

‘Wolf-friendly beef’ idea patronizing to area ranchers

There isn't anyone who hasn't said something that sounded better in their head than it did when they said it out loud.

That's what we thought when we heard that conservation groups in Washington participating on the state's wolf advisory panel suggested helping ranchers by creating a premium label for "wolf-friendly beef" for producers who employ Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife wolf protection measures.

EDITORIAL

The voice of the Chieftain

Dan Paul, state director of The Humane Society of the United States, said as with cage-free eggs, some consumers would be willing to pay more for beef raised with wolf protection measures.

Really?

First, we'd point out that all beef raised on grazing land in wolf country is "wolf-friendly." It all can fall prey. Ranchers in Washington and Oregon can't legally shoot a wolf, as they are protected either by state or federal law. In fact, we would argue beef protected by extensive measures championed by the panel is less friendly to wolves. If the measures work — and producers say the results are mixed at best — wolves have to work harder for their meal.

Second, we think the number of people who would pay more for beef in order to somehow help wolves would be small.

Though we don't necessarily think it's true, people who buy cage-free eggs believe they're getting a better quality product because of the way hens are treated. The reasoning goes that cage-free hens are exposed to less disease and stress, therefore their eggs are better.

But there is no corresponding perceived quality enhancement for "wolf-friendly" beef. The benefits from such measures go exclusively to the wolves and their champions.

Ranchers are quick to point out that to recoup the cost of the suggested counter-measures, "wolf-friendly" products would have to be priced 50 percent more than comparable conventional (wolf hostile?) products.

We'll give the wolf advocates the benefit of the doubt that they are sincere in their desire to help ranchers cope with wolves on the range. But a new marketing ploy is not a substitute for a viable management plan that includes a full range of control options, including lethal measures for problem wolves.

And this is why ranchers are frustrated with efforts they find, at best, patronizing.

The Cattle Producers of Washington has withdrawn from the Wolf Advisory Group, calling it "inept and pointless" and saying it has prevented any action by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife in dealing with wolves that kill livestock.

Though there are some with more strident views, most ranchers at least grudgingly accept that the reintroduction of wolves into the West is a *fait accompli*. They know they'll have to find a way to survive in a new paradigm that includes another predator.

Conversely, wolf advocates and government wildlife agencies must also accept that ranchers can't be expected to provide wolves an unlimited buffet. The tab must be paid, or the losses be stopped.

State-sponsored elimination of ranchers is no more palatable than the wholesale extermination of wolves.



Rik Dalvit/For the Capital Press

Crossing paths with okies

I went to school with a lot of Dust Bowl Okie kids in California. One of my good friends, Steve Harp, fell in this category. Steve, John and their sister Jodie were all red headed and not bad looking. Steve and I were in the same class and the other two kids were older. The Harp family had graduated from peach picking and working in other ag related jobs to Mr. Harp working a full time job and owning a small farm of his own. This was due in a large part to the entire family's hard work in the fields.

One day at noon I saw Steve and John talking to a guy that looked to be in his twenties. Later that day during a school break I saw them talking to the same guy. He was hanging around in the park next to the school tennis courts smoking cigarettes and playing a guitar. I wandered over and they introduced me to their cousin Merle from Bakersfield. Merle was going to be playing



OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle

at the Riverbank Clubhouse Saturday night and was staying with Harps for the week. The clubhouse was a roller-skating rink during the week and a dance hall on the weekends. I later learned Merle was fresh out of San Quentin where his cell mate was a well-known country western singer by the name of Spade Coulee. Spade had a number of hit songs in the forties and also doubled for Roy Rogers in the movies. Spade, like Roy, had a lot of Indian genetics. In fact Spade may have been a purebred. Spade's career came to an end when he justifiably killed his wife who had been having an affair with Roy. Not very Code of the West Roy! I am sure Roy's wife Dale made sure he didn't have

happy trails for a while after she found out. Trigger, Bullet and all the little matinee Buckeroos would have been horrified if this had come out. Roy didn't look good in a black hat.

As my Dad always said "It's a bad wind that doesn't blow somebody some good". Spade and Merle spent a lot of cell time playing guitar and Merle learned how to write some pretty good songs. I had assumed Merle's last name would be Harp also but later learned it was Haggard. He was the son of Steve's Aunt Flossie and his Dad had died when he was young.

Years later after Okie from Muscogee and many other hits Steve told me Merle had been real spoiled by Aunt Flossie and was pretty lazy. He said Merle would get mad when the family was picking peaches and run away. He said no one ever went to look for him and in a few days he would show up

and sulk for a day or two.

One day when I was working for the Ag department I saw Steve at a window applying for a permit to spray his hay. I went over and visited with him for a while. One of the girls in the office was a huge Merle Haggard fan. Carol came walking by and I called her over, introduced her to Steve and told her he was Merle's cousin. She was tickled to death to meet him. Steve and I talked about Merle and Carol hung on every word. Steve mentioned Merle was going to be in Modesto at the State Theatre in a couple of weeks. I said I had seen that in the newspaper. Steve went on to say "you know, we are going to have a barbecue out at the ranch when Merle is here, would you like to come?". Heck yeah I replied. Steve laughed and said "too bad" as he headed for the exit.

Columnist Barrie Qualle is a working cowboy in Wallowa County.

Walden possible Speaker candidate?

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

With the sudden resignation of U.S. Rep. John Boehner as house speaker and the equally sudden withdrawal of Rep. Kevin McCarthy of his candidacy for the role, the House of Representatives finds itself with an immense vacuum to fill with seeming no one willing to take on the challenge. The Republican majority is currently awash with in-fighting between its establishment and vocal elements of the party.

The preferred candidate, Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, says he has no interest in the position. Ryan was probably the only representative who could garner the 218 House votes needed to take on the role.

One of the names being bandied about as an interim House Speaker is Oregon's 4th Dist. Rep. Greg Walden. Former Michigan U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers touted Walden

House Speaker's role

The House Speaker role is defined in Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. Surprisingly, it is not a requirement to be an elected representative to fulfill the role, although all Speakers thus far have been.

The Speaker is arguably the most important and visible role in the House. Besides acting as the intermediary between the House and the president, the Speaker does a large portion of fundraising for their party. The Speaker is also second in line for the presidency behind the vice-president.

Unlike the Senate Majority Leader, who needs only a majority of votes from their own party, the House Speaker needs a majority of the 435 members of the House. For obvious reasons, Democrats are not interested in helping any Republican get the necessary 218 votes.

The most powerful and important role the Speaker plays is using his power through the Rules Committee to decide which bills and amendments make it to the House floor for discussion and vote. Many political observers say it is this power that contributes to congressional gridlock.

as a possible candidate during an Oct. 8 interview with Wolf Blitzer on CNN.

"One great candidate would be Greg Walden the head of the committee responsible for electing the confer-

ence of Republicans into the majority. He's been doing that for a few years. He knows every member; he knows the districts; he knows there are challenges. He knows their political bent and he's a sea-

soned hand which was missing in this leadership election. He's been around a long time," Rogers said.

Walden's communications director, Andrew Malcolm, said in a phone interview Walden currently supports Ryan for the Speaker role.

"Greg thinks that Paul Ryan would be a terrific Speaker of the House, that he could certainly unify our conference," said Malcolm. "Greg believes that he is an articulate communicator, has incredible policy depth, and cares deeply about the future of this country."

Malcolm added Walden would consider running for the position if the conference asked him.

"Greg has always been willing to step in and serve Oregon and the country when needed. That being said, he has several big jobs already: representing the Second District, chairing the Communications and Technology panel, and chairing the National Republican Congressional Committee," Malcolm said.

Legislators haven't raised new gun initiatives

By Hillary Borrud
Capital Bureau

SALEM — The mass shooting at Umpqua Community College renewed debate over gun control and on Oct. 8, Senate Democrats announced plans to close loopholes in the federal background check system and crack down on straw purchasing.

But in Oregon, lawmakers have yet to propose any new measures aimed at preventing gun violence.

"I think people are just coming out of shock right now, and we did a big push for the background checks in the 2015 session," said state Senate Majority

Leader Ginny Burdick, D-Portland. "I just need to have some conversations with people ... my caucus members and people on the other side of the aisle, to see if there's a pathway for something to happen in 2016. It's a short session. It's not meant to be a major policy issue session."

The Legislature has already closed some of the background check loopholes that remain at the federal level. Earlier this year, legislators passed a law that requires background checks for nearly all private firearm transfers. The state also began last year investigating people who failed background checks when they attempted to buy weapons at gun shows and li-

censed dealers. That policy change came at the request of Senate Minority Leader Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day, after Ferrioli learned the Oregon State Police had not been investigating the incidents.

It is illegal in Oregon for someone prohibited from purchasing a firearm to attempt to purchase one.

Some of the state's efforts to prevent shootings, or improve the response, are still unfolding.

The day before the Umpqua Community College shooting, Oregon State Police Superintendent Richard Evans gave an update to state lawmakers on what Evans said was "my passion, school safety."

Evans is part of a 14-member state task force on school safety, which lawmakers created in 2014 in response to the December 2012 shootings at Clackamas Town Center and Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn.

A couple months after the bill to create the task force became law, there was another shooting in Oregon, at Reynolds High School in Troutdale.

Evans told lawmakers on Sept. 30 the top priority for the task force is to create a tip line where people can report threats of school shootings, plus a broad range of other issues including bullying, potential suicides and abuse.

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