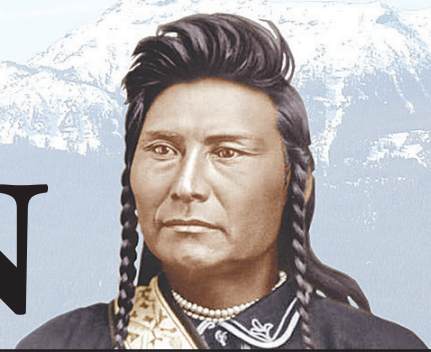




WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN



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Wallowa County Voices



Charles Ellis
Imnaha

He moved here from Hawaii during the pandemic

IMNAHA — Charles Ellis first encountered Wallowa County in the mid-1990s while returning from a business trip in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, he had attended as chairman of the Northwest Realtor Energy Task Force.

More than two decades later — and after 27 years living in Eugene and 20 years in Maui — he and his wife made their home on the Imnaha River. It's a place they bought as a vacation home, but it became their permanent home.

"(When) the governor shut down Hawaii's economy (in 2020), we thought maybe we should get out of dodge," he said, adding they will have been here two years in June.

Ellis recently shared his thoughts about Wallowa County.

Favorite thing about the county?

I love the people. They're really friendly. ... I like the fact there is not a lot of traffic. It's not crammed. I can drive to Enterprise in a little less than an hour and a half. I like the solitude. There are no crowds.

What are you looking forward to this year?

We just went down and bought two steelhead poles and reels from the Sports Corral (to go fishing).

What are your thoughts on the Russian invasion of Ukraine?

I think that Putin bit off more than he could chew. He militarily does not have the logistics or the morale to win this battle. I think it's criminal what he's doing.

What needs to be done about high gas prices?

We need to stop the war on gas and oil.

What advice do you have for people considering moving here?

Buy some long underwear for the winter, some good boots and a good coat. Enjoy the snow. Enjoy the seasons. ... Explore the county. It's beautiful. Come here for the beauty of God's creation. Come here for hunting and fishing. And I just love my little church, Imnaha Christian Community.

— Ronald Bond,
Wallowa County Chieftain

Honoring one of their own



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group

Officers with the Oregon State Police carry the flag-draped casket of Sgt. Marcus McDowell out of Loveland Funeral Chapel, La Grande, on Monday, April 4, 2022.

OSP remembers Sgt. Marcus McDowell

By RONALD BOND
Wallowa County Chieftain

LA GRANDE — Members of the Oregon State Police are reeling after the sudden loss of one of their own last week.

"It's devastated our region," retired OSP patrol Sgt. Kyle Hove said of the death of Sgt. Marcus McDowell. "He has friends all over, not just Union County (and) Wallowa County. He has friends in Baker, Umatilla (counties) — he has worked the whole state."

McDowell, 48, was found dead in his patrol vehicle in front of his Joseph home Tuesday afternoon, March 29, of a single gunshot wound to the head.

An investigation determined the gunshot wound to be self-inflicted. OSP stated McDowell was on duty at the time of his death.

"Our hearts go out to his family, friends, and co-workers as they cope with this tragic incident," OSP said in a statement March 31.

Those who worked with McDowell remembered him for his strong work ethic, for his smiling personality, for being a friend, and for caring for those around him during an OSP career that spanned 17½ years.

"He was a wonderful human being," said La

Grande-based East Region Capt. Daniel Conner. "He is going to be sorely missed by everybody for a long time."

McDowell spent the majority of his career in Union and Wallowa counties, but got his start with OSP Sept. 1, 2004, being initially assigned to the John Day outpost, Conner said. He was later transferred to La Grande and worked out of Northeastern Oregon for the rest of his career.

"Marcus has always been a very motivated and driven state trooper," Conner, who has been with OSP since 2005 and said he knew McDowell most of his career, said. "He's got a very good work ethic. He comes to work ready to go, always gives 110%."

McDowell spent five years as a K-9 handler based in La Grande, and followed that with five years in the Fish and Wildlife division.

He also spent time in drug interdiction, where on patrol he would search for vehicles suspected of transporting illegal substances, seeking to disrupt drug trafficking through patrol interdiction.

"Marcus, he loved his job," said Hove, who McDowell replaced as patrol sergeant for the La Grande-area in March 2020. "He was a hard worker. He was very productive. He was active

See McDowell, Page A16



McDowell

OSP sergeant found dead with self-inflicted gunshot wound

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — An Oregon State Police sergeant was found dead in his patrol car Tuesday, March 29, of a single gunshot wound to the head, according to a press release from Wallowa County Sheriff Joel Fish.

Fish and WCSO Deputy Paul Pagano responded to a 3:41 p.m. call of a possible medical emergency at the residence of OSP Sgt. Marcus McDowell on North College Street in Joseph.

When Fish and Pagano arrived, they found McDowell unconscious in his patrol car in the driveway. After the officers made forced entry into McDowell's vehicle, they found him to be dead of a gunshot wound.

See Death, Page A7

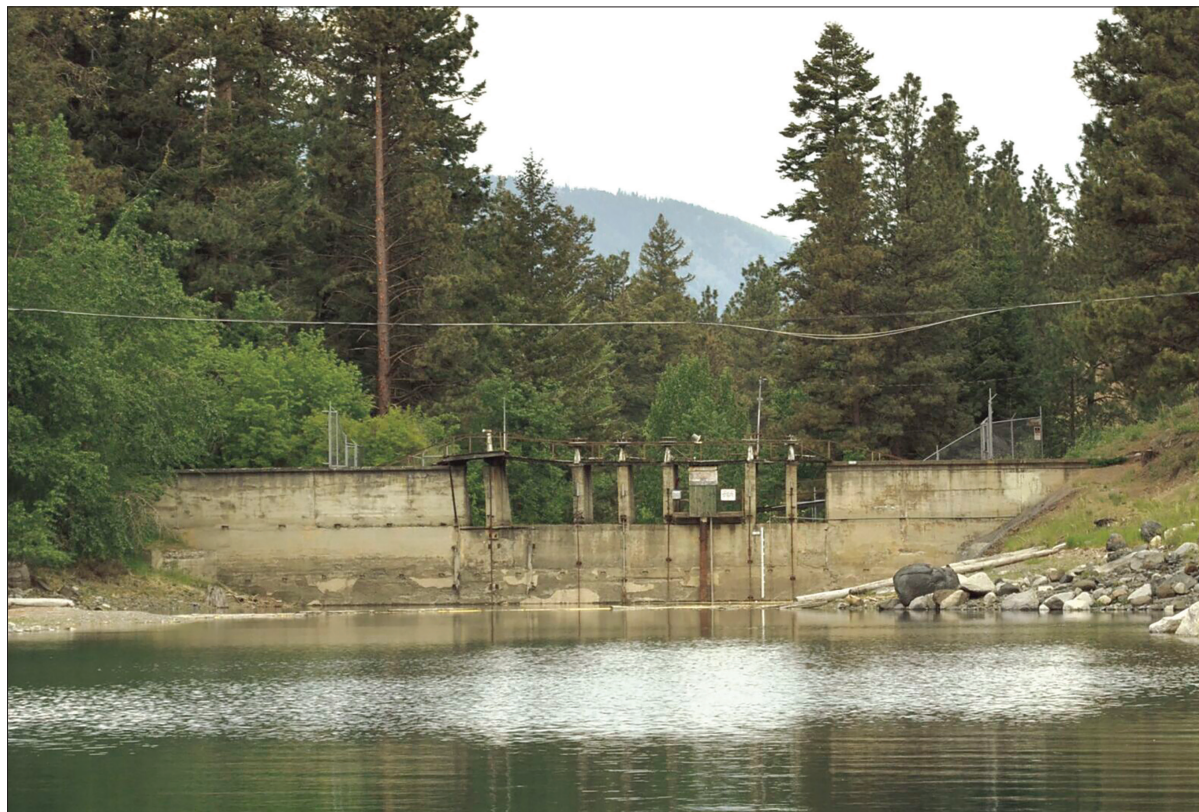
Price tag on Wallowa Lake Dam soars to \$21M

By BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The price tag on the proposed refurbishing of the Wallowa Lake Dam has jumped to about \$21 million, said Dan Butterfield, president of the Wallowa Lake Irrigation District, leaving the stakeholders wondering where the extra money will come from.

The district, which owns the dam, hopes to break ground on the project in the fall of 2023, after the irrigation season ends that September. The Legislature added \$14 million in state lottery funds to its budget last year for the project that was originally estimated to cost about \$16 million. Now the district and the other stakeholders have to figure where to find the additional money.

"We're going to want to make sure we have the funding lined up before we start. We're not spending any money until we get the \$14 (million)," Butterfield said Monday, April 4. "We're going to



Wallowa County Chieftain, File Photo

The price tag to refurbish the Wallowa Lake Dam has soared from the originally estimated \$16 million to a new figure of about \$21 million, according to the Wallowa Lake Irrigation District, which owns the dam.

See Dam, Page A7

