

WOLF

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rancher Cynthia Warnock, who ranches in the area with her husband, Dan — and who had sustained three of the last seven depredations — had predicted the event in an Aug. 10 Chieftain interview.

Nash said it was his opinion that the ODFW only took two wolves to attempt to placate the ranchers, which he said, and the department confirmed, had done their due diligence in non-lethal action against the wolves.

“All this does is serve to irritate the environmentalists,” he said. “It’s not effective for protecting livestock, which is the intent of lethal take.”

The rancher noted that the pack had gotten so brazen that an April depredation had taken place next to a home. He suggested that to be effective, at least half the pack, if not all of it, needed to be taken out.

“It’s sick. They tell us to go out there and say, ‘You guys continue with your nonlethal, now,’... We know what’s going



Todd Nash

to happen if we do nonlethal or not. It’s a sick, twisted way of thinking.”

On the same day, Cynthia Warnock agreed with Nash’s assessment and said some wolf packs seem to get by without killing livestock.

“That’s OK, but when they start, and the whole pack does it, I think you have to get rid of them,” she said.

On Aug. 17, Nash said he wasn’t surprised at the loss

he’d sustained the previous day, which resulted in another ODFW declaration to take two more wolves.

“It was predictable,” he said. “Certainly there were going to be more cattle killed when they said they’d take two wolves out. Everybody knew, including the agency, which is absurd.”

Nash said the department’s intention to take only two more wolves would result in more

depredations. He noted that the ODFW had expanded their pack estimates to eight adults and three pups.

What concerns Nash about the depredation is that impacted ranchers are not consulted about actions to control the pack.

“They just tell us what they’re going to do,” he said. “I sent them an email urging them to take action that would be effective, and I got no response from any of them.” He added he only learned through a press release of the latest attempt to curb the depredations by removing two more pack wolves.

According to Nash, between the time of the last lethal take of wolves and the Aug. 16 depredation, the pack had been continually documented running freely among cattle as well as chasing them. When he asked the department if the death of more livestock would be required before the removal of more wolves, he was told “not necessarily.”

“It’s really upsetting ... and a terrible way to treat

people,” he said.

Nash estimated the value of the calf killed at about \$800 but also said that nonlethal methods of defending cattle quickly add up to more than the costs of a calf considering the cost of hiring a person to watch over the cattle, plus the additional costs of time, fuel and vehicle maintenance.

“We’ve lost cattle on top of what is actually documented, cattle lose weight when they’re stressed and chased in hot weather,” he said. “All of that combined is huge.”

The last depredation was also in an area with high human presence, next to corrals and a place where vehicles are frequently parked. It was also a staging site for the range rider.

“There’s very little respect from the pack as far as human presence goes,” he said. “The fact is, this pack needs to be removed.”

The pack now has eight confirmed depredations in the last 13 months. ODFW spokesman Michelle Dennehy said that the department is trying to take a measured response to

the depredations. She said the wolves are not targeted by their sex, but as the department finds them, whether through the air or on the ground.

Dennehy also said that the wolf management plan revision is overdue mainly because of the year-long process of delisting wolves in eastern Oregon. She also said that public interest in the new plan is high, and the new revision is well on its way to completion.

In response to complaints about the agency’s lack of transparency, Dennehy offered a measured response.

“We kind of disagree with the idea that we’re not being proactive. When we announced plans to continue lethal control because there were more depredations and more wolves than we originally thought, we did update our stakeholders, our wolf update pages and the media,” she said.

On Aug. 18, Dennehy said that the department killed one of the two wolves slated for lethal take during the previous night. No additional information was available at presstime.

Oregon LIFT program available in Wallowa County

Part of the solution to the housing crisis in Wallowa County is state and federal agencies. One assistance program is the Local Innovation and Fast Track Housing program managed by Oregon Housing and Community Services. The program began when Oregon Legislature committed \$40 million of general obligation bonds to fund the program in 2015. In July of 2017, the Oregon Legislature allocated an additional \$80 million.

A primary goal of the program is to serve rural communities with less than 25,000 people and to do so as quickly as possible. Projects requesting \$38,000 per unit or less receive priority consideration and both traditional and alternative construction is allowed. All newly constructed units must be available for those earning 60 percent below the

area median income at the time of initial lease. However, tenants may stay in their unit regardless of future income and potential tenants with higher income may rent if space is available.

LIFT awarded over \$39 million to 12 programs in 2016.

- Two 50-unit apartment buildings in Central Point and White City.
- The renovation of 21 units at Fistera Gardens Townhomes in Yachats to provide workforce housing for employees in the local tourist economy.
- A new 42-unit multifamily housing project in La Pine called La Pine Townhomes.

The first project was a 180-unit apartment complex in Salem that includes a community center housing a mini health clinic, adult English literacy education and GED preparation, among others.

GRANT

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The Loan Preservation Assistance program can bring mortgages, past due property taxes and reverse mortgage accounts current with a maximum benefit of \$40,000.

Funding for the initiative is provided by the U. S. Treasury’s Hardest Hit Fund,

which allocated \$220 million to Oregon in 2010 and an additional \$94.5 million in 2016 for the administration of foreclosure prevention programs. To date, the initiative has provided more than \$230 million in assistance to more than 12,000 homeowners.

Info: Homeowner.Help@oregon.gov or by phone at 503-986-2025.

HOUSING

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However, there is another program for “affordable housing” handled through Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), which the legislature has championed.

“Affordable housing” is basically “rent-controlled” housing available to individuals earning 60 percent of local median income or below, according to Ariel Nelson, government relations and communications liaison for OHCS.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 2011-15 Wallowa County’s household median income was \$40,581 meaning households making approximately \$24,000 or less would qualify for “affordable housing” if it were available.

The state program’s budget for the 2017-19 biennium was approved by the legislature at \$1.1 billion and then the additional money the legislature saw fit to bestow began to roll in.

Another piece of legislation provided for two permanent staffing positions so that the service could maintain a statewide database to monitor publicly supported housing.

Another bill made changes to the definition of “low income households” in the Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) Housing Program so that single-family units could qualify for bonds to support affordable homeownership.

(See related article in this week’s Chieftain).

Funding for the expanded fast track program immedi-



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ately followed as \$80 million was diverted to support it. The legislature approved another \$2.5 million to establish an Affordable Housing Land Acquisition Revolving Loan Program within OHCS. This program is modeled after a successful Washington state program, which creates a loan fund that affordable housing developers can tap to purchase and hold land for future development.

Another bill addressed the concerns of landlords with regard to appropriate renters. The bill puts \$223,247 in a “rent guarantee fund.” Local partner organizations around the state educate potential renters through programs such as “Ready to Rent,” teaching them how to take ownership of their unit and be a good renter.

Those completing the course receive a certificate proving they have attended the classes. If landlords rent to graduates of the program and they fail as renters, the landlord can access the rent guarantee fund for limited compensation

for damage and eviction costs.

Statics provided by the state claim that less than one percent of “Ready to Rent” graduates fail as tenants.

More money — \$25 million in Lottery Bonds — came to the housing and community service’s coffers to support the “preservation of existing housing,” which means funding is available for affordability contracts that keep rents low and also to provide grants for restoration of federally funded multifamily units.

“That’s a big increase,” Nelson said. “In past sessions we’ve gotten \$5 or \$10 million so \$25 million is a big deal.”

The legislature also assented to renewed and expanded funding for the Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit boosting it from \$17 million to \$25 million. That money is paid to the mortgage lender to help offset the cost of reduced rent (rent control) in both new and “preserved” properties that provide affordable multifamily unit housing.

Oregon Housing and Community Services also received presents in what has been called the “Christmas Tree Bill,” which contains last-minute approvals of unrelated projects. The organization received \$1.3 million for the

Oregon Foreclosure Avoidance program, which provides counseling and education for Oregonians who are experiencing foreclosure.

In Wallowa County the program is available through Community Connection.

Another \$20 million was awarded for the Emergency Housing Assistance and State Homeless Assistance program. Community Services added another \$20 million from general funds to the program, bringing the program’s total budget to \$40 million.

Another \$1.5 million was set aside this past session for veteran’s homelessness in partnership with Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

Wallowa County does not have a “local partner organization” to act as a contact point for many of these programs and interested developers, homeowners and landlords may have to rely upon regional contact organizations. Those seeking more information on these programs may contact Nelson directly and be directed to the appropriate partner or department. Ariel Nelson, government relations and communications liaison at Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) can be contacted at 503-949-0201.

Hells Canyon Mule Days

Dutch Oven Cookoff



Teams may enter one dish in two entry categories. There will be cash awards for 1st and 2nd place, and a gift basket for the People’s Choice award.

Sunday, Sept. 10th.
FMI: 541-263-0104
HELLSCANYONMULEDAYS.COM
for cookoff info and entry form

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LIBRARY

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sparked the district idea. The county library provides free services to all residents living in Wallowa County; holds more than 23,000 materials including books, audios and videos; and checks out 12,000

pieces at branch sites, city libraries, child care providers, schools and outreach program participants annually.

The Wallowa County Citizens to Save the Library Facebook page, where new developments are posted and conversations continue, has grown to 94 members.

Former Wallowa Valley Library Foundation president Kim Witherite of Imnaha had to step aside due to family obligations but quickly found her own replacement — Bonnie Marks, former postmaster of Imnaha.

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

This week’s athlete of the week is Brianna Micka, soon to become an Enterprise High School freshman.

Micka, 15, took virtually every 4-H riding event she entered at the Wallowa County Fair. Micka competed with her quarter horse, Rusty, aka, “Twisted at the Bar,” and received: Reserve Grand Champion Showmanship, Grand Champion Western and English Equitation and Grand Champion Trail.

A highlight of the year for Micka is that she earned the 3-Step Dad Potter Certificate of Merit at the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show in June and did so again at the Wallowa County Fair.



Brianna Micka

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Eds

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Births



A daughter

Allie Jane Dodd

was born August 6, 2017, to Ashley Hayes and Jeffery Dodd of Enterprise. Grandparents are Dawn and Sam Rickert, James Wiess, Denise and Jeff Staidle.



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