

OSP staff remembers McDowell as an ‘upstanding individual’

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

LA GRANDE — Members of the Oregon State Police are reeling after the sudden loss of one of their own last week.

“It’s devastated our region,” retired OSP patrol Sgt. Kyle Hove said of the death of Sgt. Marcus McDowell. “He has friends all over, not just Union County (and) Wallowa County. He has friends in Baker, Umatilla (counties) — he has worked the whole state.”

McDowell, 48, was found dead in his patrol vehicle in front of his Joseph home the afternoon of March 29 of a single gunshot wound to the head.

An investigation determined the gunshot wound to be self-inflicted. OSP stated McDowell was on duty at the time of his death.

“Our hearts go out to his family, friends, and co-workers as they cope with this tragic incident,” OSP said in a statement March 31.

Those who worked with McDowell remembered him for his strong work ethic, for his smiling personality, for being a friend, and for caring for those around him during an OSP career that spanned 17½ years.

“He was a wonderful human being,” said La Grande-based East Region Capt. Daniel Conner. “He is going to be sorely missed by everybody for a long time.”

McDowell spent the majority of his career in Union and Wallowa counties, but got his start with OSP Sept. 1, 2004, being initially assigned to the John Day outpost, Conner said. He was later trans-



Members of Oregon State Police carry the flag-draped casket of Sgt. Marcus McDowell out of Loveland Funeral Chapel, La Grande, on Monday, April 4, 2022.

Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

ferred to La Grande and worked out of Northeastern Oregon for the rest of his career.

“Marcus has always been a very motivated and driven state trooper,” Conner, who has been with OSP since 2005 and said he knew McDowell most of his career, said. “He’s got a very good work ethic. He comes to work ready to go, always gives 110%.”

McDowell spent five years as a K-9 handler based in La Grande, and followed that with five years in the Fish and Wildlife division. He

also spent time in drug interdiction, where on patrol he would search for vehicles suspected of transporting illegal substances, seeking to disrupt drug trafficking through patrol interdiction.

“Marcus, he loved his job,” said Hove, who McDowell replaced as patrol sergeant for the La Grande-area in March 2020. “He was a hard worker. He was very productive. He was active in the community. Back when we were doing interdiction and stuff on the freeway, he was so good at his job. He has some incred-

ible seizures of all kinds of different things.”

Patrol Trooper Kainoa Delatori, who worked with McDowell the entirety of his six-year OSP career, and even prior during a stint with La Grande Police, said McDowell was the “resident expert” when it came to drug interdiction work, and someone he would consult often.

“We talk on a daily basis,” Delatori said. “I would pick his brain when it came to work on (interdiction) stuff. We got pretty close the last couple years.”

Delatori also commented on McDowell’s impeccable work ethic, and called him a man with whom you knew where you stood.

“That’s one of the things I respect most out of Marcus,” Delatori said of McDowell’s work. “After that long, a lot of people get burned out or they fade off. (But) he had the most stops in the office month in and month out. One thing I really looked up to him (for) is his work ethic. He would actually put in the work.”

Hove described McDowell as the person called on when an extra hand was needed on a scene. He said he was always available, whether early in the morning or late in the evening.

“He’s the guy who would always be at work, always be there,” he said. “He was the guy you called. . . . Say you’re working a case, whatever the case may be, Marcus would always stop by and see if you needed any help.”

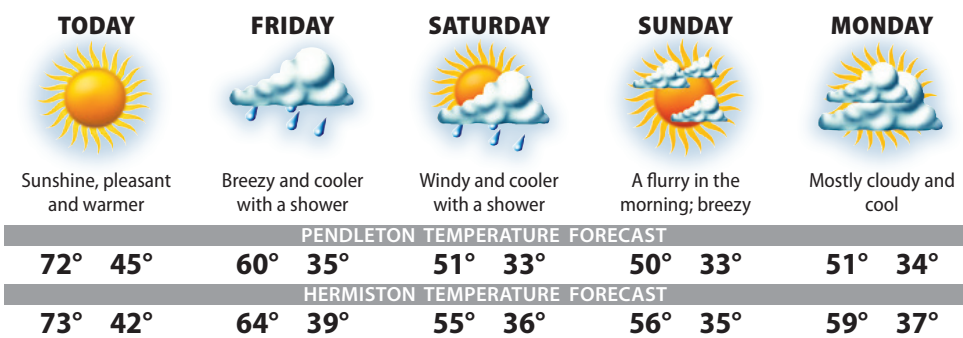
Delatori, who was one of the OSP troopers to respond to the scene in Joseph, called the loss of his friend a shock.

“It’s something that I pray in the next 20 years of my career I never have to deal with again,” he said.

Conner said in losing McDowell, the OSP is losing an “upstanding individual.”

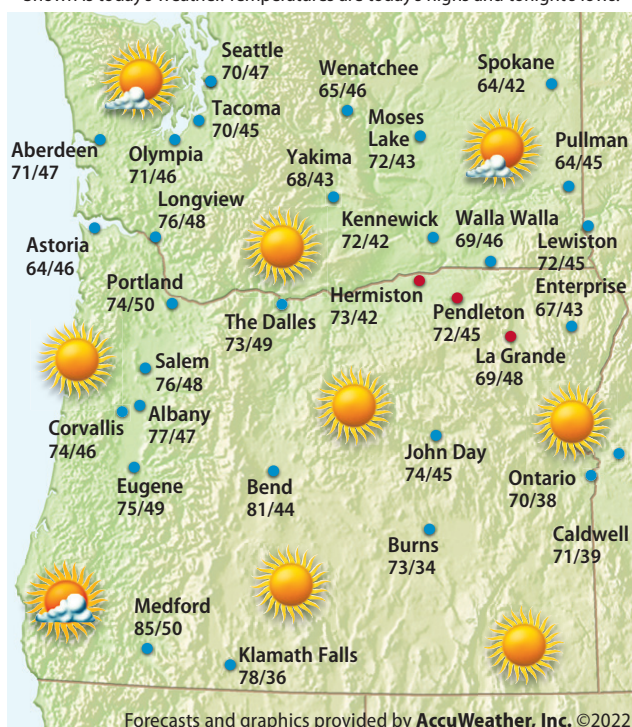
“We’re losing a great friend, employee, a supervisor, just a mentor in general to others, a leader — Marcus is all of those things,” he said. “More importantly, he’s just a friend. It’s taking a devastating toll on all of us that have worked with him over the years. It’s hard to deal with. It’s very difficult to deal with a loss.”

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	59°	27°
Normals	60°	38°
Records	81° (1934)	25° (1911)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.07"
Normal month to date	0.29"
Year to date	3.67"
Last year to date	3.34"
Normal year to date	4.36"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	59°	24°
Normals	64°	38°
Records	83° (1952)	22° (1939)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"
Month to date	0.14"
Normal month to date	0.16"
Year to date	2.09"
Last year to date	1.73"
Normal year to date	2.93"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Fri.
Boardman	NE 4-8	WSW 12-25
Pendleton	NNE 4-8	W 10-20

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	6:24 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:31 p.m.
Moonrise today	9:52 a.m.
Moonsset today	1:39 a.m.

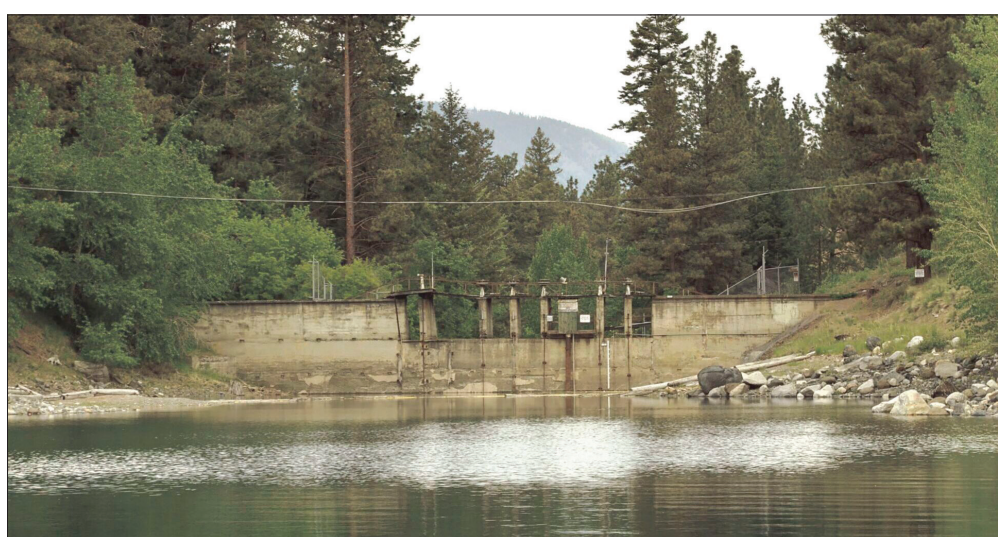
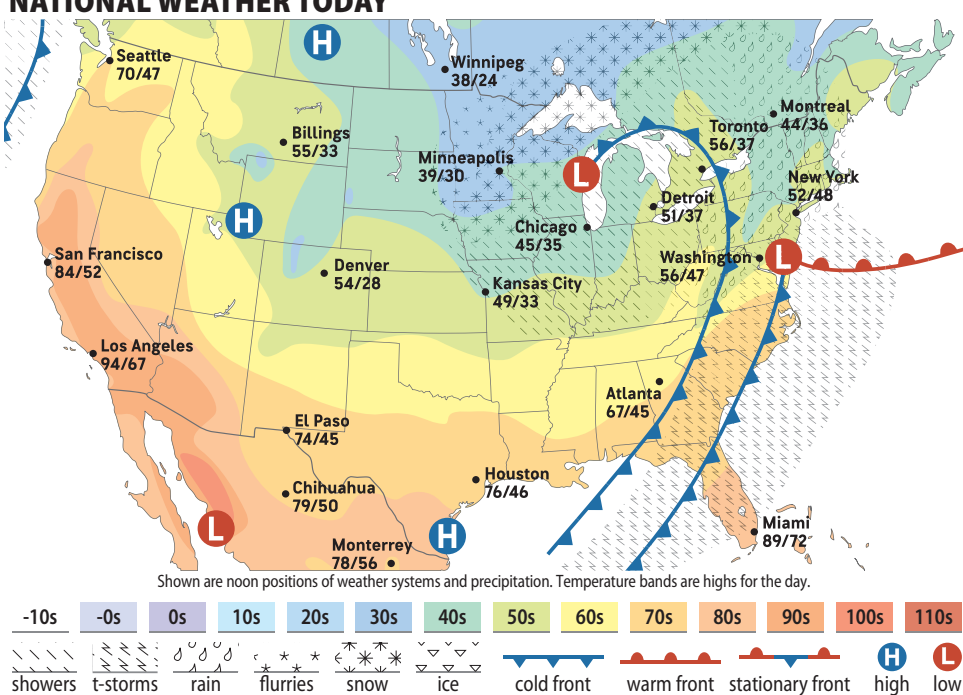
First Full Last New
Apr 8 Apr 16 Apr 23 Apr 30

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 108° in McAllen, Texas Low -1° in Climax, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

The price tag to refurbish the Wallowa Lake Dam has soared from the originally estimated \$16 million to a new figure of about \$21 million, according to the Wallowa Lake Irrigation District, which owns the dam.

Price tag on Wallowa Lake Dam soars

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The price tag on the proposed refurbishing of the Wallowa Lake Dam has jumped to about \$21 million, said Dan Butterfield, president of the Wallowa Lake Irrigation District, leaving the stakeholders wondering where the extra money will come from.

The district, which owns the dam, hopes to break ground on the project in the fall of 2023, after the irrigation season ends that September. The Legislature added \$14 million in state lottery funds to its budget last year for the project that was originally estimated to cost about \$16 million.

Now the district and the other stakeholders have to figure where to find the additional money.

“We’re going to want to make sure we have the funding lined up before we start. We’re not spending any money until we get the \$14 (million),” Butterfield said. “We’re going to wait and make sure we have our money before we get started.”

He said the district board has agreed to hold off spending until it actually receives the lottery money and determines how to make

up the difference.

Seeking extra funding

The major stakeholders of the dam include the irrigation district, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Nez Perce Tribe’s Department of Fisheries Resources Management and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Minor stakeholders also are involved, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has jurisdiction over bull trout; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

A spokesperson for Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, shed a little light on the funding issue.

“First, we brought the larger stakeholder group together to talk about progress on all projects within the Wallowa Basin that relate to fish passage or irrigation efficiency,” said Ann Rava, Hansell’s legislative assistant. “The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife announced that they will be able to contribute \$1.25 million toward design and engineering work for both the Wallowa Lake Dam fish passage and the fish passage for the Consolidated Ditch. The Wallowa County Soil

and Water Conservation District shared that they will be going after some federal funds related to a downstream project.

Fish passage

One of the major issues in designing the dam is what kind of fish passage there will be.

Butterfield said no agreement on that issue has been arrived at by the stakeholders yet.

Wallowa County native Mort McMillen, the engineer on the project, said a fish passage to allow both upstream and downstream migration of fish is being worked into the project. It will be determined by the stakeholders based on the plans his firm comes up with.

The fish passage is a crucial element of the dam’s new design. In fact, state law requires the inclusion of a satisfactory fish passage in the dam, according to Jim Harbeck, field office supervisor of the Nez Perce Tribes Department of Fisheries Resources Management.

Jeff Yanke, a watershed manager with the ODFW, said in August it’s up to the engineer to select a type of passage.

“We’ve been talking concepts and it’s up to them to pick one,” he said.

EAST OREGONIAN

— Founded Oct. 16, 1875 —

211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton 541-276-2211
333 E. Main St., Hermiston 541-567-6211
Office hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Closed major holidays

EastOregonian.com

In the App Store:



East Oregonian (USPS 164-980) is published Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, by the EO Media Group, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, OR. Postmaster: send address changes to East Oregonian, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.

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For mail delivery, online access, vacation stops or delivery concerns call 800-781-3214

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	Local home delivery	Savings (cover price)
EZPay	\$10.75/month	50 percent
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