



WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Opt-out option could affect cougar hunts

Similar move with Oregon marijuana law opened the door for other measures

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

A recent cougar attack on livestock in the Willamette Valley has re-ignited an interest in the use of dogs to hunt cougars, a practice that has been banned since the passage of a 1994 state measure.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife estimates the state's cougar population at 6,200 – more than twice the minimum outlined as desirable in the Cougar Management Program. And recently published (2014) results of long-term ODFW studies show that Oregon has one of the fastest-growing populations of

cats in the Northwest, approximately 20 percent growth per year.

The studies suggest that without dog hunting it is unlikely that the cougar population could be lowered to sustainable and desirable levels.

Cougar sightings have been on the rise statewide. Wildlife Services reports that it responds to more than 400 cougar calls per year (697 in 2003), of which one in three involves threats to human health and safety.

But the cougar attacks that

sparked larger conversations on the west side began in mid-September when livestock owners in the Oregon City/Canby area began losing sheep, goats, llamas and alpacas. By early October, more than two dozen animals had been taken.

Capturing and removing the cougar was a complicated process for Wildlife Services because of its proximity to metro areas, the smaller ranches and properties requiring multiple permissions for action on

or near their boundaries, the inability to use hounds to pursue the cat for the same reasons and the danger of accidentally trapping a pet instead of the cougar.

The cat was shot Oct. 5 when a livestock owner spotted the cougar, brought in private hounds and waited for the cat to return. The cat was subsequently treed on the landowner's property and legally shot.

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MAKING TRACKS TO DELIST TIMBER WOLVES

“IT'S A GOOD FIRST STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION”



File image

The state Fish and Wildlife Commission is expected to vote on whether to delist wolves Nov. 9 in Salem.

ODFW OFFICIALS SAY CRITERIA MET

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife on Thursday announced its official recommendation that the Fish and Wildlife Commission withdraw state Endangered Species protections from Canadian Timber Wolves. The

commission is expected to vote on the matter during a Nov. 9 meeting in Salem.

Wallowa County Commissioners had their part in the process, drafting an Oct. 19 letter to the ODFW Commission in support of state-wide delisting of wolves. The letter, authored by Commissioner Susan Roberts, states that delisting should occur because scientific information provided by ODFW biologists

indicated the wolf is not in danger of extinction for the next 50 years. The letter noted the rise in population of Oregon wolves as well.

The ODFW recommended the delisting after an in-depth examination found biological data indicates the fulfillment of five criteria spelled out by the state's Endangered Species Act:

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A fresh angle on local business

Biz Buzz: Column covers developments big and small

Wallowa County is in the middle of a business boom. That's great news, and the Chieftain wants to be right on top of that, letting you know what's going on in your county.

It's a lot. Every week we see evidence of the boom with our own eyes. And every week someone in the community asks us “did you hear about ... ?”

On top of that, we get press releases from various local, regional, state and national organizations involved in business development letting us know about workshops, webinars and programs to benefit small business.

I'm happy to say it's getting hard to keep up.



BIZ BUZZ

Kathleen Ellyn

So, starting right now, I'll be writing a column dedicated to business in Wallowa County.

Please send us your newsworthy tips on openings, closures, remodels, moves, changes of ownership, additions of partners, information on business resources and more.

As always, check the online version of this column, too; if we get a truckload of information one week and only have room for a yard's worth in the print edition, that's where the other eight yards of the load (and any photos) will go.

We will still have feature stories on new businesses, but this column will give us a chance to report on other developments that might not have normally made the paper.

The Big News this week is that, after 15 years on NW 2nd Street in Enterprise, Wallowa County Ace has made the move to their new location on the corner of West North Street and River. They snuck that past us, with no big Grand Opening celebration for now. Co-owner Nick Cameron pleads “too much to do!” and hints that there may be some sort of a splash next spring.

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Steve Tool/Chieftain

At the Joseph Canyon Overlook, Nils Christoffersen, executive director of Wallowa Resources, explains the finer points of forest collaboratives to democratic legislators from the west side of the state during an Oct. 27 informational bus trip. Local rancher Rod Childers looks on, as does local Oregon Department of Wildlife Commission member Holly Akenson.

Western Oregon delegation gets close look at eastern issues

Bus trip takes lawmakers, state officials, conservation groups on tour of County

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

Eight Democratic legislators and a number of state officials traveled to Wallowa County on Oct. 27 for a bus trip intended to help Western Oregon lawmakers learn more about agriculture in the state's northeastern corner. The delegation, which also included members of state agencies and conservation groups, came to hear the stories of ranchers and foresters who make their living on the land. The event was the brainchild of Dist. 29 Sen. Bill Hansell of Athena. District 58 Rep.

Greg Barreto and Wallowa County Commissioner Susan Roberts also were among the attendees.

The group departed Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise on a Joseph Charter School bus early in the morning.

Although most of the trip focused on ranchers' problems with wolves, Bruce Dunn of the Natural Resource Advisory Council and Wallowa Resources Executive Director Nils Christoffersen spoke about the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Collaborative. They also spoke about working with the U.S. Forest Service to facilitate the proposed Lower Joseph Creek Project.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson of Scappoose said she found the discussion of the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Collaborative to be particularly educational.

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