



2016 Wallowa County
Visitors Guide (inside)

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Landfill tipping fees to go up 40 percent

End of scrap metal boom has county looking for new ways to fund facility

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Tipping fees at Wallowa County's only landfill are set for a steep climb this spring and summer.

The county recently notified local contractors that the cost of tipping refuse at Ant Flat Landfill

outside of Enterprise will rise from \$26 a ton to \$36 a ton. The hike will take place in two increments — \$5 in April and another \$5 in July — and amount to about a 40 percent increase.

In recent years, the county had a lot of scrap iron and prices were high, so a windfall of scrap helped

keep the landfill budget afloat. Scrap no longer sells for "much of anything," according to Interim County Commissioner John Lawrence, and without the added income from scrap, the landfill cannot make its bills.

The rise in fees does not entirely address the income problem for the

facility, but it will help, Lawrence said.

"We began operating in the red in February," Lawrence said. "And the 2016 budget process forecast that we'd operate in the red by \$60,000 in 2016."

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COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTIES IT'S BEEN PRETTY LOW. I THINK IT'S WORTH THE EXTRA COST.

Chris Borgerding,
contractor



Courtesy of ODFW

OR-3, a 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.

Imnaha Pack strikes again

Local ranchers request lethal action after two more depredations confirmed

By Scot Heisel
Wallowa County Chieftain

State wildlife officials on Monday confirmed two more wolf depredations on private land in the Upper Swamp Creek area of Wallowa County, bringing the total number of confirmed Imnaha Pack kills in the area to four in March.

The most recent incidents were reported and investigated Monday and involved a pair of dead calves in rangeland pasture. Wildlife officials determined that one calf was killed sometime Saturday night or Sunday morning, while the other likely was killed Monday morning and was still warm when an investigator arrived on scene.

Both heifer calves weighed approximately 700 lbs., according to ODFW incident reports, and each had signs of numerous bite wounds and scrapes.

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FOREST REVIVAL

WALLOWA MAN FINDS HIMSELF AT THE INTERSECTION OF HEALTHY FORESTS, JOB CREATION



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Ed Sparks of Wallowa watches as one of his poles, deemed of too small a diameter for commercial milling, is peeled by his 1965 peeler. Sparks says he gets enough call for thinning and forest restoration to put two more crews in the woods, but has enough work for himself to take him to retirement and would rather recommend other local guys.

WASTE-FREE FOREST MANAGEMENT PROTECTS LAND FROM WILDFIRES WHILE SUPPLYING LUMBER MARKET

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

Ed Sparks of Wallowa has all the work in the woods he can handle. He's working a portion of Galen Williams' 1,880-acre timberland in the Shell Resources Management Area north of Wallowa.

"Williams' property alone has enough work to take me to retirement," Sparks said.

What Sparks and Williams are doing is exactly what lumbermen and ranchers have been begging the Forest Service to do for decades. They're replacing wildfire with forest management.

Sparks is protecting the land from fire by removing less valuable overstory, and thinning and removing understory so the sun can get through the canopy and let the grasses grow, allowing cattle and wildlife to graze and assist in fire control.

In the process Sparks is turning Williams' forestland into a park — one that may help stop catastrophic wildfire from destroying not only Williams' valuable timber, but the timber, homes and livestock of his neighbors. Sparks also is removing and utilizing diseased trees, burnt trees and even rotted trees.

"I couldn't ask for a better job," said Williams. "What Ed's done will increase grazing and improve my timber stands. It's also going to release other species of trees besides the lodgepole pine. And I'm basically getting my timber stand improved for free because I let him have the wood he takes out."

As an added ecological bonus, Sparks' method wastes nothing. Gone are the days when monstrous slash piles burned on dozed timberland. When Sparks is done, all that's left is a little pile of twigs and needles and some sawdust.

Biochar turns wood waste into valuable soil amendment

By Jennifer Hobbs
For The Chieftain

Improving soil health is a high priority for local farmers, but it can be challenging to find soil amendments that are economical and sustainable. Biochar appears to be both. As an added bonus, biochar is generated from waste products like wood slash, manure, and leaves.

In Wallowa County, forest byproducts from thinning and fuel reduction—generally burned off as slash—are an abundant potential source of biochar.

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Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Rockford, Wash., farmer David Gady holds up biochar made from bluegrass screenings Jan. 15 on his farm. Gady is partnering with a Spokane company interested in possibly commercializing the process Gady uses to produce biochar, which may show benefit when used as a soil additive.

"I generally do all of (my work) on the mountain," Sparks said. "I cut it, I peel it and I bring it in all finished out."

Back at his 7-acre yard in Wallowa his posts, poles, stakes, retaining wall timbers and more are treated with non-toxic preservation and are sold.

It's the forest managers' dream. And it could be the realization of a dream for a few men and/or women who love working in the woods and making lumber products.

Because Sparks has a big problem — the

work he does is so in demand that he keeps getting calls from other timberland owners asking him to come work for them. And he keeps getting orders for his products he can't fill.

"I've got 300 acres to thin and I can't do it alone — 160 to 320 acres will keep a two-man crew with small equipment busy for years," Sparks said. "What makes that possible is total utilization of material, right down to one to 3-inch-diameter wood."

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