

Study looks at cattle time near streams

Environmental groups say cattle grazing on public rangeland trample and erode streambanks and pollute water.

But a five-year study of cattle grazing conducted by Oregon State University shows cattle spend only 1 to 2.5 percent of their time in streams or buffer areas. And rather than ranging up and down the length of streams in allotments, cattle used only

EDITORIAL

From Capital Press

10 to 25 percent of the available stream area.

The cows typically did not rest or graze near streams. Instead, they spent most of their time grazing on higher ground or resting in dry areas away from streams.

John Williams, an OSU Extension rangeland expert in Wallowa County, said cows enter riparian areas for two reasons: "One is to drink, the other is to cross."

The study was done on a tight budget. Researchers built their own GPS collars, which generated location data every five minutes. They attached the collars to 10 cows in three different herds.

Over the course of five years they collected 3.75 million data points. That data show that animals behave differently at different points in the grazing season. And that, Williams says, suggests that producers could use such data to increase the efficiency of their operations.

The findings are potentially significant.

Now we know that cattle probably don't cause as much damage to streams and riparian areas as popularly thought, and it's possible to use real data to reduce damage further by better management.

The study shows the value of testing assumptions, and using what's learned to make things better.

We encourage OSU to continue this line of inquiry, and for all parties to take note.

Agriculture is sustainable

Speaking to reporters last week, American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said producers need to speak up and tell the public how they are producing more food with less water, less pesticides and less plowing.

"We need to take back the concept of sustainability, because nobody works harder on sustainability than the American farmer and rancher," he said.

He says agriculture has never been more sustainable. Here, in his own words:

"Just think about it for a minute; by using modern technologies, today's farmers grow more crops on the same amount of land, using less plowing and pesticides, and feeding more people.

"By developing more uses for our crops, like energy, we are making our economy more sustainable.

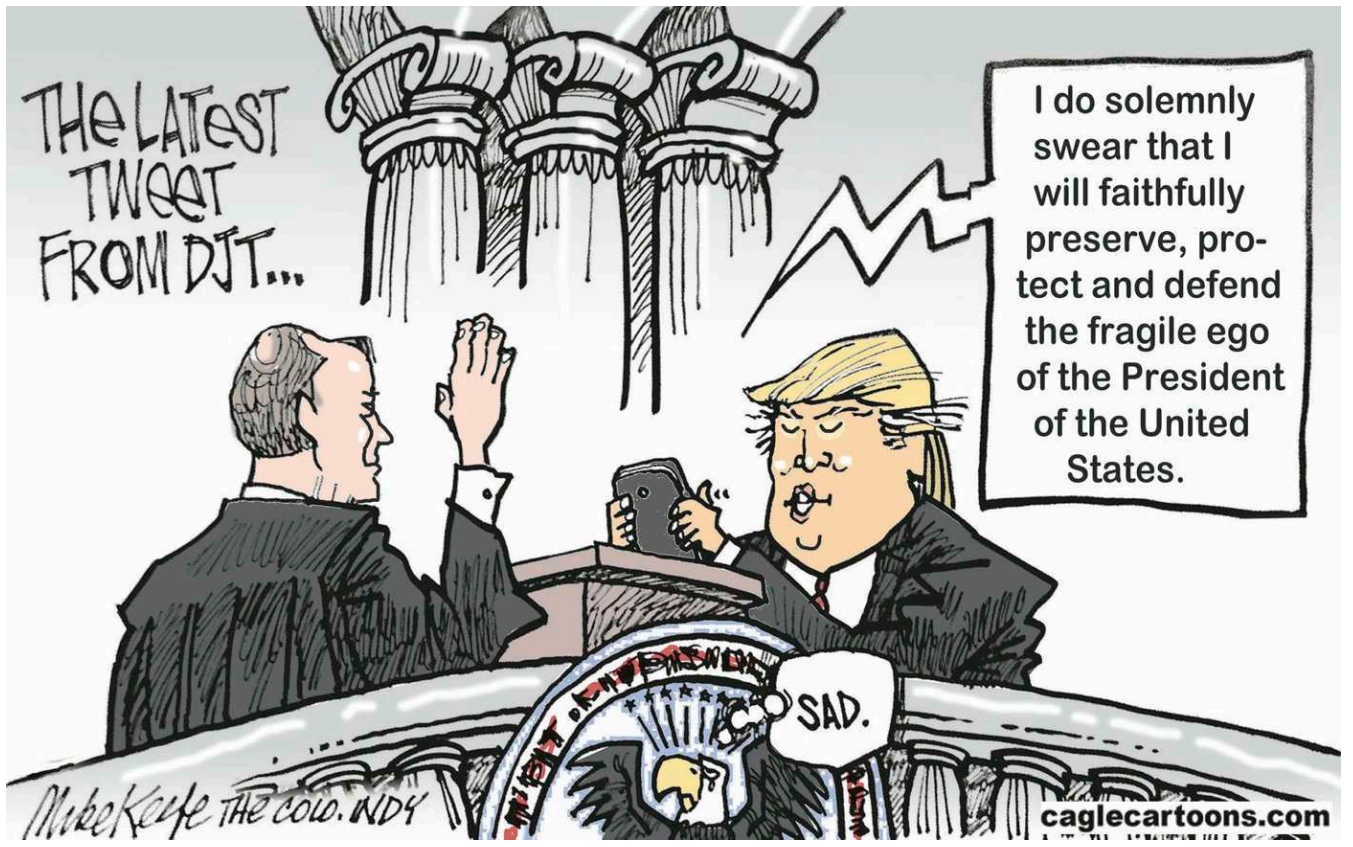
"If farmers don't take care of our land, we cannot stay in business. By providing food for all Americans, we are sustaining their freedom — so they can pursue the careers they are interested in.

"We have a great story to tell. We need to take back the concept of sustainability — because nobody is working harder to be sustainable than America's farmers and ranchers."

All good stuff. But he saves the money shot for last.

"For agriculture to be sustainable, farming and ranching have to be profitable."

No profit, no food. Enough said.



The Legacy of Vietnam

This month Fishtrap reads "The Things They Carried," by Tim O'Brien, a novel of Vietnam, as part of the Big Read Program. It is also Martin Luther King day as I write.

In 1994, at Fishtrap, our theme was "The Restless West: World War II and After." Alvin Josephy was there, with stories of the Marine Corps in Guam and Iwo Jima. And Ivan Doig, with a new memoir, "Heart Earth," based on a letter exchange between his mother in Montana and an uncle in the Pacific. And Jean Wakatsuki Houston, who had grown up in the Japanese internment camp at Manzanar.

Historian Richard White gave the keynote, and I can almost quote his opening lines from memory: "Before World War II the West was a hard-scrabble place looking for population, capital, and an industrial base. World War II brought all three. Most of us in this room would not be here but for World War II."

We looked around the room and at each other. Some had a mom or dad who had worked in shipyards; many were from families transported west by the military; some came at war's end to build and live in tract homes in California, or work in factories converted from building tanks to tractors. The war was part of



MAIN STREET

Rich Wandschneider

us.

In a recent essay in the New York Times, "Vietnam: The War That Killed Trust," Karl Marlantes argues that it was "the war — not liberalism, not immigration, not globalization — that changed us." Marlantes is a Vietnam vet who grew up in an Oregon logging town and the author of "Matterhorn," a well-regarded novel of that war.

WW II; Vietnam. Sure Vietnam changed us; my life here in Wallowa County is a small example. I was in the Peace Corps in Turkey in 1967, loving it and looking for a career in the State Department. I passed the Foreign Service written exam at the embassy, and, when I came home that fall, had a scheduled interview with the State. I also interviewed for Peace Corps staff, and had been offered a job there when I went to State. A panel of four ambassadorial-ranked men and women sat across from me at a huge table.

I sweated my way through the inter-

view, in the course of which I learned that my first assignment would be Vietnam. I remember saying that I had been out of the country since 1965, and really didn't know much about Vietnam. A kind woman, seeing my discomfort, suggested that I take the Peace Corps offer and come back to them after my three-year hitch. Two years later, Turks were yelling at me on the streets over an ambassador newly arrived from the Vietnam "Phoenix program," and the Peace Corps was kicked out of Turkey.

Marlantes' "War that killed trust" takes me — and us — from 1967 to today. He remembers a 1967 late-night hallway discussion at Yale, where he was the naïve Westerner who didn't believe that American presidents lied to us. He learned about Johnson's and Nixon's lies while in Vietnam.

I learned about them in Turkey, where Ambassador Komer was greeted in 1969 newspapers from far left to far right as the "American butcher from Vietnam." "Phoenix," part of a "pacification program," was aimed at killing suspected Viet Cong in South Vietnamese villages. It was later admitted that 20,000 had been killed.

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Poachers steal from everyone

Appreciation for native wildlife is something nearly all Americans share. Wildlife bring value and belong to all of us — not just those of us lucky enough to live near our state's big wild places or those who shoot them with cameras rather than rifles.

Some animals challenge us, but poaching is a crime against us all. Recent efforts to address the problem are welcome, but show just how far we have to go.

Too often, poaching is considered an exotic problem on faraway continents where animals like elephants and rhinos are prized for their ivory and horns. Less recognized is the enormous problem closer to home. Exhibit A is the easy passage of Measure 100 in the same year that saw Oregon's legislature create legal loopholes for poachers and its wildlife agency defend allowing hunting of wolves as soon as this year.

Poaching laws are difficult to en-

GUEST COMMENT

Rob Klavins

force, but the problem has deep roots that make powerful interests uncomfortable.

Even in wildlife-loving Oregon, our efforts show a reluctance to take the first step of admitting we have a problem — and the influence of politics. When one of Oregon's rare moose was illegally killed in Wallowa County, it was front page news. New laws mean that if the animal was sporting antlers, the crime is punishable by \$50,000. News of wolf poaching is usually buried in annual agency reports. The fine for killing a wolf or cougar maxes out at \$7,500.

Wolf recovery in Northeast Oregon is no longer a novelty. However, that's not true everywhere. OR-28, the matriarch

of the Silver Lake wolves, was killed in October in Southern Oregon. The investigation into her death remains shrouded in secrecy. Had she, her pup, and her 8-year old partner (another Wallowa County disperser) survived, they might have officially been designated the second known wolf pack outside Oregon's Northeast corner.

It's not an isolated incident. In 2015, one-in-five monitored wolves were illegally killed — or died under mysterious circumstance — a number sadly in line with states like Idaho and Wyoming.

That rate is also consistent with deer poaching in Oregon. A recent migration study incidentally revealed just as many mule deer killed legally by hunters as were killed illegally.

Does that startling rate of poaching apply to other wildlife? We simply don't know.

See KLAVINS, Page A5

Joseph's flower boxes need help

I am writing in reference to the article in (the Jan. 11) Chieftain about the Joseph City Council — I have to say, as the "Joseph Flower Girl" for two summers that I love the gardens and flower boxes in the city of Joseph. I worked hard in my 2 summers there to do the best for them — however, Mr. Clevenger had an excellent suggestion for those boxes and gardens, they really, really need help.

While I was working with them I worked hard to develop new soil and compost to try and replace the soil in each box and revitalize them.

There was not money for new soil and the compost was blocked off so that plan did not work. This really desperately needs to be done. Many people over the years have just clipped the weeds (or plants they don't like) at the surface leaving the soil in nearly every spot so impacted with roots that it's nearly impossible to dig them. Many business owners and/or those who have adopted the beds have not been able to maintain them, because the soil is so unhealthy and thick with weeds it's nearly impossible to dig into. With money and some coordinated effort they could be refreshed and made gorgeous again.

Ideally, the flower beds need to be completely dug out, any repairs on the structure and/or water system need to be fixed and the offending big rocks that have blocked several of the hoses at the

LETTERS to the EDITOR

entrance to Joseph and new soil put in. We have many lovely perennials that a skilled gardener can save and replant so that would keep the costs down but, we really need to do something! The potential for them to be great again is there — they are in place and my understanding is the hours and pay for the seasonal gardener have been reduced — when I was there it was a 20 hour a week job at \$10 an hour — that is reasonable — you cannot go much lower than that.

Please take the time to think about and consider if the flowerbeds — which many love should be continued and if so they must have a revitalization as I've described. If not then they should consider removing some or most because they are simply to the point of needing to be taken care of correctly.

Tamara da Silva
Enterprise

Did Wallowa County move west?

Possibly five years ago the Wallowa County Commissioners went out on a limb and loaned \$500,000 to an incoming entrepreneur to purchase the old Wallowa

Forest Products mill site near Wallowa to set up a biomass operation. The state thought it was such a good idea that they popped in another \$100,000 or so.

The loan was for five years, but the investor paid the county back in 18 months. It's been a bumpy road, but Integrated Biomass has remained a steady, top employer at the Northwest corner of Wallowa County; paying bills primarily through sales of firewood, posts, and poles.

In the January 4 issue of the Chieftain, on page 14, the local newspaper published a lengthy article written by the Oregon State University Department of Forestry saying, in essence, that what has been done for five years in Wallowa County can't be done.

That study concluded that, even were wood off federal lands made available (the issue Wallowa County Commissioners have been battling to assist Integrated Biomass,) "the additional supply does little to change the economic feasibility of processing facilities." The nut of the argument comes two paragraphs later when it states all 65 identified locations the study was based on are in Western Oregon.

Hmm. Isn't Wallowa County, which the Chieftain represents, in Eastern Oregon?

Rocky Wilson
Wallowa

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN

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