

# Commissioners, advocate butt heads — again

Joseph woman wants few or no people on East Moraine face

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — Once again the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners got a visit from a self-described land-use planning advocate and once again they came head-to-head over the county's the East Moraine Forest Management Plan.

"I've made a study of the wildlife history the best I could," said Milley O'Callaghan of Joseph in submitting a stack of 41 pages with maps and the history of wildlife management. "I've been worried about the wildlife corridor. ... I want the face of the moraine protected because it's winter range."

O'Callaghan said the commissioners were violating restrictions on developing the face of the East Moraine by continuing to allow a single road — mainly used for walking — up the face of the moraine.

The moraine, a parcel of land of roughly 1,800 acres, was purchased and moved to county ownership in January 2020. A draft management plan has since been worked on by the Wallowa Lake Moraines Partnership — made up of Wallowa County, the Wallowa Land Trust,

Wallowa Resources, the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Nez Perce Tribe's cultural and forestry divisions, as well as community members.

### The single road

"Uses of this type, serve to increase the level of human activity and density in the inventoried area and are considered to have effects on the wildlife habitat," O'Callaghan said referring to the single road.

The commissioners had difficulty getting O'Callaghan to state up front what it was she desired.

"There's one pathway or road that's been in existence that people walk and ride and take bicycles up and it's right there at the edge of the timber," Commissioner Todd Nash asked her. "Do you see that as a conflict and a detractor?"

"I do," she said.

"So do you think that should be demolished and no more access at that point?" Nash asked. "I've wanted to, for months now, to get what you want and you dance around what you want out of this. You've treated some



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

**Milley O'Callaghan of Joseph, a self-described land-use planning advocate, addresses the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners at its meeting Wednesday, Sept. 15, 2021, about the county's pending management plan for the East Moraine. From center, Commissioners John Hillock and Todd Nash listen.**

of our staff very poorly over these last few months. Our staff doesn't need to be treated like this; we don't need to be belittled. If you're not going to get to the point and answer my questions, we're no longer going to have a conversation. I don't want to treat you poorly, but this has been ongoing. I've asked you directly several times to get to the point and I want you to get there."

"OK, the point is, you cannot develop the face of the moraine, it would only destroy it," O'Callaghan said. "You can only develop

the backside."

Commissioner Susan Roberts tried to soothe O'Callaghan's concerns.

"We have no plans to develop the face of the moraine, and that's where I'm unsure and unclear on what it is you're asking," she said. "We have no plans to change anything except improve the gate."

### Human density

"The point is that human density is the issue," O'Callaghan said. "The county also faces a policy ... that they would determine in the

future which kind of human density levels they wanted, but they never got around to doing anything except writing that policy. The purpose for acquiring the property was to establish a community forest that would protect the open space on the face of the moraine and the wildlife corridor that's on the face of the moraine and be compatible with the conservation goals of the Wallowa County Land Use Plan ... adding increased recreational activities that are in conflict with the wildlife corridor is not protect-

ing the resource on the face of the moraine."

"Is your request to us to monitor the number of people we allow on the moraine? Is that what you're after?" Roberts asked.

"We figure that three people a day for a year constitutes the number of people who regularly use it now," O'Callaghan said.

She also mentioned requests she had heard of for additional trails to access the face of the moraine. And, she said the commissioners had not held enough meetings on the management plan.

"So we have a differing of opinion on that, and we know we do," Nash said. "We disagree there."

O'Callaghan concluded her presentation by submitting her 41-page document to the commissioners as part of the public comment the county is taking on the forest management plan.

Comments may continue to be submitted until Oct. 2. After that, the plan's management committee will review it and make appropriate changes. In November, the county commissioners will review and approve the revised plan, as will the Oregon Department of Forestry. In December, it is expected the plan will be adopted and implemented by the commissioners.

# County reaches 500 COVID-19 cases

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — It's a number that, just months ago, may have felt unimaginable.

But on Friday, Sept. 17, the Oregon Health Authority's report of seven new COVID-19 cases in Wallowa County pushed the county past 500 total cases of the virus, with 60% of that count coming in the past two months.

The county had seven more cases reported over the weekend, putting the total during the pandemic to 508.

The OHA last week also reported five fatalities in Wallowa County, four of which came during a week-long stretch in August, and one earlier in the spring. There have now been 11 COVID-related deaths in Wallowa County during the pandemic.

The four August deaths are the first reported by OHA during a spike in cases that has seen roughly 300 people in the county contract the virus in the past two months.

The earliest death was

### KEY DATES

Below are the reported dates of key COVID-19 numbers in Wallowa County, with amount of time between the dates.

- First case: April 8, 2020
- 50th case: Oct. 30, 2020 (205 days later)
- 100th case: Jan. 26, 2021 (88 days)
- 150th case: April 2, 2021 (66 days)
- 200th case: July 19, 2021 (108 days)
- 250th case: Aug. 5, 2021 (17 days)
- 300th case: Aug. 17, 2021 (12 days)
- 350th case: Aug. 24, 2021 (seven days)
- 400th case: Aug. 30, 2021 (six days)
- 450th case: Sept. 7, 2021 (eight days)
- 500th case: Sept. 17, 2021 (10 days)

a 79-year-old woman who tested positive on April 28 and died May 11. The woman, who had underly-

ing conditions, died at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Lewiston, Idaho, the OHA update said.

Then, a tough stretch in August saw four individuals die with COVID-19.

First was a 69-year-old man who died on Aug. 20, six days after testing positive for COVID-19. It's not yet known if he had underlying conditions.

A day later, on Aug. 21, an 84-year-old man died, also six days after testing positive for the virus. The man had underlying conditions.

Four days later, on Aug. 25, a 56-year-old woman tested positive and died the same day. It's unknown yet if she had underlying conditions.

The most-recent was an 86-year-old woman who tested positive Aug. 25 and died two days later on Aug. 27. It's unknown if she had underlying conditions.

Vaccinations rates, as of Monday, Sept. 20, continue to trickle higher, though at a slow pace. Currently, 64.1% of residents 18 and older have received at least a dose

of vaccine. In the last month, that number has increased by about 3 percentage points. The data shows, through Sept. 18, 3,691 people vaccinated in the county who are 18 or above, up 176 from 3,515 on Aug 18.

The overall vaccination rate in the county stands at 53.9%.

Statewide hospitalizations for COVID-19 are starting to trickle downward, with the OHA reporting 968 on Monday.

But in Oregon's Region 9, which includes Wallowa County, there were 31 reported hospitalizations due to COVID-19, the region's third highest total of the pandemic.

# Commissioners wrap up monetary issues

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — A couple monetary items that had to be approved before the end of the month were OK'd by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners at a special session Monday morning, Sept. 20.

The commissioners approved a bid of \$28,373 for a District Attorney's Security Grant project that will install bulletproof glass

in windows and a door in the DA's office.

The funding came from Wildhorse Grants of Pendleton and from the DA's usual funding sources. The approval was delayed because county officials wanted to be sure the Wildhorse grant was coming through before spending it, said Brenda Micka, administrative services director for the county.

Micka also said she was

given the go-ahead to pay out \$372,537 in premiums for those who participated in this year's Wallowa County Fair.

She said the premium checks, which also must be paid by Sept. 30, are going to those who entered open class, 4-H and FFA exhibits and who sold animals during the fat stock sale.

The commissioners meet next on Wednesday, Oct. 6, at 9 a.m.

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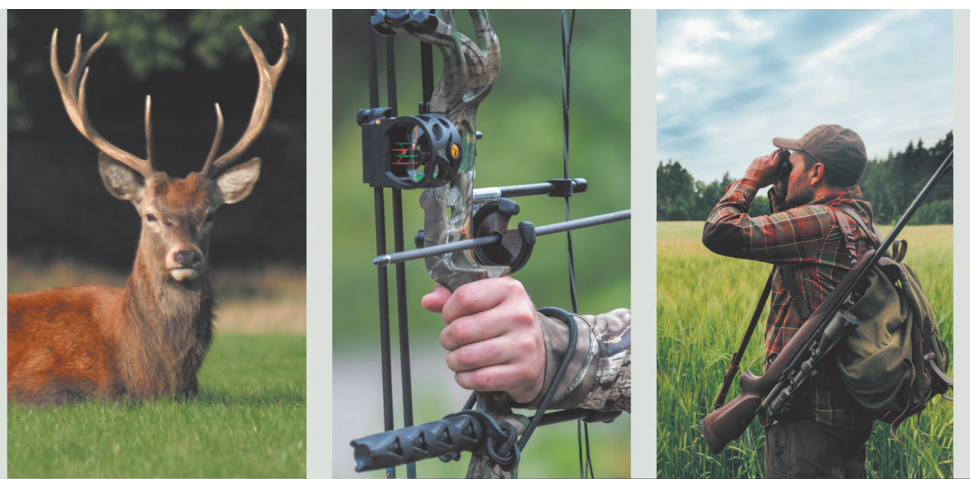
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