several rescues and at least one death within city limits. A 28-year-old fitness instructor died after being rescued while mountain biking on June 19 in Phoenix during a record-breaking 118-degree day. Six people in Arizona died that day of heat-related causes, including two German men who were visiting Tucson and went on a hike.

Large snake eats beaver, swims across river

WESTBROOK, Maine (AP) — The hunt for a large snake seen feasting on a beaver in Maine has residents atwitter.

Police in Westbrook say the 10-foot-long snake finished its meal early Wednesday and then swam across the Presumpscot River and disappeared into brush on the other side. Residents are alarmed because children swim and feed ducks in that section of the river.

The snake was quickly dubbed Wessie and the Presumpscot Python by residents on social media. A Twitter hashtag was created, and someone made a fake account for the snake.

Police are patrolling the riverbank. But the snake is nowhere to be seen.

The Maine Warden Service says the snake is expected to lay dormant for a couple days because it just consumed a large mammal.