

# ESA created an industry

When it comes to environmental groups, extremism pays. A review of the tax forms filed by many of the most active — and radical — groups operating in the Western U.S. shows that the top 10 groups received nearly \$1 billion in contributions and legal fees.

That's billion, with a "B."

If they wanted to, those groups could fully fund the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species programs — for five years.

Instead, they go for the money. They snipe at the federal government and, as importantly, at farmers and ranchers. Many prefer to drag their targets into court instead of seeking compromises that would help species and allow farmers, ranchers and others to stay in business.

In fact, the litigation precludes such compromises.

"When you're litigating something, you almost can't really talk to anyone," said Don Stuart, former American Farmland Trust Pacific Northwest director. He wrote a book about the clashes over the ESA.

The reasons for suing the government and ranchers are clear. Many environmental groups don't like animal agriculture. They want a vegetarian lifestyle. And they don't like large-scale farming. Anything they can do to get rid of ranching and large farms would be a feather in their cap.

But there's more to it. Environmental organizations cannot raise money if they solve problems. They must make sure the problem remains, or they can't produce the glossy ads and pamphlets and hold fund-raisers.

You'll never hear an environmental group announce to its donors, "Well, we've solved that problem. Thanks for your help, and we're now going to dissolve the group."

Environmental groups need a perceived problem — preferably one that's "getting worse and that, through your donations, we can make a difference."

Here's the format they use:

"The (insert an animal, fish or insect) needs your help. We will fight to save the (insert an animal, fish or insect). With your donation, we can save the (insert an animal, fish or insect) for our children and generations to come."

The environmental groups came up with this formula decades ago, when Congress wrote the Endangered Species Act and President Richard Nixon signed it into law.

With its deadlines and protection not of species but of specific populations, the ESA was a gift to the environmental movement.

Suddenly, these groups had an open playing field to petition the government to protect local populations of salmon, smelt, wolves, owls, grouse and other critters as though they were the last of the species.

Take, for example, the gray wolf, which is protected as "endangered" in parts of the Lower 48 despite the fact that just over the border in Canada there are more than 50,000 — and about 10,000 in British Columbia alone. Yet under the ESA, American wildlife managers must protect wolves as though they are the last of a breed.

The ESA is the blunt instrument that turned environmentalism into big business. If the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or any other federal agency does not follow the letter of this poorly written law environmental groups drag them into court.

The result is a payday for the environmental group, if they can convince a judge that the agency missed a deadline or failed to meet some other requirement.

For environmental groups, it's a great deal. Groups spend all of their time suing the government and other bystanders. Instead of solving problems, they make sure the problems continue.

It's like shooting fish in a barrel that the ESA provided.

**EDITORIAL**  
*The voice of the Chieftain*



## Getaway pays off minimally

Well it's February in Wallowa County. Even though it has been a mild winter so far I have noticed that people are getting a little edgy. This is not that uncommon this time of year. Domestic disputes start to erupt and general crankiness is widespread.

Several of the locals have escaped to Cowboy Disneyland and are basking in Arizona roping arenas. I refuse to answer their calls when they phone to brag about the great weather they enjoy. I think that for every week they spend in Arizona during the winter they should have to spend two weeks there in the summer. That would soon curb their wanderlust.

Funny they only call when they have won or placed deep in a roping. A couple of weeks ago I got a call from some friends in Reno wanting me to come down and accompany them to a big Ranch Sorting in Laughlin, Nevada. They offered free transportation and would supply a good horse for me to compete on. They went on to mention all the money we would win and the 70-degree weather. I thought about this for a day or two and after an unprovoked verbal attack by the Missus I decided it might be good for the two of us to head south and thaw out for a few days.



**OPEN RANGE**

Barrie Qualle

After the trauma of packing we loaded up and headed out on the sagebrush tour for Reno. The good moods lasted till just past Winnemucca and we both agreed that it was good she was flying out of Reno in the morning to visit one of the kids in San Diego. Being trapped in a car for hours can wear on a person. To break the monotony of Interstate 80 she picked a fight about how we would spend the millions if we won the lottery. That got us past Lovelock and we both felt better.

Laughlin did have 70-degree weather but also had Santa Ana conditions and was every bit as windy as the Grande Ronde Valley. The horse Conrad had supplied me took a little getting used to and my chances of winning anything were falling faster than feeder prices in 1996, but after a few failed attempts things finally got better. After three days of competing I finally scratched them for one hundred and twenty-eight dollars while Conrad won twenty-eight hundred and

Sandy and Jake both placed deep.

I think my friends in Reno consider me a good luck charm since they always win big and care little about my misfortunes. If you don't do something all the time you are not as sharp as you should be and you should have your own horse. After paying for four nights in a hotel, stall fees for the horse, fuel, meals, drinks and entry fees there was a net loss I would like to forget. All things considered it was worth it. The wife realized how annoying grown children can be and was glad to be headed home.

Picked her up at the airport the day we got back to Reno and left for home the next day and made it in ten-and-a-half hours. When you get lonesome for home you always make it faster on the return trip.

I did notice fuel prices on the trip and could not find prices higher than Wallowa County. Went through a lot of remote towns a long way from civilization and even places like Tonopah and Shurz, Nevada were cheaper. It is hard to believe it costs 40 to 60 cents a gallon to haul fuel from Elgin to Enterprise. We may have the highest prices in the lower 48 states.

*Open Range columnist Barrie Qualle is a working cowboy in Wallowa County.*

## Coach stands tall after bum call

By Rocky Wilson

I have to admit that following the shocking ending of Super Bowl No. 49 I bellied up front-and-center to listen when Seahawks coach Pete Carroll explained his reasoning for the surprise call for a pass that traded victory for defeat.

Carroll stood with head high and told reporters he'd already told his players that he was responsible for the loss. What else could he say? No other words out of his mouth would have been acceptable.

With 20 seconds left in regulation on the Patriots' one-yard line and New England leading 28-24, QB Russell Wilson and troops had up to three plays and one timeout to negotiate that one final yard. Marshawn, nicknamed "The Beast" because he's so tough to tackle, was lined up in the backfield and obviously Marshawn Lynch, a man who knows end zones, was everyone's choice to carry the football.

But Marshawn did not happen, Russell threw a short bullet pass into a crowd that was intercepted, and Tom Brady and company earned gold.

It was a strange game in many ways. For instance, at the end of the first half Carroll defied logic and made another call

### JABBERWOCK II

that, in contrast to the finale, drew unbridled accolades from near and far.

With the Patriots leading 14-7, a mere six seconds remaining in the first half, and Seattle on the New England six-yard line, Carroll refused to take the safe route by kicking a cinch field goal. Even my 93-year-old father, glued close to the screen because his eyesight is less than keen, was demanding that Pete do the smart thing and kick that field goal. Instead, with the clock having ticked down to only two, Wilson lofted one to an undrafted rookie who'd made his first-ever professional catch that game and the game was tied.

Another odd play, nearly miraculous from Seattle's standpoint, came seconds before the bizarre game-ending interception when Seahawk receiver Jermaine Kearse made a look-what-I-found catch flat on his back following a highly contested pass from Wilson. Kearse, battling clear to the ground with Malcolm Butler, the same Patriot defensive back who made the

game-saving (game-losing?) interception seconds later, not only surprised the world after a juggling act to catch the pass, but had the wherewithal to hop up and get out of bounds to stop the clock.

Marshawn next ran four of the five yards to the goal line and Coach Pete Carroll undoubtedly wishes the following play never would have happened.

Another oddity about the game was the play of Patriot QB Tom Brady, the hands-on choice for Most Valuable Player honors. Like a surgeon, Brady repeatedly completed short pass after short pass, ending the game with 37 completions from among 50 attempts for 328 yards.

All four New England touchdowns came on pass plays by Brady.

And yet, barring that bizarre ending, Brady's team would have lost the game. Had that been the case, would Brady have been the MVP? In the 49-year history of the Super Bowl only once has a player on a losing team been tabbed MVP for the game. And that was 44 years ago when Cowboy linebacker Chuck Howley was gifted the prestigious award in a game his team lost 16-13 to the Colts.

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## Coverage of forest, deer issues fell short

To the Editor:

The January 7, 2015 issue of the Chieftain reported that opponents of the Blue Mountain Management plan were going to "get tough" and "abandon political correctness" to redress their concerns. But as pointed out by a subsequent letter to the editor (January 21), there was little detail provided to inform the reader of exactly what was so bothersome to the opponents, the qualifications of the opponents to assess the plan, and the thinking of those who drafted the plan versus those opposed. An opportunity for the Chieftain to educate the reader about these issues was lost.

In a similar vein, we read in the January 28 issue of the Chieftain that the Joseph City Council and Mayor Sands "blasted" ODFW for not doing more to reduce the deer population in Joseph. However, much like the report of the Blue Mountain Management Plan, there was a lost opportunity to inform the reader of the issues regarding deer in Joseph. For example, the implication of Mayor Sands' comments is that ODFW is "responsible" for the deer population; we are then informed that ODFW has "disclaimed responsibility." Surely this is something that can be further investigated and ODFW responsi-

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bility, if any, can be identified. The mayor has the opinion that wolves residing "just outside" of Joseph are contributing to the problem. Is there evidence that this is the case, or are there alternative explanations?

For example, anecdotes that homeowners are feeding deer can be followed up with evidence that this is, or is not, contributing to the problem.

There are other relevant articles that could have been linked for additional information. For example, a May 18, 2014 report is readily available on the Internet, "Southern Oregon Towns Torn On Urban Deer Management" (at opb.org). We were informed that (1) communities have formed "ad-hoc Wildlife Committees" to bring in local experts that provide advice and workable approaches, (2) excess deer populations may result in diseases that will "naturally" reduce deer numbers, (3) culling excessive populations may be a palatable alternative to these "natural" deaths and may enlist support of otherwise reluctant homeowners, (4) quantifying the extent of the deer population using more sci-

entific methods than an individual making observations "during a walk last summer" can help define the extent and locations of the problem, (5) implementation of a city-wide feeding ban may be a helpful deterrent, and (6) ODFW may have little authority to act in the manner implied by the Mayor of Joseph. The authors concluded, "When it comes to driving numbers down, or mitigating the damage deer cause, there are only a handful of strategies available. ... Cities can apply for kill permits ... but they're beholden to citizens. Some communities have made it clear they will not tolerate killing, or only allow it as a last resort if an animal is a persistent threat. That leaves non-lethal strategies: fencing and deterrents, hazing, trapping and relocating, and birth control."

Local observation of perceived problems in our community are an important start to enlist community involvement that will hopefully lead to solutions; the Chieftain has an opportunity and (I think) an obligation to provide more information than "Mr. X is upset about issue Y and he wants something to be done!"

Ron Polk  
Lostine

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