

# Oregon's wolf management plan to receive first airing

By STEVE TOOL  
EO Media Group

The subject of wolves is front and center for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The agency released the working draft of its wolf management plan to stakeholders Nov. 17. The draft highlights changed wording from the draft released last April.

ODFW media representative Michelle Dennehy said that the plan will be discussed at a Dec. 8 ODFW's wildlife commission meeting that will include a panel of stakeholders but no public comment. The results of that meeting will be worked into a draft to be presented at the commission's Jan. 19 meeting, which will include public comment.

Dennehy said that the current revised version reflects the concerns of the plan's stakeholders, including the public and commission members. She named a number of the plan's significant changes, including data on the role of wolves in ecosystems and how it might apply in Oregon.

Additional sections include wolves as special status game mammals. The agency is following the lead of the legislature, which changed the status of wolves from protected non-game wildlife to game mammals in 2009.

"It recognizes the wolves' distinct history in extirpation and conflict," she said. "It's based on Oregon's management success with respect to other large carnivores ... but also recognizes the factors that



This 2014 file photo provided by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shows a female wolf from the Minam pack outside La Grande, after it was fitted with a tracking collar.

make the wolf different from other large carnivores."

While some have questioned the final draft being approved before the early 2018 wolf count, Dennehy said it was time for the approval.

"This has been going on for more than a year now," she said. "We're looking to bring this to completion. We have others asking us when the plan is going to be finished. It's a big public process, and we didn't want to rush it."

Arran Robertson, media representative for environmental group Oregon Wild, said the April plan was not to the group's liking and that the latest revisions did little to

change that.

"The previous version that's being edited was not starting from a strong place in terms of wolf conservation," he said. "I would say that although there's a few small changes that improve here and there, there's also some things that take it further back. It doesn't look like a better plan from our perspective."

Robertson was unable to provide further details because the group's wolf expert, Rob Klavins, was on vacation and not available.

Wallowa County rancher Todd Nash, who also serves on the county's board of commissioners as well as the Oregon Cattlemen's

Association wolf task force, saw little in the plan to encourage ranchers.

"There's protection for wolves, but very little for anything else," Nash said. "Things we've been asking for are absent in there — even some of the things that the commission directed."

According to Nash, collaring additional wolves is not on the table in the next phase. He said that both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the management plan call for at least two wolves of each pack to be radio collared so the wolves and their locations can be monitored more closely.

"They never really achieved that, like a lot of other things they don't achieve," Nash said.

The agency says that collaring wolves is expensive because the are hard to find and safely collar. Nash said that collaring helps identify which packs remain within close range of livestock. He said that Michael Findley, the commission chair, assured him money could be found.

"They get a directive from the chair of the commission, then you read what's in the plan, but it's not there," Nash said.

The rancher said recommendations of more local control of suspected depredations was also completely dismissed by the agency. He added that the suggestion that law enforcement, including Oregon State Police, be involved in the process was also discarded, even though local police agencies were willing to

participate.

Nash said that another bone of contention with the plan is a section that calls for mandatory minimum wolf population on hunting units, but did not dictate maximum wolf populations. He also said the plan as it stands probably won't be acceptable to either ranchers, hunters or conservationists.

"It doesn't address the three components that I think are necessary to have wolves in Oregon," Nash said. "Livestock producers need to be assured that their livestock can be protected in an effective manner; hunters need to be assured they'll have viable wildlife populations to hunt; and the environmental community needs to be assured that wolves that are not in conflict with (livestock and viable wildlife populations) will be unharmed. If we have all three of those, we achieve equilibrium and possibly live with each other."

In Nash's opinion, conservation groups called ODFW often enough to wear them down, while livestock producers try to openly air their grievances in public debate.

"It looks like most of the environmental applications are being addressed but very little of what we've asked for," Nash said.

The rancher said that he hopes changes will take place in the plan before the final revision is issued. He said that as it stands, he didn't think stakeholders such as the Oregon Hunters Association, the Farm Bureau and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation would sign on to the document.



Shoppers flow through rows of skis during the West Valley High School Ski Team's annual ski swap in 2013 in the school gymnasium.

## How to survive your first alpine ski swap

By SAM FRIEDMAN  
The Fairbanks (Alaska)  
News Miner

The Fairbanks Ski Patrol and Fairbanks Alpine Ski Club ski swap will open at noon on Saturday, and much of the action will be over in minutes.

The doors open, and people immediately start grabbing things from the rows of used gear. Parents pull multiple sets of skis for each child they're shopping for. People throw off their shoes and start trying on boots. Even decades-old wooden skis get picked up. Few people ski on them, but they're popular cabin decorations.

I like to think the ski and snowboard community is more polite than the retail world in general, but with hundreds of shoppers looking for bargains, a Fairbanks gear swap is a bit like Black Friday.

### Alpine ski tips

I got some tips for alpine ski shopping this week after talking to Tara Bellion. Bellion is an instructor and the vice president of the Fairbanks Alpine Ski Club.

- Come early to get a place in line. The best items are often sold early in the ski swap.

- Shop for boots first because you'll want to try them on to ensure a comfortable fit. The boots that fasten with three or four buckles tend to be more comfortable than the older-style rear-entry boots. It's OK at a ski swap to grab a few pairs to try on, but try to put back the ones you don't want quickly; others are waiting.

- When buying a first pair of alpine skis, consider "all-mountain skis," skis that perform well enough under most snow conditions. All-mountain skis have are narrower at the center and are wider and rounded at the ends. Look for skis that are as tall as your nose and with bindings that fit your boots. Ski Patrol and Alpine Ski Club volunteers will be on

**SKI REPORT**

**Spout Springs**  
Tollgate, Ore.  
**CLOSED FOR SEASON**

**Anthony Lakes**  
North Powder, Ore.  
**No scheduled opening date.**

**Ski Bluewood**  
Dayton, Wash.  
**No scheduled opening date.**  
**New snow: None**  
**Base depth: 15"**

**Ski Fergi**  
Joseph, Ore.  
**Not enough snow to operate.**

**Mt. Hood Meadows**  
Government Camp, Ore.  
**Dec. 2 is first day of operation.**

hand to help with sizing.

- If buying bindings, remember that older bindings may be past their indemnification date. This means that some certified ski technicians will not mount or adjust these bindings. Before using used skis, set the DIN settings to your weight. The DIN is the pressure under which a ski binding will release in a crash.

- To size poles, flip them upside down with the top of the poles on the ground and fists gripping the baskets. The elbows should be at right angles. Pole height can be pretty forgiving, so it's OK to buy growing children longer poles.

- Other ski swap tips
- When selling items at a ski swap, try to price items based on what you'd be willing to pay for the item today, not the higher price you paid for them years ago.

- Ski swaps aren't just about skis, check out other items like ski roof racks and ice skates.

- Swaps are also a good place to shop for classic skis — cross country and skate setups can be steals.

## The Belles: A women-only hunting club

By KATHERYN HOUGHTON  
Bozeman Daily Chronicle

BOZEMAN, Mont. — The second year Judy Cornell's husband and son went hunting without her, she loaded her Subaru with her black lab and her Remington and headed out to hunt alone.

The Chouteau family had gone through hunter safety courses together. But Cornell's husband explained some trips were important father-son time.

"Something he had done with his dad," Cornell, 61, said. "I got it. But staying home, that's not what I was envisioning."

It was 1995. Her basecamp was an inn with a kitchenette so she could avoid restaurants packed with hunting fellas. Soon after arriving, she went knocking on doors to get the OK to hunt on private lands.

"They were amused by the fact that I was out hunting — women didn't really do this, go knocking on doors and go hunting by themselves," Cornell said.

A few years after Cornell discovered those hunting spots alone, they became the first grounds for an all ladies hunt, though the gals were outnumbered by their dogs.

They go by The Belles. And they've been hunting together at least once a year for nearly two decades.

"Belle means a charming, beautiful woman, and we thought, 'Well, that's us,'" said Kathy Hansen Crawford of Bozeman.

Aside from its summarization of the ladies, the name came from the Bella Vista Motel, the spot Cornell found that acted as the first Belle Hunt home base in 1998.

Hansen Crawford, now 66, said most of the gals learned hunting through men, "but it's not rocket science."

She said the Belles found each other at a time when they were used to being "the woman or one of the women" in a group of hunters.

They didn't mind being the anomaly. "But the conversations, everything, it's just different when a bunch of women are lying on the ground, talking, tired and with their dogs," she said.

Women filter in and out of the group each season. But there are three regulars: Cornell, Hansen Crawford and Stacy Upton of Whitefish.

The trio rotates turns picking hunting



Deer hunting in Roundup, Montana, in 2004. Left to right: Judy Cornell, Kathy Hansen Crawford and Stacy Upton.

spots across Montana and going through the hoops to access the land. Depending on the location, they've slept in cabins, tents, truck beds and campers.

"In 19 years of doing this, we've had horrible blowing snow storms, muddy muddy roads, lovely sunshiney days," Hansen Crawford said. "We've had rattlesnakes, dogs in porcupines, eclipses and a baby shower."

Upton said there are a few exceptions when men can enter a Belle campsite, like when she was nursing and her husband tagged along with the baby.

If they're hunting near one of the Belles' homes, a gent is allowed to come into camp if he bears refreshments — like the year Hansen Crawford's husband had wine and hor d'oeuvres set up on the open door of a truck bed after a day's hunt.

Cornell said it's hard to describe what feels different when they go into the woods as a group of women.

"In most ways it's not different. The men in my life have been 100 percent encouraging of my interest in hunting. That is true for all of the Belles," she said. "But you're spending time with gals. We don't have to turn on the radio to catch the World Series playoff. You're talking about things that women talk about."

Hansen Crawford said it's also not all about hunting, "though we're good at that part."

"We once left our hunting site near the Canadian border to drive an hour

to the closest town with a bar to watch (Barack) Obama's first presidential debate," she said. "We weren't all in the same political camp, but we had to see it."

For another thing, Upton added, the dinners are luxurious.

Each Belle likes to cook. They plan their meals around the game they intend to catch. If it's deer season, they may plan white-tailed deer medallion glazed in a huckleberry sauce.

"We make the table look nice with candles, wine glasses of course, a full set of silver," Upton said.

Breakfast is the same setup while lunch is a picnic in a field.

Upton said they only have a few days out of each year together. But those are rare days outdoors and away from the routines around work and family. All that matters is the hunt and each other.

She said while sharing a meal they shot and prepared, they've counseled each other through career changes, newborns, retirements and a cancer diagnosis.

"We went even the year I was pregnant," Upton said, who joined the crew at 34. "We don't stop for anything."

When people talk about the Belles as an anomaly, Upton said her 15-year-old son gets confused.

"He's like, 'but you guys only hunt once a year together,'" Upton said with a laugh. "Isn't it nice that in his world, it's not unusual for us to hunt? His view of the world is, that's just what we do."

## Caregivers name rescued sea turtle 'Turkey'



In this Nov. 23 photo provided by the Oregon Coast Aquarium, a rescued olive ridley sea turtle rests at the aquarium in Newport, An Oregon couple rescued the endangered turtle from a Washington state beach over the Thanksgiving weekend.

## Endangered animal found on beach on Thanksgiving

NEWPORT (AP) — The Oregon Coast Aquarium has named an endangered sea turtle rescued on a Washington state beach "Turkey" because it was found around Thanksgiving.

The female olive ridley sea turtle was critically ill when she was discovered by an Oregon couple walking on the beach at Cape Disappointment State Park.

Staff at the aquarium in Newport said Thursday that Turkey isn't out of the woods yet but does not have any internal injuries and has warmed up some.

Turkey's body temperature was just 59 degrees and veterinarians estimate she had not eaten for a month.

Sea turtles belong in warmer waters to the south, but sometimes winter storms and strong currents bring them to the Pacific Northwest.

In cold water, they became lethargic and have trouble eating and swimming.