

# Biologists begin wolf counts in NE Oregon

By KATY NESBITT

For the La Grande Observer

ENTERPRISE — As the end of the year approaches, wildlife biologists are gathering data on Oregon's wolf population even as increased numbers complicate long-term management of the animals.

In Flora, Shamrock Pack sightings have become a regular occurrence. Mike Hansen, assistant wildlife biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Enterprise office, said this week he investigated a report of wolves in and around a ranch house in northern Wallowa County.

Hansen said confirmed wolf tracks were seen coming through a horse pasture, within 50 feet of the house and within a foot of a chain-link dog kennel.

"The homeowner said this was not the first time," Hansen said. "They had seen wolves in their yard on at least three occasions."

Last week, a homeowner reacting to her dog barking inside the house

saw wolves approximately 40 feet from the front door.

The wolves have been seen on Lost Prairie outside of Flora multiple times. So far, they have not shown aggression in these residential sightings. However, the Shamrock Pack has been implicated in livestock kills, most recently a calf found badly injured last month on the Zumwalt Prairie. The calf had to be euthanized, according to Rod Childers, a member of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association wolf committee.

As wolf numbers and packs increase, the territories change. Biologists are trying to sort out wolf packs that are now inhabiting the Imnaha River country where the state's best-known pack, the Imnaha Pack, was established around 2008.

Last spring, the aging alpha male and crippled alpha female of the Imnaha Pack, along with two of their offspring, were killed by wildlife managers after repeated loss to livestock over the course of a few months in a relatively small area

northeast of Enterprise. Hansen said as other packs expand their territory, OR-4 and the three wolves running with him last year may have been pushed into the prairie.

"As alphas get older and weak, they are not as successful at reproducing, the pack diminishes and the pack next door pushes them out of their territory," Hansen said.

While four members of the Imnaha Pack were eliminated, Hansen said four other wolves thought to be part of the pack remained on the divide between the Imnaha and Snake rivers.

Pack territories often can change, even within a year.

"We've seen it with the Imnaha pack and others," Hansen said.

OR-35, a female wolf originally from Umatilla County, was in the Sled Springs Wildlife Unit last month when her collar information indicated she went to the Wenaha Wilderness in Washington.

"Territories are very fluid, and trying to keep track without radios is pretty difficult," Hansen said.

"Even then, you don't know the reason they moved."

In October, responding to repeated wolf reports in the Imnaha Wildlife Unit of 11, 12 and 13 wolves, Pat Matthews, Enterprise's head biologist, trapped and collared a wolf.

"We thought, 'Great, now we will learn what's going on,' and this one turns out to be a disperser," Hansen said.

The wolf's radio collar information indicates not long after he was collared, the wolf crossed the Snake River and is now in Idaho's Frank Church Wilderness, leaving the wolves in the Imnaha River corridor still uncollared and the identity of 14 wolves filmed loping along the east side of the upper Imnaha Canyon unknown.

When asked what pack those wolves might be — Snake River, South Snake River or an expansion of the remaining Imnaha pack — Hansen said right now, it's anybody's guess.

The Snake River Pack's territory

appears to still be mostly on the lower Imnaha River in the Snake River Wildlife Unit, while the South Snake River Pack are not where they were last year on the Baker County line. Two other wolves, a male and female pair, have occupied that country in recent months. Roblyn Brown, acting state wolf biologist, said so far this year pups have not been seen with that pair.

Some of Wallowa County's other well-known wolves, the Wenaha Pack, are off the radar with no collared members reporting data for the last year and a half. The Sled Springs Pack was essentially decimated last summer when the alpha male and female were found dead in north-central Wallowa County.

As biologists continue to get numbers for the 2016 wolf management annual report, Hansen said remote cameras have been installed to get counts of pups. He said they will also fly to locate animals and later in the winter they may try to capture and collar wolves from a helicopter.

## BRIEFLY

### Fire destroys workshop near Tollgate

TOLLGATE — A workshop fire near Tollgate completely consumed a building Thursday morning.

The East Umatilla County Rural Fire Protection District received the call at 10:02 a.m. and was later joined by the Pendleton Fire Department.

Juan Avila, the firefighter-in-command for the district, said the building owner was trying to put out the fire with an extinguisher when authorities arrived.

The fire was already in the walls by the time firefighters arrived, and because there was another call in Weston they were tending to, Avila said firefighters focused on protecting some of the surrounding buildings while letting the fire burn itself out.

No one was hurt and the cause of the fire is under investigation.

### \$400,000 grant given to Pendleton, two other cities

PENDLETON — Some Pendleton homes will get much-needed repairs courtesy of the federal government.

Partnering with the cities of Pilot Rock and Adams, Pendleton received a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Business Oregon recently announced.

Grants will be provided to home owners for things like replacing or repairing electrical wiring, heating sources, and water and sewer lines. The grant can also address dry rot, foundation repairs, weatherization needs and handicap accessibility issues.

Chuck Wood, a Pendleton city councilor and a member of the Restore Pendleton committee, said there are 42 homeowners eligible for the grant and 15-20 will receive it.

Homeowners can receive up to \$20,000 for their home projects, a majority of which are located in Pendleton or Pilot Rock.

Wood expects the grant funds will be dispersed during early summer 2017.

The goal is to continue to apply for the grant each year to continue to cross off homes from their list, Wood said.

### Open house lets community offer project ideas

PENDLETON — Pendleton community officials are inviting the public to explore some of the new projects being considered for the city.

The process of figuring out what these projects will be is being dubbed "Project Exploration" and includes an open house at the Pendleton Convention Center Monday.

One of the organizers of Project Exploration, Pendleton city councilor Chuck Wood, said the effort came about when a committee convened to figure out a way to demolish the dilapidated Webb's Cold Storage building on South Main Street.

The committee succeeded in convincing Union-Pacific Railroad Co. to fund the demolition, but committee members continued to spitball ideas, not just for the newly vacated area, but for locations across the city.

Some of those proposals include a food hub, a community gathering place and gateway enhancements to Pendleton's downtown area.

Organizations involved with Project Exploration include the city of Pendleton, the Pendleton Downtown Association, Pendleton Farmers Market, Umatilla County and the Community Action Program of East Central Oregon.

Wood described the open house as a "standing meeting," where the public will be asked to interact and offer their own ideas with facilitation from Clive Kaiser, an associate professor of horticulture for Oregon State University Extension Services.

The open house will be held at the Pendleton Convention Center on Monday from 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

For more information, email Wood at chuckwood@wtechlink.us, CAPECO CEO Paula Hall at phall@capeco-works.org, Pendleton Development Commission associate director Charles Denight at charles.denight@ci.pendleton.or.us or Pendleton Downtown Association president Fred Bradbury at fbradbury@yahoo.com.

### HSD announces more than \$846K in energy savings

HERMISTON — The Hermiston School District's energy savings have grown with its square footage.

According to a district press release, the district has saved \$846,075 since 2011 despite adding 27,000 square feet in recent years.

That's a 20 percent reduction in total cost per square foot, putting the district in the top 20 percent of schools in cost per student and cost per square foot, with the goal of eventually reaching the top 10 percent.

The district attributes the increased energy efficiency to a number of facility improvements, including a complete school replacement at West Park, Sunset and Armand Larive, boiler replacement, a new lighting system, new computer and communication management systems and a solar panel installation at Armand Larive.

The district highlighted the software-controlled heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, which staff made 500 programming modifications to in the past year to accommodate events outside the usual building schedule.

"This scheduling strikes a pleasant balance in being fiscally responsible while ensuring the comfort of our staff, students and patrons," the press release states.

The district will continue looking for more efficiencies, which it said will allow the school system to direct more money toward the classroom.

## WARM: Neighbor 2 Neighbor seeking more volunteers

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they had a holiday fight with their family or can't pay the electric bill," she said.

Rossell said sometimes worried parents or spouses will show up at the Warming Station looking for a loved one who stormed out after an argument, but volunteers won't disclose who is sleeping there. The best someone can do, she said, is leave a note that volunteers will offer up to the person if they do show up.

"If guests wish to be anonymous we'll protect that," she said. "We do assure people that if their loved ones are there we'll take good care of them, and keep them warm and safe."

In the past the Warming Station has been located in church basements, storefronts or the ARC of Umatilla County building, so having a house that was meant for sleeping in is nice, Rossell said. They also have a change of pace with their schedule, which is keeping the Warming Station open every night through Feb. 28 instead of being weather-dependent.

That's made it easier for volunteers, Rossell said, and they have a rotating group of about 100 of them this year.

Chris Clemons, executive director of Neighbor 2 Neighbor in Pendleton, said volunteers are "the one leg of our stool that's always



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Owen McLaughlin, second from right, checks in with volunteer Elaine Entermille as Raymond Penrod, second from left, checks in with volunteer Dwight Johnson at the Neighbor 2 Neighbor warming station on Thursday in Pendleton.

the shakiest." He said this year they could definitely use some more people willing to pitch in.

Volunteers must go through a basic background check and a training, and if they are working directly with guests they will always have a second volunteer with them.

"We're not just going to throw you out there," Clemons said.

So far Neighbor 2 Neighbor has been open for two nights, and Clemons said the first night they had 6 guests. The shelter usually averages about 7 per night.

"We had a couple of

overnighters I know from last year, but several I did not recognize," he said.

Clemons said the new building on Court Street, donated by St. Anthony Hospital, has been a "huge blessing." It's all on ground level and has plenty of room for intake, storage, serving food and sleeping.

He said Sundown Bar & Grill donated meals for the guests on Wednesday, and other businesses have already contacted him about providing food or other services. The city has worked with them to make the transition to the new building smooth, he said,

and police, churches and social service agencies have been good partners as well.

"It's nice, the kind of community participation that's been taking place," he said.

Neighbor 2 Neighbor can be contacted through their Facebook page or by email on their website at [www.n2npendleton.org](http://www.n2npendleton.org). The Hermiston Warming Station can also be contacted through Facebook or [hwsrelations@gmail.com](mailto:hwsrelations@gmail.com).

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

## COMING EVENTS

**FRIDAY, DEC. 9 CONFERENCE CELEBRATING CULTURAL EFFECTIVENESS**, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., EOTEC, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston. Racial, equity and structural racism conference sponsored by several area agencies. Keynote speaker Dr. Raymond Reyes will emphasize team building using laughter and humor when discussing equity in organizations. Free, but registration is required.

**A VISIT FROM SANTA**, 4-6 p.m., Weston Public Library, 108 E. Main St., Weston. Free books, candy canes and photos with Santa (parents should bring a camera). Free. (Kathleen Schmidtgal 541-566-2378)

**CANDY LAND HOLIDAY PARTY**, 4:30-6 p.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. Craft projects, cookie decorating (and eating), games, activity booths and a STEAM project. For kids in the fifth grade and younger. Free. (541-567-2882)

**SATURDAY, DEC. 10 BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**, 8-10 a.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St., Boardman. Includes breakfast, Santa, crafts and activities, and horse-drawn wagon rides. Cost is \$3 per person. (541-481-3257)

**PARKING LOT SALE**, 8:30-11:30 a.m., Agape House, 500 W. Harper Road, Hermiston. Clothing 3 items for \$1, furniture priced as marked and knick-knacks you name the price. Donations welcome through Friday. (Dave Hughes 541-567-8774)

**HOLIDAY BAZAAR**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., St. Mary's Catholic Church, 800 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton. Vendors selling handcrafted items, brunch, lunch and desserts for purchase, raffles and more. \$1 admission gets one raffle ticket. (541-276-2715)

**ECHO PTIO HOLIDAY BAZAAR**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Echo School commons, 600 Gerone St., Echo. Vendors, book sale and more. Free admission. (Ashley Harwood 541-240-1656)

**HOLIDAY BAZAAR**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Echo Community Church basement, 21 N. Bonanza St., Echo. Vendors, chili feed (\$5) and more. Free admission.

**SAGE SATURDAY**, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman. Create your own gift from materials supplied by the center. Free. (541-481-7243)

**COUNTRY HOEDOWN**, 1-4 p.m., Milton-Freewater Neighborhood Senior Center, 311 N. Main St., Milton-Freewater. Live music, dancing and singing. Admission \$2, refreshments available for purchase. (541-938-3311)

**"THE CANARY EFFECT"**, 1-2:30 p.m., Tamastislikt Cultural Institute, 47106 Wildhorse Blvd., Pendleton. Documentary

follows the abuses perpetrated on the indigenous peoples of North America and details the genocidal practices of the US government and its continuing effects on present day Indian country. Free admission. (541-429-7700)

**MOVIE AT THE VERT**, 1:30-4 p.m., Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Enjoy "Elf" and free popcorn. All ages. Free. (Glenn Graham 541-966-0370)

**THE ARC CHRISTMAS PARTY**, 2-4 p.m., The ARC Building, 215 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Enjoy refreshments, bingo, caroling, crafts and a visit from Santa. Those wishing to participate in the gift exchange should bring something for a man/boy or woman/girl, \$5 limit. (541-567-7615)

**OLD FASHIONED HOLIDAY STROLL**, 3-7 p.m., downtown Pendleton, Main Street, Pendleton. Celebrate the holiday season while admiring winter window displays and drinking free hot cocoa. Holiday carols performed by local musical groups. Also, specials and discounts at many local

shops and venues. **HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE**, 4-7 p.m., Huwe residence, North Washington and First Street, Irigton. Santa and maybe an elk will appear. Cocoa, cider, coffee, cookies and candy canes for the little ones. Bring non-perishable food items to donate to the needy in the Irigton community.

**"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"**, 6:30 p.m., Pendleton High School auditorium, 1800 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Shakespeare's romantic comedy performed in 1980s costume. Cost is \$6 for adults, \$4 for students with ID.

**"AN EVENING WITH THE CLASSICS"**, 7 p.m., Hermiston High School performing arts auditorium, 600 S. First St., Hermiston. Hermiston's own Kelly Kuo and Ron Blessinger will perform classical music. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for students in advance, \$5 more at the door, available at Hermiston Parks office, Hermiston Chamber of Commerce or online at [www.desertartsCouncil.com](http://www.desertartsCouncil.com). (Larry Fetter or Phyllis Shoveliski 541-667-5007 or 541-379-6992)

The Pendleton Center for the Arts presents

**Greg Blake TRIO**

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