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Bird rehab center faces dilemma



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Lynn Tompkins looks in on an enclosure at Blue Mountain Wildlife on Tuesday morning near Pendleton.

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The latest edition of the Blue Mountain Wildlife newsletter included a section called “Now the Unsettling News.”

Blue Mountain Wildlife Director Lynn Tompkins gave a brief history of how the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Agriculture have regulated the wildlife rehabilitation center’s ability to import birds from out of state before cutting to the chase.

“Recently, the ODFW State Veterinarian has determined that the risk of importing diseased birds into Oregon is too great to allow rehabilitators to import migratory birds,” she wrote. “Initially, I was hopeful that we could address ODFW’s concerns of disease transmission across state lines, and maintain the integrity of BMW’s wildlife rehab program. I am not sure that is going to be the case.”

In an interview, Tompkins said the state preventing Blue Mountain Wildlife from rehabilitating birds that were found in Washington could be an existential threat to the nonprofit, but state officials maintain that nothing has changed from the previous way they did business.

Founded by Tompkins and her husband in 1990, Blue Mountain Wildlife specializes in rehabbing birds of prey like eagles, hawks, and owls.

When raptors get sick, injured or hurt, often from direct or indirect contact with humans and manmade objects,



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

A great gray owl with only one eye swoops across an enclosure at Blue Mountain Wildlife on Tuesday morning.

Blue Mountain Wildlife usually gets the call.

The organization received its first migratory bird from Washington in 2001, and Tompkins now estimates more than half the birds Blue Mountain Wildlife receives are from the Evergreen State as rehab centers in Walla Walla, Tri-Cities and Yakima have closed.

With Blue Mountain Wildlife the only rehabilitation facility in Oregon east of The Dalles and the closest Washington facility at Washington State University in Pullman, Blue Mountain Wild-

life’s coverage is now nearly the size of New York state, stretching from Burns to the south to Wenatchee, Washington, to the north.

Washington not only provides Blue Mountain Wildlife with a steady stream of birds, but also brings in an important source of revenue.

Tompkins said the nonprofit gets much of its funding through memberships, a source of revenue that’s often cultivated when Blue Mountain Wild-

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PENDLETON

Getting a bird’s-eye view

Binoculars on Main Street Bridge provide opportunities to view river wildlife

By BEN LONERGAN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Center for the Arts recently arranged for the installation of two sets of binoculars on the Main Street Bridge. The binoculars, funded by a grant from Umatilla County and several private donors, are free for the public to use and provide opportunities for viewing wildlife along a section of the Umatilla River.

Roberta Lavadour, the executive director of the Pendleton Center for the Arts, says that the project has been in the works for several years now, however, it was not until more recently that things took off.

“We’ve been looking for ways to get people to come downtown and across the bridge and this fit the bill,” said Lavadour. “The river through town is one of the most overlooked, beautiful resources we have and we wanted to encourage the engage-

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IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

Most of Oregon’s delegation behind inquiry

By REBECCA ELLIS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

WASHINGTON — Most of Oregon’s delegation stood behind House Speaker Nancy Pelosi Tuesday as she launched a formal impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump. Pelosi’s announcement followed new allegations that the president had tried to coerce a foreign power to aid his political campaign.

Three of the state’s congressional representatives had spoken out in favor of an inquiry prior to last week’s reports that Trump had pressured the president of Ukraine to launch a corruption investigation into former Vice President Joe Biden, a leading Democratic presidential contender, and his son, Hunter.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon, was the first in Congress to call for an impeachment inquiry in early May, a few weeks after Special Counsel Robert Mueller released his report. At the time, Blumenauer called the investigation “a treasure trove of information that deserves further investigation,”

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Anti-immigration group sends Oregon sheriffs to D.C.

Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack to visit nation’s capital

By EMILY CURETON
Oregon Public Broadcasting

PORTLAND — An anti-immigration group is paying for two Eastern Oregon sheriffs to attend political events in Washington, D.C., this week.

Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer said that he and Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack were the only Oregon sheriffs going to the capital for a “training in regards to some of the immigration policies.”

The Federation for American Immigration Reform, or FAIR,

confirmed covering travel expenses for 191 sheriffs to convene on Capitol Hill on Wednesday for “Badges and Angels,” a press conference with the relatives of people killed by undocumented immigrants, or “angel families.”

FAIR lobbies to curtail immigration. Its leaders have been accused of making racist statements and spreading anti-immigrant propaganda, such as connecting increases in local crime to undocumented people. Non-partisan researchers analyzing FBI data



Matlack



Palmer

recently found no such link.

FAIR spokesman David Ray said in an email: “America’s sheriffs are the frontline of public safety and are often the first to encounter criminal aliens and the carnage that some of them leave behind.”

Ray added: “Sheriffs who have shown the most interest in immigration are among those who were invited.”

Palmer said while in D.C. he plans to meet with senators, congressional representatives, “and we’ve actually got a White House briefing.”

Angel families have appeared at dozens of family events over the last few years, as the president justified his administration’s punitive immigration policies, such as family separation.

When asked if undocumented immigrants are a problem for law

enforcement in remote Grant County, Palmer said no. He estimated that in the two decades he’s been sheriff, there’s never been a non-citizen booked in the local jail.

Matlack did not return requests for comment.

FAIR has been labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit best known for legal cases against extremist and white supremacist organizations.

When FAIR founder John Tanton died over the summer, SPLC’s responded with a lengthy piece exploring his influence, saying Tanton’s “legacy is difficult to overstate.”

Tanton was also a co-founder of the Center for Immigration Studies, which in 2010 published a paper calling SPLC’s hate group designation a “smear.”

