

Local man to join Water Resources Commission

State Senate approval set to come today

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — A Wallowa County man is set to join a state committee.

Woody Wolfe, who owns a farm between Wallowa and Lostine, was recently appointed to the Water Resources Commission by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown.

The appointment awaits a final confirmation by the state senators, with a vote set to come today, Wednesday, Sept. 22.

“I guess it either means I was qualified or nobody else applied,” Wolfe said. “I had a couple friends hit me up about applying. They felt I would be a good candidate. I’ve always been interested in water law and become fairly averse

about how it applies to my property specifically. The resource of water is one of the most valuable. I have been diligent to understand how that works.”

Wolfe is filling a vacancy in the seven-person commission left by Bruce Corn, according to Elizabeth Merah, press secretary for Brown.

“He will represent the Eastern Region, consisting of the Owyhee, Malheur, Grande Ronde, Malheur Lake, Middle Snake and Powder drainage basins,” Merah wrote in an email to the Chieftain. “Mr. Wolfe will work with the other commission members in carrying out the duties of the commission. ... As he will represent the Eastern Region (as described above), he will bring his perspectives on that region to contribute to

the statewide goals of the commission.”

Merah, in explaining the commission, said it “sets statewide water resources policy and over-

firmed by the Senate and serve four-year terms.

Wolfe said he sees the appointment and subsequent service as a learning opportunity and to be on the forefront, he said, of the changes he believes are coming concerning water use.

“As much water as there is flowing through Wallowa County, it is a scarce resource. As our regional and global population grows, it’s going to have to be regulated to a greater degree,”

he said. “Exactly what that looks like, I don’t know. I felt like it was in my best interest to maybe, possibly, have a say in what that looks like and have a voice in the decisions that are made. If the rest of the commission doesn’t share my perspective on certain things, at least I will know

what those changes are when it happens.

“My perspective is that if changes are made, we need to try to gain efficiencies in water use either from a consumptive standpoint or an evaporation standpoint. I don’t really have an opinion as far as we need to see more regulation, I would be more open to creative changes to water law that can increase efficiencies.”

Wolfe has experience with water efficiency tasks on his own property, finding ways over the years to use the resource in an effective manner.

“I’ve been successfully awarded a grant for an irrigation efficiency project which was through the Water Resource Department,” he said. “That has given me some experience with water transfers and water statutes and some of the things that are avenues to the use of the Water

Resource Department that I think the average irrigator doesn’t have. I’ve been an active conservationist on my own property, and that has led me to work with the Water Resource Department on a fair amount. I have some experience there.”

He also believes he can apply his knowledge of Wallowa County to the rest of the region he’ll cover for the commission.

“I have extensive knowledge of the geographical region of a small part of Wallowa County,” he said. “Part of my task will be applying what I know and manipulating that to understand how things work in Ontario or Burns, or places that are geographically different and having the thought process of ‘Can things work there or can it not apply.’”

The term Wolfe is serving runs through June 30, 2025.

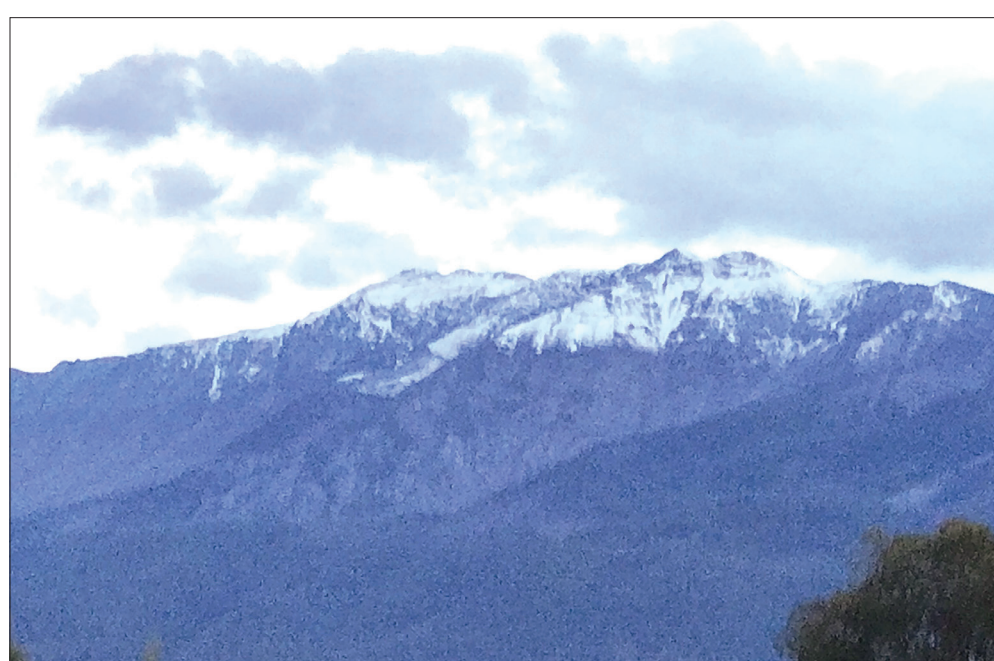
“AS MUCH WATER AS THERE IS FLOWING THROUGH WALLOWA COUNTY, IT IS A SCARCE RESOURCE.”

Woody Wolfe, appointed to the state’s Water Resources Commission

sees the work of the Water Resources Department. Five commission members each represent one of the regional river basins, and two members represent a portion of the state in an “at-large” capacity.”

Commission members are appointed to the position by the governor, con-

First snow of the season arrives in Wallowa County



After a mid-afternoon rainfall on the floor of the Wallowa Valley, on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021, the clouds cleared enough to reveal the first snow of the season on the mountains above.

Photo by Bill Bradshaw/
Wallowa County Chieftain

MEET TIMOTHY!

Timmy, born approx. April 20, 2021 is a neutered male marbled tabby. He was found in a haystack with his two sisters Barley and Alfalfa. Timmy is up-to-date on vaccines, dewormed and is litter box trained. Unfortunately, Timmy was on hold for a paid adoption but it didn't work out so he's back on the market! Timmy is full of energy, full of love and dreams of a home that will spoil him! Will that be you?

Pet of the Week

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Volunteers sought for dog sled race

The Observer

JOSEPH — A volunteer fair for the Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race is set Saturday, Sept. 25, at the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture, 403 N. Main St., Joseph. People interested in helping with Oregon’s only Iditarod and Yukon Quest qualifier can drop in between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Masks are required. The races are in January 2022. For information on the event and volunteering, email publicrelations@eaglecapextreme.com.

Wallowa County

FREE

Chess Club

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The Nature Conservancy Youth

BULL ELK HUNT OPPORTUNITY

On the 33,000 acre Zumwalt Prairie

The Nature Conservancy would like to offer a youth bull elk hunting opportunity to the youth of Wallowa County. Wallowa County youth between the age of 12-17 with a valid elk tag for Chesnimnus 258X OR 258Y are eligible to apply for permission to hunt the Zumwalt Preserve. One permission per season will be granted via random draw. Youth must be accompanied by an adult. Opportunity is for one bull elk with 5 points or less on each side.

To sign up:
Email Chad Dotson at chad.dotson@tnc.org
Deadline to apply October 8th