

Environmental groups oppose \$1M wolf compensation bill

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press



ODFW

Environmental nonprofits oppose a bill to provide ranchers with an additional \$1 million in compensation for wolf problems.

SALEM — Environmental groups oppose providing Oregon ranchers with an additional \$1 million in compensation for wolf problems, arguing the bill sends a bad message about the predators.

Supporters of House Bill 4127 counter that as wolves spread across the state, it's necessary to devote more money to pay ranchers for lost livestock and for preventive measures.

"We need to ensure this fund doesn't go dry," said Rep. Bobby Levy, R-Echo, referring to the Wolf Management Compensation and Proactive Trust Fund created in 2011.

"We have over twice as many confirmed depredations as we saw in 2020," Levy said, noting that wolves killed 41 cows, 23 sheep, 9 goats and a guard dog last year.

Based on previous levels of compensation, that means ranchers would need more than \$750,000 in compensation for last year's confirmed losses, she said.

For the current biennium, Oregon has \$400,000 per year in federal and state money authorized for wolf compensation, said Jonathan Sandau, special assistant to the director at the Oregon

Department of Agriculture.

On average over the past three years, the wolf compensation fund has annually received \$425,000 in requests and paid out \$185,000, Sandau said.

At least 30% of the funds must be dedicated to prevention, but usually that proportion is much higher, hovering at about 70% per

year, he said.

Coalitions of environmental nonprofit groups have come out against HB 4127, claiming it will provide funds for missing livestock that wasn't necessarily killed by wolves.

The Oregon Conservation Network, a coalition of 30 organizations, opposes "throwing more money at

missing livestock," partly because it will conflate wayward animals with wolf depredations, said Julie McGraw, the network's representative at a recent House Agriculture, Land Use and Water Committee hearing.

"The more it appears that wolves are killing livestock, the worse it is going to be in terms of the quality of the

relationship with people trying to raise livestock," she said.

The number of livestock that have allegedly gone missing due to wolves far surpasses the number of confirmed depredations, said Julie Moser, wildlife program coordinator for the Oregon Wild nonprofit.

Meanwhile, livestock going missing for any number of reasons, so those claims for compensation aren't verifiable, Moser said.

"Blaming wolves for any unaccounted livestock not only superficially inflates wolf-livestock conflict but it perpetuates a problematic stigma about wolves," she said.

Critics of the bill also argued the wolf compensation fund is prone to misuse and should be reformed, while adding more money to it will create a "moral hazard" by encouraging ranchers not to look for missing animals.

"Making the fund easier to abuse is not a solution," said Bethany Cotton, conservation director for the Cascadia Wildlands nonprofit.

The bill's supporters pointed out that despite the critics' focus on missing livestock, the added funding would go to the wolf compensation program as a whole.

"There's a lot of con-

jecture on this but there are really no facts," Rep. David Brock-Smith, R-Port Orford said.

With wolf depredations reaching a record level in 2021, it's worth adequately funding the wolf compensation program to encourage acceptance of state policies for the species, Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane said.

"It's a trend that's starting to possibly erode the social tolerance we started to develop with the wolf management plan," Owens said of rising depredations. "Nothing in this bill changes the wolf management plan. Nothing in this bill harms wolves. In fact, this bill is there to support that social tolerance of wolf interactions with our public."

Wolves cause problems for the livestock industry that go beyond depredations, such as lower conception rates and weight loss, said Todd Nash, president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and a Wallowa County commissioner.

"If we paid for the missing livestock and the confirmed depredations, it wouldn't come close to capturing the cost incurred by ranchers," Nash said. "If there's going to be fraud in the system, the fraud is that we have a compensation system and there are not funds available."

Judge restores many wolves to endangered species list

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

A federal judge in Oakland, California, Thursday, Feb. 10, restored many wolves in the Lower 48 to the endangered species list, overturning a decision by the Trump administration that was cheered by ranchers.

U.S. District Judge Jeffrey White embraced claims

by wolf advocates that stripping protection was premature.

The ruling again puts wolves in Western Washington, Western Oregon and California under federal protection.

The decision does not cover wolves in Eastern Washington, Eastern Oregon, Idaho or Montana. Wolves in those areas will remain off the federally

protected list of species and will still be managed by state officials.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service argued that wolves throughout the U.S. were no longer threatened with extinction because of robust wolf populations in the Northern Rocky Mountains and the Great Lakes.

The agency said West Coast wolves were an extension of those large and

stable populations.

White, however, said the agency erred by declaring West Coast wolves are recovered based on the status of wolves in Rockies and Great Lakes.

Environmental groups that sued to restore protection celebrated White's decision.

"This is a huge win for gray wolves and the many people across the country

who care so deeply about them," Collette Adkins, carnivore conservation director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said in a statement.

The Biden administration inherited the lawsuits and defended in court delisting wolves throughout the Lower 48. At the same time, the Fish and Wildlife Service said it will review the status of wolves

throughout the U.S.

The agency said increased hunting of wolves in states such as Idaho may cause it to reconsider its decision to remove federal protection.

Under federal protection, wolves that attack livestock are not subject to lethal removal. Washington and Oregon wildlife managers have used lethal control to curb attacks on livestock.

REFLECTIONS ON THE 2021 MARKET HERE'S WHO RUBY PEAK SERVED

234
buyers and sellers assisted

25
retired buyers

where the buyers were from
45- Wallowa County or returning
7- Eastern Oregon
42- Western Oregon
10- Washington
6- California
6- Idaho
7- Other

18
first-time buyers

20%
median sale price increase

50
investment property/
second homes

2020/2021 HOME SALES IN WALLOWA COUNTY

Home in Town

City/Area	# of sales 2020	# of sales 2021	Median Sale Price 2020	Median Sale Price 2021
Joseph	20	28	\$256,000	\$334,500
Enterprise	37	37	\$225,000	\$299,650
Lostine	3	2	\$165,000	\$250,000
Wallowa	5	22	\$190,000	\$202,500
Imnaha	4	1	\$86,250	\$552,500
Wallowa Lake	17	16	\$355,000	\$472,500
Homes on 1 - 20 Acres (All Areas)	29	35	\$425,000	\$450,000
Residential Acreage (1-10 Acres)	16	28	\$146,250	\$165,000

Thank you to our clients
for a successful 2021!



Anette Christoffersen
Principal Broker
Cell: 541-398-1148
anette.realtor@gmail.com



Kirk Makin
Owner/Principal Broker
Cell: 541-398-0340
kirkmakin@frontier.com



Michele Baird
Principal Broker, GRI, ABR
Cell: 541-398-1377
mbaird@eoni.com



Diane Daggett
Broker
Cell: 541-398-1297
diane.daggett1297@gmail.com



Lindsey Chrisman
Broker
Cell: 541-398-8065
lindseychrisman1@gmail.com



Kent Sands
Broker
Cell: 541-263-1492
kentsands@eoni.com



Kate Crawford
Broker
Cell: 541-231-9714
e.kate.crawford@gmail.com



Deidra Ripsom
Broker
Cell: 541-324-1425
homesbydeidra@gmail.com

See our listings at
www.RubyPeakRealty.com

83365 Joseph Hwy, Joseph, OR 97846

541-432-5000