

HADDEN: Has gathered a fan club of hunters and hunting companies interested in his exploits

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or lift a spoon to his mouth, but a Walla Walla man named Gary Parson helped him obtain a contraption that mounts a rifle, shotgun or crossbow on his wheelchair and allows him to sight it and pull the trigger using puffs of air from his mouth.

He has been hunting in the years since, and has a few sets of antlers at home to show for it. In the past, he has had to more or less park his wheelchair in one spot and hope the right animal wandered past. Now he'll be able to move through the forest with other hunters in a manner more reminiscent of when he was younger.

"I grew up in Pilot Rock and my family, that's just something that we did," he said. "It's not just about taking an animal, it's about getting together and joking and laughing."

Even when he was stuck sitting in a blind not too far from the wheelchair-accessible van, Hadden has had some adventures. One night he and his nurse Miranda Amwoka were sitting in the blind when a mama bear and her two cubs walked by. The mama bear came up against the side of the blind, stuck her head in and looked right in at the two of them. Since Hadden was strapped to a wheelchair and Amwoka didn't have a weapon, it was a pretty scary experience for both of them.

Nels' wife Betsy said he has more Twitter followers

than anyone in the family after he gathered a fan club of hunters and hunting companies interested in his exploits. A couple of them even sent him free game cameras for him to review. He has more than 40,000 game camera photos saved on his computer.

Betsy was the one who found out about the Independence Fund, a nonprofit that gives all-terrain wheelchairs and other tools to veterans injured in combat so that they can resume more of the outdoor activities they enjoyed before their injuries. Hadden wasn't injured in combat, but he is a veteran who served nine years active duty and he was injured while acting as a Good Samaritan, so Betsy convinced him to take a shot at applying anyway. He received a letter saying that usually he would not be eligible, but there was a veteran in the area who had recently given one back because he only got to use it a couple of times before he fell too ill. The group was willing to give Hadden the used chair for free.

It wasn't a simple matter of moving the chair from one part of Oregon to another. Each chair for a quadriplegic user must fit them "like a glove" in order to avoid pressure sores, and Hadden has even more needs because of the extent of the injuries he suffered during the accident. The chair was sent to a factory where it was customized to Hadden's measurements and needs, but when Pete Hedberg of Pacific

Healthcare Associates delivered it on Tuesday it still took an hour and a half of small adjustments before Hadden was lifted into it using a sling attached to an apparatus on the ceiling. Then it was another hour of adjustments aided by a tape measure to make sure his arms were resting at equal height.

"It takes longer than normal to sit him because he had so many bones broken," Betsy said.

Still, Hadden was excited about the long-awaited chair, which resembles a shiny red miniature ATV on the bottom.

"Wow, she's purdy," he drawled as he laid eyes on the chair. "Pretty fancy."

He commented on the lights and turn signals on the chair, joking, "Wal-Mart, here we come!"

Hadden doesn't know the exact value of his new chair, but he does know that the less-fancy one he has been using cost \$40,000. Buying a new wheelchair would have cost him more than buying a new car, he said. He can't even begin to express how grateful he is to receive one for free.

"You rely on it every day because without it you're in bed," he said. "It's basically like an arm or a leg."

For more information about the Independence Fund, visit independencefund.org.

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FIREWORKS: Must reach goal by Feb. or March

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Imsland said other early contributors include Pioneer Title Co., Arne Swanson of Arne's Sewer & Septic Services and Pendleton resident Rick Rohde.

Imsland said he has already met with the previous years' organizer and is in contact with the fireworks company that supplies the show.

The committee is currently working on a pledge letter

to send to potential donors with the goal of raising the money it needs by February or March, which is near the deadline to order fireworks for next year's show.

The fireworks show was sponsored for many years by the local chapter of the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce, which used to count Imsland as a member. When the Jaycees folded, various nonprofits took over the show.

The Fraternal Order

of Eagles was the latest organization to sponsor the fireworks, but a lack of fundraising nixed the 2016 show.

With the momentum the Rotary Club has generated in a short period of time, Imsland is confident the committee will reach its goal for next year's celebration.

"I have no doubt about it," he said.

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STEELHEAD: Study was launched in 2013

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The five-year average to date is 19,272.

Fisheries managers in Oregon and Washington have approved steelhead restrictions on the Columbia River, closing steelhead retention below The Dalles Dam for the entire month of August. Steelhead retention is closed between The Dalles and John Day dams during the month of September, and from John Day Dam to the Oregon-Washington border during October and November.

Juvenile steelhead already face an arduous journey migrating from the upper Columbia and lower Snake rivers. Once they finally reach the ocean, Kendall said conditions right away play a significant role in determining total marine survival.

The study was launched in 2013 as part of the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project, a collaboration of both U.S. and Canadian scientists. Kendall said the team analyzed 35 coastal steelhead runs dating back to the late 1970s, primarily from Puget Sound and lower Columbia River.

"From our research, it's conditions in the early ocean life of steelhead, shortly after they hit salt-water, that influence their total marine survival,"

Kendall said. "They all go to the same place in the ocean. That doesn't seem to matter."

In particular, Kendall said harbor seals, harbor porpoises and birds seem to be preying more on juvenile steelhead due to a reduction in populations of forage fish, like herring, anchovies and eulachon.

Every year since the project began, Kendall said researchers have released between 100-200 tagged steelhead smolts into the Green and Nisqually rivers — which flow into Washington's Puget Sound — to measure predation by seals. One year, just 6 percent of the tagged fish made it out of the Sound. Another year, the total was 40 percent, which just so happened to coincide with a huge anchovy boom.

"I think this research looking at predation is going to be important," she said. "The same predation is taking place down in the Columbia River on both juveniles and adult (fish)."

Other parts of the study focus on migrating fish that have been infected by nanophyetus, a parasite that burrows into juvenile salmon and steelhead and attacks their muscle tissue.

Kendall said nanophyetus has been documented much more heavily in the southern Puget Sound,

though there is concern that the parasite could spread as waters continue to warm. During the 2015 drought, Kendall said the team documented nearly 100 percent of steelhead with nanophyetus in the Nisqually River.

River contaminants are another concern, with Kendall mentioning polychlorinated biphenyl ethers, or PCBs, a compound found in flame retardants.

"There are certain levels if they get into fish and other animals that can affect their health and vitality," she said.

All of those factors have contributed to a decline in Northwest steelhead survival over the past four decades, Kendall said. Populations that once saw 10 percent returns are now down to 5-6 percent. Columbia River steelhead have fared slightly better than Puget Sound steelhead, she added.

Kendall said they are working with the state of Washington to fund their program for the next two years, which will allow them to continue refining their data.

"Hopefully, we can make better policy and management recommendations," she said.

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RESTAURANT: Hopes to employ 6-7 people

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The idea for the restaurant came earlier this year, when Estle met with the church board to discuss ideas to create jobs in the community.

"With this restaurant, that's exactly what it's doing," he said. "We'll try to employ people on state assistance, people struggling to get jobs because of felonies. Those aren't the only people we'll employ, but the goal is to help people that need work, and need

to be able to do things to fit better into society."

He hopes to employ six or seven people once the restaurant opens, but those working to get it ready for business are all volunteers.

The restaurant will largely be furnished by community donations, including dishes, booths and a salad bar — which Estle attributes to community spirit.

"We opened the restaurant with less than a thousand dollars in the bank account," Estle said.

"People have donated from around the community, not even really knowing what they are donating, if that makes sense," he said. "The lady who gave us booths didn't even know we were opening a restaurant."

Though the restaurant hadn't opened yet, Estle said last week that it was already achieving the goals he'd hoped.

"It's amazing," he said. "People working together — that's what we're hoping we're building here. Community."

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