

# WOLF

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Commissioners Greg Wolley and Laura Anderson voted against the majority. Wolley didn't think wolf numbers supported delisting, while Anderson supported delisting only in the eastern part of the state and voted against the motion because the state's current ESA only allows delisting of the wolf across the entire state.

As part of its decision, the commission recommended changing the ESA to allow for partial delisting, and because of fears that the delisting might be seen as "open sea-

son" on wolves, recommended increasing the penalties for killing a wolf, which currently stand at a \$6,250 fine and one year in jail. Those recommendations must be voted on by the state legislature.

Oregon wolf management is not dictated by the ESA. Rather, it is dictated by the Oregon Wolf Management Plan, which was implemented in 2005 spells out three phases of protection for wolves. The state moved to Phase 2 in January of this year when ODFW biologists recommended the change as their data showed at least four breeding pairs of wolves for three consecutive years in the eastern side of the state.

Wallowa County Commis-

sioner Susan Roberts attended the hearing and said the commission made the right decision.

"It was a long day, for sure," Roberts said. "It was an interesting process, and I think the commission made the right decision in the end. We would have liked it better if the decision was 6-0, but we'll take it."

Ramona Phillips, who runs cattle outside of Joseph with her husband Charley, expressed cautious optimism about the vote.

"I feel like it's a tiny step forward," Phillips said. "It's really not going to change a whole lot for right now, but it gives us a step in the process in the next couple of years to

get where we want to be. My concern is that there will be a lawsuit to undo it."

Wallowa County resident Holly Akenson serves on the commission and voted to delist the gray wolf. She said most of the people who testified at the meeting were against delisting, and that written testimony was overwhelmingly in favor of keeping wolves on the ESA list.

"I voted the way I did because we were asked if the wolf population met the five criteria (for delisting), so the decision was based on information, whether it was time or wasn't time to delist. It was a biological decision, yes or no, regardless of how you feel about wolves in Oregon," Ak-

enson said.

Arran Robertson, a communication associate for Oregon Wild, said the organization was disappointed with the decision.

"We think the delisting decision is premature," Robertson said. "There's some question about the process. Specifically, what the state is calling a 'scientific review.' We don't think it was rigorous and it discounted a majority of the scientific criticisms and feedback they got for the justification they used for delisting."

Amaroq Weiss, West Coast wolf organizer at the Center for Biological Diversity, voiced similar concerns.

"The decision was deeply

disheartening for us," Weiss said. "Our sense is that the step Oregon took in delisting is not representative of how most Oregonians feel about endangered species. I know the commission said they care about wolves, but I think if they cared about wolves they'd have followed science and followed the law. In this case, it's pretty clear they didn't do either."

The commission filed the ruling with the Secretary of State on Nov. 10. While the ruling removes wolves from the state ESA it has no other effect on wolf management for the present. The state's wolf plan is up for review next year. It was last revised in 2010.

# AUCTION

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"Matt Kurtz was great," Green said. "He was fantastic, fun and funny."

Musical guests Carolyn Lochert and Gail Swart serenaded the audience during dinner with a localized, health care version of the Beatles' "When I'm 64."

Among the live auction items was a U.S. flag offered by U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, who was in attendance. Rep. Walden said the flag would be flown over the U.S. Capitol Building at a predetermined time to honor a veteran or event and returned to the winning bidder. Walden conducted the auction for the flag. When two bidders remained, he offered a second flag, each at a price of \$650, for a total of \$1,300 raised.

Health District CEO Larry Davy was among the night's speakers. Davy thanked those in attendance for their continuing generosity and described the key role they play in maintaining one of the country's top-performing rural hospitals. He also noted that Wallowa Memorial Hospital has been named among the nation's Top 100 critical access hospitals by iVantage Health Analytics three of the last four years.

Sarah Johnson, Wallowa Memorial's director of imaging, took the podium to explain the need for this year's target purchase—a bone-density system that produces a low-radiation X-ray to determine the mass and strength of bones. The system is vital in diagnosing and treating osteoporosis, a common condition that leads to brittle bones that are extremely susceptible to

breaks.

"One in every two women is affected by it," Johnson said. "And one in every four men. It's a common misconception that it only affects women. That's not the case."

The Wallowa Valley Health Care Foundation was formed in 1990. The foundation's first dinner and auction event in 1996 raised about \$19,500, and in 20 years the event has brought in more than \$900,000 for county health care, according to Green.

Green said she was happy to see two of the foundation's original founders—Don Swart, Sr. and Mona K. Wil-

liams—in attendance this year, as well as two founders' daughters, Diana Collins (Don Hubbard, Sr.) and Saralyn Johnson (Reid Johnson), who serve on the board, and Gail Swart, whose parents Gwen and Gladys Coffin got the foundation up and running in 1995 with a \$500,000 donation.

"It's great to celebrate what they started and to see the tremendous impact that the foundation and the community has had on our health care," Green said.

The evening's dinner was catered by Backyard Gardens, with a full no-host bar by La Laguna.

# DAVY

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recommendation on how to shore up hospitals and make them available to meet the needs of our communities," he said. "We'll be assessing communities and determining the issues they face."

Basically, what model change would make most sense to meet the goals of hospital transformation while maintaining or even improving access?"

Davy said the task force meets monthly, generally by teleconference, and likely will produce a report with recommendations by next summer.

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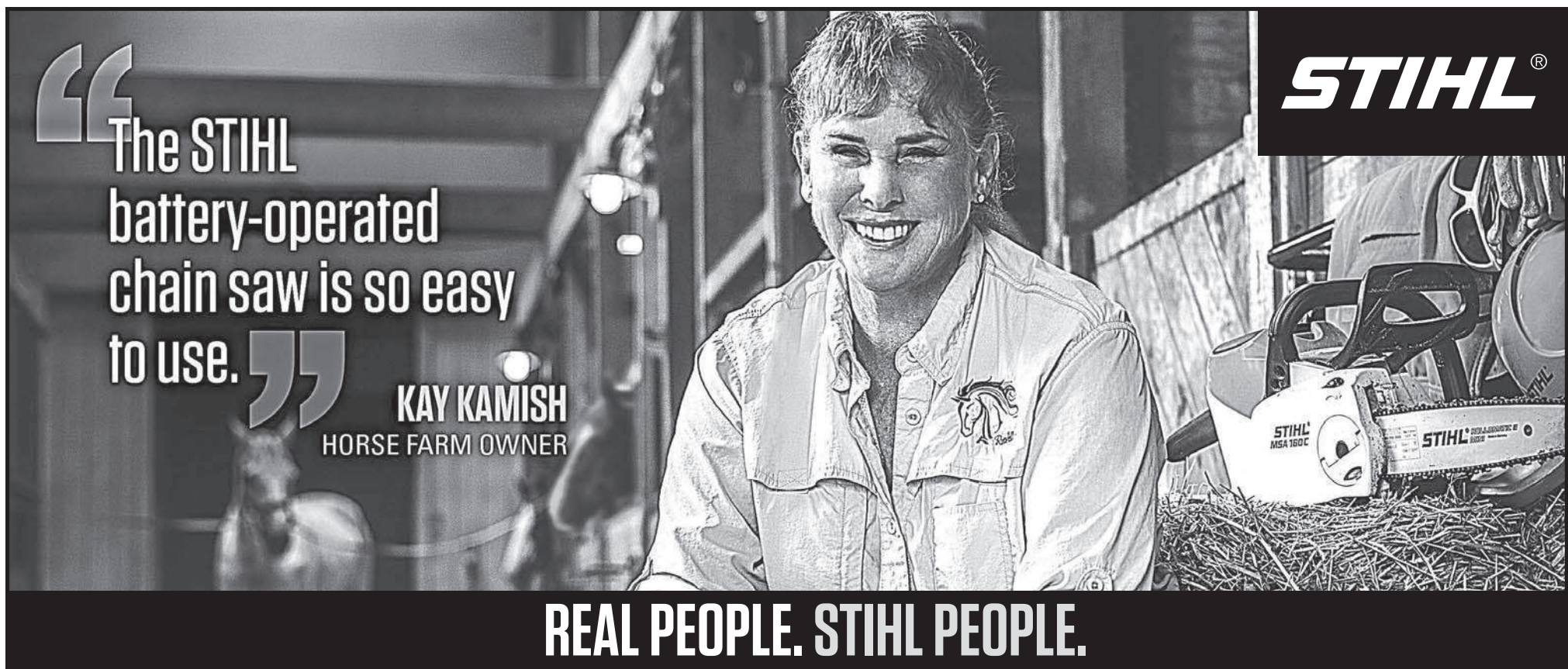
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