

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Nez Perce conservation site a step closer to reality



Ellen Morris Bishop

The Nez Perce conservation easement, occupies the eastern side of the lake shore.

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Nez Perce Tribe, Wallowa Lake Lodge, and Wallowa Lake State Park are one step closer to permanently conserving a sacred Nez Perce cultural site, Waalal'aamkt or "where the braided stream disappears into the water" as a conservation easement. The ten-acre locale, at the south end of Wal-

lowa Lake, also provides premier habitat for fish, wildlife, and birds. Grants totaling \$295,000 from the Healy, Collins, and Meyer Memorial Trust Foundations have brought funding to \$449,000, or nearly half of the \$990,000 assessed value of the easement. "We expect the purchase to be completed this year, hopefully by summer," James Monteith, Wallowa Lake Lodge's Managing Board

Member said. "Everyone deeply appreciates the leadership and generous support of these Oregon foundations for the Nez Perce Tribe's first conservation easement in Oregon."

When local investors purchased Wallowa Lake Lodge in 2016, protecting the undisturbed portions of the grounds through a conservation easement was part of their plan. Keeping a portion of the grounds wild made

sense for habitat and aesthetics. Honoring the Nez Perce reverence for the site was important. When complete, the financial contribution of the easement purchase will help retire the large majority of the debt that investors and Lake Wallowa Lodge LLC incurred in purchasing the Lodge, James Monteith, the Lodge's Managing Board Member noted.

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'I JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. IT'S NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE TO ME.'

Gary Marks, Imnaha rancher

TRIPLE SURPRISE



Gary and Vicky Marks /Capital Press

A cow gave birth to triplet calves on a northeastern Oregon ranch recently. The odds of having triplets are 1 in 105,000.

Wallowa County cow births rare triplets

By GEORGE PLAVEN
Capital Press

Wallowa County's very own Imnaha rancher Gary Marks, like many local ranchers is in the midst of calving season.

Early on, Marks figured his pregnant 4-year-old cow might be having twins, considering how big she was all winter.

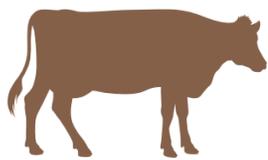
But triplets? The thought never even crossed his mind — even our most seasoned local ranchers catch a surprise from time to time.

By 8 p.m. on March 23, the Charolais-Angus cross had already given birth to one calf. Sure enough, three hours later there were two in the barn. When Marks and his wife, Vicky, returned at 3 a.m. to check on the babies, they were stunned to find a third.

"I just couldn't believe it," said Marks, 62, who runs a small family ranch up the Imnaha River in Wallowa County. "It's never happened before to me."

Indeed, triplets are a rare occurrence in cattle. The odds are about 1 in 105,000, according to the Iowa Beef Center at Iowa State University.

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Odds of cow having triplets

1 in 105,000



Planning commission says it could do some planning of its own

By Steve Tool & Christian Ambrosion
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Wallowa County Planning Commission publicly revealed that it could benefit from a little planning of its own during its monthly meeting on March 26.

The meeting appeared to have little direction. On the agenda was the vote to ratify the reasoning behind the planning commission's Feb. 26 denial of the Joseph Branch Trail Consortium's conditional land use permit for a trail accompanying along the old rail line.

As the hearing commenced, Commission Chair Ramona Phillips said she would do something "a little unusual." Phillips proceeded with a lengthy statement that ultimately urged the commission either to disapprove the prior findings, table or reopen the record of the prior findings to allow more testimony.

Phillips, who has admitted to owning and managing land next to the tracks, in an unchecked monologue said her concerns lay not with what was included in the findings, but rather what was not included.

After listing a variety of concerns from the prospective of some adjacent land owners in a somewhat unorthodox way of testifying for the record, Phillips expressed concern over the lack of legal counsel as well.

According to the chairperson, Planning Director Franz Goeble advised Phillips that county attorney, Paige Sully, would recuse herself from the proceedings as she was a former member of the Joseph Branch Trail Consortium. Nevertheless, the meeting proceeded without counsel.

Phillips continued to speak to questions of liability issues on hunters or trail users with hunting season on private property as well as interactions with livestock.

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RAILS WITH TRAILS PROJECTS ALSO CONTROVERSIAL ON WESTSIDE

Yamhill and Wallowa counties both grapple with the thorny issue | A10

The perennial power of friendship

It was the summer of 2001 when my family moved to Wallowa County. Undoubtedly this would change my life forever. I was prepared for that.

But how my life changed is astonishing beyond comprehension. Approaching the situation, I knew that I had an uphill climb.

I was a quiet city kid from a family of artists, now in rural Oregon. And I was shy and self-conscious to boot. For the first time in my life I wondered if and how I would make any friends.

It turns out I was lucky. After building up a good deal of courage I gave football a chance though I'd never played it before. Knew nothing about it in fact. I pushed the limits of my timidity. It didn't seem to get me far.

But I'll never forget the bus ride home—I believe after playing Pilot Rock. Something changed. The other students engaged me in conversation. They welcomed me. In hindsight I now know that it wasn't moving from the

'WE WILL TELL HIM OF LANCE'S HUMOR AND LOVE OF LIFE. WE WILL REGALE HIM WITH STORIES OF HIS STRENGTH AND INTELLIGENCE.'

city to Wallowa County that would change my life. It was the bus ride home that night.

Unbeknownst to me, a teammate, Lance Strickland told everybody to give me a shot. "Put yourself in his shoes," were his exact words... which I remember to this day. Lance had one of those personalities that radiated greatness. A quote from Thomas Merton comes to mind whenever I think of Lance: "You are certainly one of the joys of life for all who

have ever come within a mile of you." That was Lance.

And immediately I was surrounded by a handful of 'brothers' that to this very day remain my closest friends. Justin Bird, Kyle Schoeningh, Ryan Barstad and Mikey Gamboa—just to name few. Like Lance, these men stood by me and continue to stand with me through pain. Through joy. Through Fear.

Lance left this world in 2005. And I speak for all of us when I say that nothing on this earth could fill that void in our broken hearts. But together we moved forward, one slow step at a time, piecing our lives back together just as our friend would want.

I'm confident today that Lance, knowing my affection for Robert Kennedy, would remind me of his words: "Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom, not a guide by which to live." Or perhaps he would remind

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