

# Commissioners apply for a \$500K grant

## Money will go for senior citizen housing

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — In a nearly record-short about 7½-minute meeting, the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners handled largely routine money matters, including applying for a \$500,000 grant to help with low-income housing, during the board's Wednesday, April 21 meeting.

The board authorized Commissioner John Hillock to sign an application for the grant under the 2021 Community Development Block Grant Program.

Hillock explained how the grant works.

"As part of my duties of being on the board of Community Connection — generally we partner with other counties — the money's used for low-income housing improvements," he said. "The way they set it up in the past is we get this grant from the state, it goes into a revolving loan fund and, say we go do some work on a senior citizen's house, they would get a loan on that, but there's no money due payable until the house is sold or the person is deceased. ... It's a way to get money out to low-income people to do repairs on their homes."

He said Wallowa County usually partners with neighboring counties. This year, Grant County decided to sponsor the grant. Last year it was Union County and Wallowa County has done so in the past.

"Unfortunately, not a lot of the seniors are taking advantage of it in

Wallowa County," Hillock said. "They seem to be using it in Grant and other counties more than they are here."

He said some homeowners seem reluctant to take a new lien on their homes, even though it's not required to be repaid until the house is sold or the homeowner dies.

"A lot of people don't want to put a lien on their house," he said. "But it would be advantageous" for various projects homeowners might need done, such as roof repairs or a septic system.

Hillock said one advantage to the county is that unused funds can be rolled over from year to year. As a result, the county has a considerable fund for senior housing, although he didn't know the exact amount.

In other routine actions, the commissioners approved:

- A plan of action for the county to satisfy the state audits division.
- The receipt of a \$39,000 grant from the state to use for a trailer for its recycling program.
- A transfer of \$25,000 to use for weed spraying.
- A transfer of \$250,000 to buy out the lease the county held on a road grader used by the road department.

The transfers were to place county funds already on hand into the line items where they'll be used.

The commissioners also:

- Accepted the resignation of Deputy Kevin McQuead from the Wallowa County Sheriff's Office. McQuead was sworn in earlier this month as Enterprise police chief.
- Hired Jean Jancaitis to handle planning and building codes.

# Moncrief already reeling in whoppers

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — A local fishing expert who holds the record for the largest mackinaw caught at Wallowa Lake recently hooked another whopper.

He also has had recent success pulling in kokanee, and said it appears this will be a good season for catching large kokanee at the lake.

It's been a good start to the angling season for Mark Moncrief, a hunting and fishing guide who owns Tri-State Outfitters south of Enterprise.

In a matter of hours during a fishing trip at the lake in late March, Moncrief — who holds the lake record for a 36½-pound mackinaw he reeled in back in the 1980s, caught a 35½-pound mackinaw and, he said, hauled in a 33-pounder a couple of hours later.

"I do really well from usually about the first couple week or weeks in March on," he said. "We've done good in February. It depends on the year. On an average by mid-March on we're starting to do good and consistently catching. I do really good on the macks early like that. We have a really large average on our fish. Most macks, people are catching 5-12 pounders. Our average here is 15-18 (pounds)."

With the kokanee, Moncrief said there has been a cycle between smaller fish sizes but higher numbers, or larger numbers but smaller fish.

"Last year, I saw the cycle swing back to a bigger fish," he said. "This year, this early in the year, I'm catching fish in excess of 20 inches already. They'll



Mark Moncrief/Contributed Photo

**Mark Moncrief holds up a 35½-pound mackinaw he caught recently at Wallowa Lake. Moncrief holds the record for the largest mackinaw caught at the lake, one that was just a pound heavier than the one pulled in last month.**



Mark Moncrief/Contributed Photo

**Two of Mark Moncrief's clients hold up a 29-inch, 9-pound kokanee caught under Moncrief's guidance about a decade ago at Wallowa Lake.**

grow an inch a month after March."

Most good-sized kokanee, he said, are anything in excess of 12 inches, and he said 18-20 inches is getting into trophy-sized fish range.

Business has not slowed down for Moncrief despite the pandemic, especially once restrictions were lifted last year and he was able to get back on the water.

"When they opened the

county back up I was just flooded," he said. "... I think it was the COVID. They were just bugging out — a lot of Washington (and) Idaho people (were here)."

Moncrief isn't sure if this year will be as busy as 2020 was for him, but when the large kokanee start showing up at Wallowa Lake, more people make their way to the water to try and hook a big one.

"I don't know if it'll be

### UPDATE ON LOCAL FISHING

Chinook salmon numbers are not expected to be good this year, Kyle Bratcher, assistant district fish biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, said in a recent update.

In the report, Bratcher wrote that Hells Canyon opened to spring fishing April 24, and that he looks for the fishing to improve around the middle of May.

Bratcher also reported that kokanee fishing on the Wallowa Lake is turning in fish that are averaging about 10 inches.

Steelhead fisheries close on Friday, April 30.

as busy as last year, but the word is getting out about these big fish," he said.

This spring, Moncrief not only has had a solid run of catching large fish, but he and his clients are pulling them in in large numbers.

"I had two clients out (from) California. With three of us fishing we boated 62 kokanees," he said, though he noted he personally releases almost all his catches now.

Catching big kokanee, by the way, is not just a trait of his — it runs in his family. The second-biggest kokanee pulled in in the world was one he said his daughter, Shelby, caught at Wallowa Lake 10 years ago — a 27-inch, 9½-pound whopper.

Those interested in getting a guided tour from Moncrief can call Tri-State at 541-426-4468.

# Volunteers hold spring cleaning for Earth Day

## Art contest, litter patrol held in Enterprise

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Spring cleaning took on a special meaning Thursday and Friday, April 22-23, as about a dozen volunteers celebrated Earth Day by holding a "litter patrol," cleaning up the Wallowa County Recycling Center and holding a recycled art contest.

The Friends of Wallowa County Recycling organized the effort, as nine members of the Wallowa County Rotary Club spent a couple hours Thursday picking up trash along Highway 82 from Enterprise to Eggleston Corner, filling 21 bags.

Friends member Randi Jandt said there were a few interesting finds among the trash.

"Interesting finds this year did not include any checks like last year," Jandt said, in reference to a \$200 check found during a similar effort in 2020. "But they included a small, new American flag (still in the wrapper), an Easter card from 1982, a large cardboard box (creepily labeled "Research Mannikans") and pages of



Friends of Wallowa County Recycling/Contributed Photo

**Volunteers bag trash Thursday, April 22, 2021, during a litter patrol south of Enterprise. The volunteers picked up 21 bags of trash between Enterprise and Eggleston Corner.**

a quite torrid letter — or someone's draft of their latest romance novel."

The recycling center got to show off a recently arrived mobile recycling unit trailer, purchased with a grant from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

On the trailer were entries in the recycled art contest where throngs of people could vote on the winners, spin a wheel for prizes and learn about the county's recycling program.

The winners will be on display soon at the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture in Joseph. Everyone who entered an art piece got

some kind of a prize, Jandt said.

Local merchants and individuals donated more than \$1,000 in prizes and giveaways, she said.

Friends volunteers cleaned out the recycling centerbuilding, pressure-washed the gummy plastics room floor, picked up escaped paper around the grounds and perimeter, mounted a new decorative sign and accomplished other chores, Jandt said.

Mike Harvey was on hand with his Wallowa Valley Cleaning Products. All Harvey's products have refillable containers — a

throwback to when we all used to refill stuff — with the intention of reducing plastic waste in the landfill. Harvey's products are available locally at the Wild Carrot Herbals in Enterprise and Joseph Hardware in Joseph.

Local merchants kicked in great prizes and gift certificates, reminding us that the best way to reduce packaging and transportation waste is to shop local, Jandt said.

She said even the weather cooperated for the efforts at the recycling center and the litter patrol.

"If only we could have weather like that every Earth Day," she said.

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