

Bills seek to ratify wolf delisting

By Mateusz Perkowski
Capital Bureau

The proposals, which will be considered during the upcoming legislative session in February, are planned by Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, and Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove, in reaction to a lawsuit filed by environmental groups.

Under a management plan for wolves first created in 2005, the species could be delisted after having established four breeding pairs for three years and no longer facing a substantial risk of extinction in a significant portion of its range, among other criteria.



OR-3, a three-year-old male wolf from the Imnaha pack, is shown in this image captured from video taken by an ODFW employee on May 10, 2011, in Wallowa County. Two Oregon lawmakers plan to introduce bills that would ratify the decision by state wildlife officials to delist wolves as an endangered species.

However, Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands and the Center for Biological Diversity recently challenged the state's delisting decision in court, arguing the decision unlawfully ignored the best available science about wolf recovery.

"We're shoring up what

Oregon has 81 documented wolves, but the actual population is likely in the range of 100-120 animals and a delisting is necessary for the ODFW to eventually manage the species, said Sen. Hansell.

Ranchers in Oregon have abided by restrictions on wolf management for the past 10 years, so now that the criteria for delisting have

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followed as planned rather than allowing the courts to take over the process, he said. "I want to bring some sanity to this and let the scientists and wildlife managers manage, instead of some conservation groups and a judge."

Oregon has fewer than 90 wolves, but the state could sustain up to 1,400 of them, said Sean Stevens, executive director of Oregon Wild.

In the past year, wolves have only been confirmed to have killed four cows, while the state has more than 1.3 million cattle, he said. The cattle industry generated more than \$1 billion in revenues, making it Oregon's top agricultural sector.

The proposed bills would set a dangerous precedent of the legislature inserting itself

Pair moves to Shamrock area

announced a new area of known wolf activity in Wallowa County.

WMU north of Enterprise.

ODFW District Wildlife Biologist Pat Matthews said the pair, one of which was radio-collared, were the only

"We know they had a litter this year and that there are six animals in that pack now, at least," Matthews said.

Matthews said the ODFW will refer to the wolves as the Shamrock Pack in the future.

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