



Photo contributed by Oregon State Police
Two bull elk were poached and wasted in Union County, northeast of Elgin.

OSP investigating elk poached in Union County

Two bulls killed, left to waste

East Oregonian

The Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division is investigating two bull elk poached in Union County, roughly 60 yards off Yarrington Road northeast of Elgin.

A reward of \$500 is available for anyone with information leading to an

arrest and conviction in the case. Based on evidence collected at the scene, the animals were most likely shot in the late evening of Nov. 15 or early morning Nov. 16.

Anyone with information should contact OSP senior trooper Marcus McDowell through the Turn-In-Poachers (TIP) hotline at 1-800-452-7888, or email marcus.mcdowell@state.or.us. Tipsters can remain anonymous.



AP Photo/Matthew Brown, File
In this 2013 file photo, a train hauls oil into Glacier National Park near the Badger-Two Medicine National Forest in northwest Montana.

U.S. cancels energy leases in area sacred to Blackfeet Tribe

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — U.S. officials cancelled 15 oil and gas leases on Wednesday in an area bordering Glacier National Park that’s considered sacred to the Blackfoot tribes of the U.S. and Canada.

The cancellation was aimed at preserving the Badger-Two Medicine area, a largely undeveloped, 130,000-acre wilderness that is the site of the creation story for members of Montana’s Blackfeet Nation and the Blackfoot tribes of Canada.

“It should not have been leased to begin with,” Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said in announcing the cancellations at her agency’s headquarters in Washington, D.C. “This sets the right tone for how business should be done in the future.”

Details on the cancellation were obtained by The Associated Press in advance of the announcement.

The move comes amid sometimes-violent protests over an oil pipeline being built in North Dakota near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. The Obama administration has been criticized by some American Indians over its handling of the matter, and federal officials have sought to reduce tensions by saying they would consider re-routing the pipeline.

Jewell said the leasing and pipeline disputes bear similarities: In both cases, she said, federal officials made decisions without sufficient input from tribal members who had cultural concerns.

Blackfeet Tribal Chairman Harry Barnes said the pipeline protests and his tribe’s decades-long effort to block development in the Badger-Two Medicine reinforce the need for closer cooperation between the government and tribes.

“Hey, this ain’t working.

How do we find a better way to consult with the aboriginal people and inhabitants?” Barnes said as he stood beside Jewell on Wednesday. “The Blackfeet tribe has never been opposed to oil and gas exploration. We are opposed to oil and gas exploration on our sacred sites.”

The 15 cancelled oil and gas leases on almost 23,000 acres were issued in the early 1980s and held by Oklahoma-based Devon Energy, according to Interior officials.

Interior officials said they were sold without proper consultations with tribal leaders. Another energy lease in the same area was canceled by federal officials earlier this year.

No drilling has occurred and the cancellation was made in cooperation with Devon executives.

Devon President David Hager said the cancellation “was the right thing to do.” It entitles the company to a refund of \$206,000 for fees associated with the lease purchase.

Montana U.S. Sen. Jon Tester said the company deserved credit for its willingness to relinquish the leases in an area that’s prime habitat for grizzly bears, bighorn sheep, elk and other wildlife.

In March, federal officials canceled a 6,200-acre lease in the Badger-Two-Medicine that was held by Solenex LLC. The Baton Rouge, Louisiana, company has been seeking to drill for gas in the area for the past several years. It has challenged the government’s decision in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

Two oil and gas leases remain in the area.

Federal officials plan to address the remaining leases, but they have been unable to contact their owners, Interior spokeswoman Amanda DeGroff said.

Tempted by dead deer on the roadside? Better think twice

By SCOTT HAMMERS
The Bulletin

BEND — With the season of feasting and family dinners on the horizon, it’s a safe bet one dish will be missing from most menus — roadkill.

Oregon bans the harvesting of most animals you might strike with your car yet still consider eating, unlike nearly a third of states, where the fender-to-frying pan journey is one possible path for the victim of an unforeseen collision.

In Oregon, game animals killed by a vehicle cannot be harvested, by the driver or anyone else. Antlers from deer or elk killed by a vehicle cannot be harvested either. The law, according to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife website, is intended to discourage individuals from “hunting” with their vehicle.

On the other hand, any motorist who kills a nonprotected animal — or just happens to find it along the road — is free to take it home. Qualifying species include coyote, skunk, nutria, opossum, badger, porcupine and weasel, and anything else that can be hunted without a license or tag, reports *The (Bend) Bulletin*.

There’s also a third category that applies to individuals licensed to trap animals for their fur. They can take home bobcat, gray fox and red fox, marten, muskrat, mink, raccoon, river otter and beaver, but only when such animals are in season.

Cory Heath, wildlife biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, said Oregon’s laws on harvesting roadkill date back decades. In large part, the rules against keeping game animals killed by vehicles are designed to deter illegal or out-of-season hunting, he said. By banning the collection of roadkill, poachers can’t cover up their activity by claiming to have struck the animal accidentally, Heath said.

Heath said a scattering of Oregonians are caught illegally harvesting roadkill every year, though often, not for the meat.

“In many cases, they are people taking antlers off buck deer and bull elk, people taking bear paws off road-killed bears, things like that,” he said.

Harvesting of the smaller animals in the nonprotected category is quite rare, Heath said.

“You see what the critters look like after they get run over on the road, and most of them are probably not in a very usable condition,” he said.

Peter Murphy, regional spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation, said the period between



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin via AP, File
In this 2014 file photo, wildlife fencing lines a section of U.S. Highway 97 near the northbound onramp of the highway at Sunriver. The Oregon Hunters Association maintains the fences that prevent car-deer crashes on the highway near Bend.

“In many cases ... people are taking antlers off buck deer and bull elk, people taking bear paw off road-killed bears.”
— Cory Heath, ODFW wildlife biologist

early October and mid-November is the deadliest time of year for local deer venturing onto the road in Central Oregon.

Deer that make their home near Bend and in the Cascades during summer often move toward Christmas Valley for the winter, Murphy said, necessitating trips through populated areas and across busy highways. For whatever reason, far fewer tend to be struck by vehicles when making the return trip in the spring.

Bend is on the northern edge of a zone extending past La Pine that sees more collisions between deer and vehicles than anywhere else in the state, Murphy said.

Oregon’s rules on keeping what you run over are tighter than in many states, including Washington, which adopted a roadkill salvage law that went into effect in July.

Under the Washington law, drivers who strike and kill a deer or elk can take it home, and have 24 hours to

obtain a salvage permit — a deer or elk tag does not suffice. Drivers are further forbidden from killing an animal injured in a collision for the purpose of harvesting the meat or antlers.

Whether you should or would want to eat an animal killed by a vehicle is another question.

Bob Mehan, owner at Cinder Butte Meat Co. in Redmond, said it’s common when processing legitimately hunted deer and elk to discard the “blood shot” portion of the meat, the tissues that are bruised and damaged by the path of a bullet. Bruising on an animal struck by a car would likely be much more extensive, he said.

Mehan said an injured animal will generate a surge of adrenaline, which can degrade the taste of its meat and is often cited as among the drawbacks of consuming roadkill.

Still, Mehan said he’d expect a similar adrenaline surge would be taking place when a hunter wounds an animal, then tracks it for hours before delivering the fatal shot. Perhaps, he said, the excitement of harvesting one’s own meal allows a successful hunter to ignore any off flavors.

Murphy said ODOT has tried and failed to find takers for animals killed along the road. Wildlife rescue facilities that keep animals that might otherwise enjoy a carcass have turned down ODOT, he said, for fear of potentially introducing disease. Instead, carcasses collected by ODOT are typically dragged away from the road, he said, and left to scavengers to do the rest.

Portland man died seeking place to soak in Yellowstone

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — An Oregon man who died after falling into a scalding Yellowstone National Park hot spring in June was looking for a place to “hot pot,” the forbidden practice of soaking in one of the park’s thermal features, officials said.

Sable Scott told investigators that she and her 23-year-old brother, Colin, left a boardwalk near Pork Chop Geyser and walked several hundred feet up a hill in search of “a place that they could potentially get into and soak,” Deputy Chief Ranger Lorant Veress

told KULR-TV in an interview.

As Sable Scott took video of her brother with her cellphone on June 7, he reached down to check the water temperature and slipped and fell into a thermal pool about 6 feet long, 4 feet wide and 10 feet deep, according to a National Park Service incident record first reported by KULR.

Park officials did not release the video or a description of it, but the report said it also chronicled Sable Scott’s efforts to rescue her brother.

Search and rescue rangers spotted Colin Scott’s body floating in the pool the day of the accident, but a lightning storm prevented recovery, the report said.

The next day, workers could not find any remains in the boiling, acidic water.

“In very short order, there was a significant amount of dissolving,” Veress said.

The report included images of several signs warning people of the dangers of the park’s geothermal features and of traveling off walkways in the

area where Colin Scott died.

The National Park Service did not issue any citations in the case.

Scott was on a college graduation trip with his sister at the time of his death, which came a day after six people were cited for walking off-trail at the park’s Grand Prismatic Spring.

A week later, a tourist from China was fined \$1,000 for breaking through the fragile crust in the Mammoth Hot Springs area, apparently to collect water for medicinal purposes.

Warm weather stops ski resorts from opening early

BEND (AP) — Warm November temperatures mean it is unlikely ski resorts in central Oregon will be opening early.

The Bulletin reports that Mt. Bachelor and Hoodoo Ski Area had hoped to open by Thanksgiving, but consistently warm, sunny weather this month has melted snow that fell in October.

Mt. Bachelor spokesman Stirling Cobb says the mountain is waiting for a “just-in-time” storm to cover the area in snow before Thanksgiving.

Mt. Bachelor opened Nov. 20 last year with. So far, the mountain has 5 inches at base.

Hoodoo Ski Area will likely not open until early December.

GENERAL DENTISTRY

FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY



- Digital X-rays
- Laser Cavity Detection

Extended hours: Mon. - Thur.: 7:00 am to 6:00 pm
We take most insurances, including PPO's
Dr. Smith se habla Español

310 SE2ND ST., STE 203
PENDLETON, OR 97801
541-276-4768

T. BLAIR SMITH, DMD
EDWARD S. DOLAN, DDS