

Groups ask governor to reopen wolf killing case

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

An alliance of conservation groups is asking Oregon Gov. Kate Brown to reopen the state's investigation into the killing of a female wolf Oct. 27 in Union County.

Brian Scott, a 38-year-old elk hunter from Clackamas, shot the wolf after he claims the animal charged him, though critics argue that photos released by Oregon State Police directly contradict that story.

The groups — 18 in all — sent a letter Thursday to Gov. Brown requesting that OSP reopen the case, with independent oversight from the Office of the Attorney General and full cooperation from the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

"Enforcement of Oregon's wildlife laws is crucial to deter criminals and to protect our state's most vulnerable species," the letter reads. "A failure to hold OSP accountable in this case could set a dangerous precedent and send a message that Oregon will look the other way when it comes to illegally killing wolves and other wildlife."

A spokesman for the governor's office did not return calls by press time.

In a recent interview with the *Capital Press*, an EO Media Group newspaper, Scott said he screamed when he saw the wolf charging him, pulled up his rifle and fired a single shot. The 83-pound female was associated with the OR-30 pair of wolves occupying the Starkey and Ukiah wildlife management units, straddling

Umatilla and Union counties.

Scott said he feared for his life, and felt he would have been mauled had he not shot.

"I take no pride in this at all," Scott said. "The only thing I'm happy about is I made it home to my wife and two children."

The complete account is on Page 10C of today's newspaper.

However, as the groups point out, photos show the bullet passed through the wolf's shoulders, an indication that maybe the animal was standing broadside to Scott rather than running directly at him. The evidence "casts serious doubt on both the hunter's story and OSP's interpretation of the evidence," the letter states.

The Union County District Attorney's Office declined to prosecute Scott, chalking up the

incident to self-defense. It is illegal to kill wolves in Oregon except in defense of human life or to protect livestock under a specific set of circumstances.

"Self-defense claims are difficult to substantiate in cases like this," the letter goes on. "We are not questioning that the hunter may have felt fearful. We are, however, questioning his story that he shot the wolf while it was running toward him. We are questioning OSP's official report of the incident, which corroborated the hunter's story even though the evidence suggested otherwise. And we are questioning the Union County District Attorney's decision not to prosecute."

Scott told the *Capital Press* he cannot explain the bullet's trajectory and does not know if the animal veered sideways as he shot. He

said the moment makes him almost nauseous, and it will be something he has to live with the rest of his life.

Steve Pedery, conservation director for Oregon Wild, said the physical evidence raises a red flag and he does not want to see self-defense become a "get out of jail free card" for potential poachers.

"It's irresponsible of ODFW and OSP to let this stand, if the physical evidence contradicts it," Pedery said.

In addition to Oregon Wild, groups that signed on to the letter include the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife and Endangered Species Coalition, among others.

Contact **George Plagen** at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

PENDLETON

Indian restaurant reopens as Flavors of India

East Oregonian

Indian food is back in Pendleton with the same ownership and location, but under a different name.

Owners Surya and Andrea Das opened Flavors of India at 103 S.E. Court Ave., the same spot where Govinda's Garden opened two years ago.

Surya Das thinks he's zeroed in on what made the family's first foray into Indian dining unsuccessful.

"In this cowboy town, vegetarian (cuisine) isn't the right option," he said.

Govinda's Garden opened in Pendleton in 2015, the restaurant acting not only as the city's only Indian restaurant, but also as its only completely vegetarian eatery. The couple moved Govinda's Garden to College Place at the end of 2016 and an Italian restaurant named Fattonies took its place last summer.

Das said it was difficult to manage businesses in two separate towns at once — the Dases also own The Marigold Hotel connected to the restaurant space — and traveling between Pendleton and College Place was made harder



Photo by Antonio Sierra

The restaurant at 103 S.E. Court Ave. relaunched as Flavors of India Nov. 2.

during a heavy winter.

When Fattonies folded after Round-Up, the family retook the space and converted it back to an Indian restaurant.

When the space reopened Nov. 2 it was rechristened Flavors of India, a move meant to disassociate the restaurant with vegetarian cuisine. The restaurant now has several chicken dishes

including curry, korma and masala.

Flavors of India is a buffet during lunchtime and a traditional restaurant during the evenings.

Flavors of India is one of six business licenses the city of Pendleton issued in October. Below are the rest of the business names, their physical or mailing address and their owner or contact

person.

- Southern Twine, 615 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston, Patrick Hunt

- Moeuth Soeum, 8 S.E. Dorion Ave., Moe Pho

- Eastern Oregon Mechanical, P.O. Box 1377, Hermiston

- Lawn CH, 1901 N.W. 56th Ave., Stephen Lawn

- Alphabet School, 920 S.W. Frazer Ave.

Umatilla County Fire District wins state award

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

They're a freshman organization, but the Umatilla County Fire District received a statewide honor at its board meeting this Wednesday — the Oregon Fire District of the Year award.

"We were nominated this year at the Oregon Fire District Directors Association conference," said Chief

Scott Stanton.

Stanton said he wasn't involved with the process, but the district was nominated for a variety of successful endeavors, including contributions to the community and facilitating internal growth.

"We're a brand-new district, and that went fairly smoothly," he said. He also attributed the award to programs like the community paramedic service, which allows the district to

partner with Good Shepherd Medical Center to provide preventative treatment, as well as the construction of the four-story drill tower and the district's cooperation with local schools teaching home and fire safety.

"This award was made possible by all the members of the district including the board of the directors and the great support of our citizens," Stanton said via email. "It truly is an award

for our district members and the public."

Contact **Jayati Ramakrishnan** at jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534



Photo contributed by Milne McLaughlin

Vogler named Realtor of the year

Pendleton real estate agent **Matt Vogler** receives the Umatilla County Board of Realtors' 2017 Realtor of the Year Award from **Milne McLaughlin**, principal broker with the Pendleton-based **Clark Jennings & Associates**. The local board reported it selected Vogler for his dedication, willingness to work hard with other brokers and community service.

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