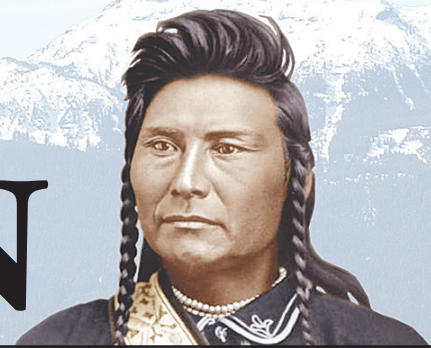




WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



Wallowa County Voices



Nicholas Lewis
Imnaha

Money grows on trees for him

ENTERPRISE — Nicholas Lewis came all the way from his teepee home in Imnaha on Tuesday, Dec. 28, to pedal around Enterprise and get his new puppy his first shots.

To be fair, we should say he got a ride from Imnaha before riding a bicycle around doing errands.

This time of year, one might wonder at living in a teepee, if one doesn't think about the original Nez Perce inhabitants of the area. Lewis finds the lower elevation there quite comfortable.

An arborist, he cut a tree one day in the Imnaha area for a friend who offered to let him set up his teepee on his property.

"It's a good job," he said. "Money does grow on trees for me."

Lewis brought his new pup, Waylon, to Enterprise for his first shots. As he did, Lewis was made well aware of the effect of the cold an increase of nearly 2,000 feet in elevation can mean.

"It's a painfully cold year up here," he said. But, "The snow melted away (at home) before I came up."

Lewis recently shared his thoughts about living in Wallowa County.

What's your favorite thing about Wallowa County?

The lake. I love the lake; it's magic. I swim and hang out at the beach.

Did you get what you wanted for Christmas?

Sure, I got a new puppy.

What are you looking forward to in 2022?

Happiness. I kind of live in the now.

Do you have a New Year's resolution?

I haven't really thought about that yet.

What would it be?

Stay positive.

Have you broken it yet?

No, I try to stay pretty positive. If you don't all you get back is the negative.

What's your advice for people who are thinking about moving here?

I hope you like the cold. My message for the world is stay positive.

— Bill Bradshaw,
Wallowa County Chieftain



Anna Butterfield/Contributed Photo

A snowmobiler rides alongside some cattle stranded in the Upper Imnaha area recently. Many of the cows were calving and some had to be put down after being stuck in deep snow.

Cattle, calves rescued from dire straits in Imnaha snows

Sheriff mulls criminal charges; ranch may be seized by county

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

IMNAHA — An investigation is ongoing into possibly neglected cattle — many of which had young calves — in deep snows on U.S. Forest Service land in the Upper Imnaha area, Wallowa County Sheriff Joel Fish confirmed Friday, Dec. 31.

Fish stated in an email the investigation was started after learning the magnitude of the situation Dec. 19.

"Wallowa County is moving toward seizing the Dean Oregon Ranch cattle for neglect, and we are investigating possible criminal charges," Fish said in the email.

Fish said the sheriff's office is "assisting with the retrieval of the cattle on the Forest Service grazing permits on the Marr Flat C&H Allotment. We have had deputies on snowmobiles assisting since that date."

There have been numerous volunteers helping in the rescue efforts, as confirmed by county Commission Chairman Todd Nash and volunteers with the Wallowa County Humane Society.

Social media alert

One of the first widespread alerts came in a Facebook post by Craig Stockdale, who was one of the first to discover the cattle on the 200 Road south of Salt Creek.

"I just came upon them snowmobiling," Stockdale said Jan. 1.

He said the post mobilized rescuers — both those out finding the cattle and those with facilities to care for the rescued livestock — and he has since taken it down.

Kathy Gisler Reynolds, a volunteer with the Humane Society, shared a post of the cattle Dec. 29. Photos posted on Facebook showed a cow up to its neck in snow and unable to move.

"I was alerted to it yesterday by the ranchers who have been out there trying to save them," Reynolds said Dec. 30.

She listed several people who were involved in rescuing and caring for the

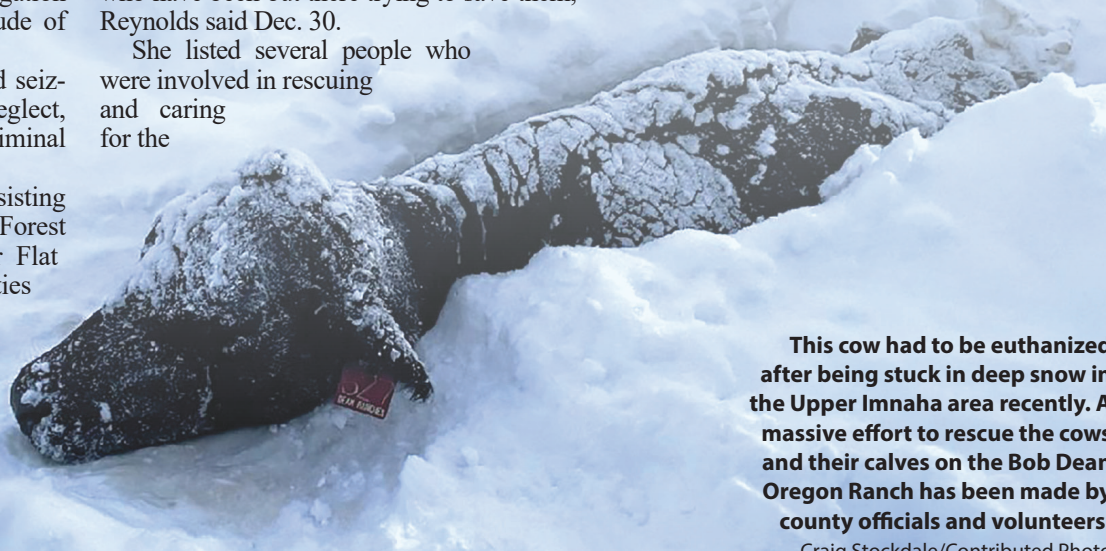
cattle and their calves, calling some of them "heroes."

"Some were too weak to even move," she said of the cattle, adding that although rescuers were able to retrieve calves, a number of the adult cows had to be euthanized.

Stockdale and Anna Butterfield, who with her husband, Mark, ranches northeast of Joseph, confirmed the cattle are on the Bob Dean Oregon Ranch managed by B.J. Warnock.

Dean lives in the Deep South and Warnock was not at liberty to provide contact information.

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This cow had to be euthanized after being stuck in deep snow in the Upper Imnaha area recently. A massive effort to rescue the cows and their calves on the Bob Dean Oregon Ranch has been made by county officials and volunteers.

Craig Stockdale/Contributed Photo

Taking the plunge for New Year's in the lake

Renamed to honor the late Beth Gibans

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA LAKE — Several dozen new year's revelers washed out 2021 and welcomed in 2022 with a cleansing plunge into a frigid Wallowa Lake on New Year's Day, Saturday, Jan. 1, under skies that seemed to shine blue just for the event.

New name

Rechristened the Beth Gibans Memorial Wallowa Lake Polar Bear Plunge, the impromptu event has been going on at least since 2007, said Rich Wandschneider, the only one of the five founders of the event to take part this year.

He estimated there were 40-50 who ran down the boat ramp at the county boat launch site at the north end of the lake during the "first rush."

"We've had as many as 80," he said, adding that the temperatures that hovered around zero degrees likely discouraged some



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

An estimated 40-50 people took the plunge into a chilly Wallowa Lake on Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022, at the Beth Gibans Memorial Wallowa Lake Polar Bear Plunge.

from participating.

The event was named after Gibans this year in her memory, said her husband, Leon Werdinger. Gibans died in June at age 58 after a long battle with ovarian cancer.

Gibans was known in the county for starting Backyard Gardens and the Wallowa County Farmers Market. She also was

known for her love of the outdoors, including the lake.

"She backpacked, danced, ran the rivers and did all sorts of swimming," Werdinger said, adding that she even swam in the lake and swam in in many mountain lakes, even when they were still partially frozen.

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COVID-19

Wallowa County reports 700th case of 2021

Year's total is a 900% increase over 2020 case count

By **RONALD BOND**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — More than 700.

That is the number of COVID-19 cases that have been tallied up in Wallowa County during 2021.

The County passed that threshold Tuesday, Dec. 28, when the Oregon Health Authority reported five cases in Wallowa County. That moved the pandemic total at the time to 780, and the total for the year to 703, amounting to a more than 900% increase in

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