

Local & State

PRO-WOLF GROUPS HELPED TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE \$46,000 FENCE

Southern Oregon rancher puts up fence to thwart gray wolves

■ Ted Birdseye said other tactics, including dogs and inflatable tubes, were ineffective

By George Plaven
Capital Press

PROSPECT — Ted Birdseye has tried seemingly everything to keep the wolves out of his ranch in Southwest Oregon.

Fladry, guard dogs and even inflatable dancing tube men — similar to those seen outside of used car lots — have all failed to keep the predators at bay, Birdseye said. Now, a \$46,000 wildlife fence might be the last hope for protecting his cattle in an area where gray wolves remain listed as a federally endangered species.

Crews finished installing the 5-foot-tall, 3-mile-long fence on Nov. 4, wrapping around 276 acres of pasture at the Mill-Mar Ranch about 35 miles north of Medford. The property borders the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, home of the Rogue Pack, which has at least six known wolves as of 2018. Made from recycled steel posts spaced 90 feet apart, with eight strands of high-tensile electric wire running between 1-inch fiberglass rods, Birdseye said anything that touches the fence “is supposed to get the shock of its life.” It is powered by a 3 foot by 3 foot solar panel and battery.

“My big concern is I just hope it works,” Birdseye said. “If it doesn’t work, I don’t know what the other options are.”

Birdseye bought the Mill-Mar Ranch near the small community of Prospect roughly four years ago. The sixth-generation rancher has been frustrated by the Rogue Pack repeatedly attacking and killing his livestock and pets, including eight calves and two guard dogs. Whereas the state can



George Plaven / Capital Press

Crews finished installing a 5-foot-tall, 3-mile-long wildlife fence at Mill-Mar Ranch in southwest Oregon on Nov. 4 to keep wolves from preying on cattle.

authorize shooting wolves that meet the definition of “chronic depredation” in Eastern Oregon, the animals are still listed as endangered and managed by the feds west of highways 395, 78 and 95.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has worked extensively with Birdseye to set up nonlethal deterrents, such as flashing lights, alarm boxes and fladry — lines of rope strung up along fences with red flags that flap in the wind, intended to scare away wolves.

Defenders of Wildlife, a nonprofit environmental group, also donated two neon green and yellow waving tubes to stand guard over Birdseye’s cattle in February. Yet the Rogue Pack keeps coming back, he said, with the latest incident in March where the wolves took down a 5-month-old, 400-pound calf.

In response, Birdseye decided to build a more sturdy wildlife fence around the entire pasture. The project received a \$25,000 grant

from the USFWS, as well as \$15,000 from the Jackson County wolf depredation compensation committee.

Counties are awarded money from the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s Wolf Depredation Compensation and Financial Assistance Grant Program for nonlethal deterrents.

A second environmental advocacy group, the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, or KS Wild for short, also launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise \$6,000 for the fence, which it accomplished over three weeks in June.

Joseph Vaile, who until recently served as executive director of the Ashland-based group, said the Mill-Mar Ranch is at a crossroads of wolf movement in the region. “We felt it was a very important place to put some energy,” Vaile said.

What’s more, Vaile said he hopes the effort will show that ranchers and conservationists can put their

differences aside and work to come up with solutions to protect wolves, while ensuring that producers can keep their operations profitable.

“It’s something that we need to do a lot more of, I think,” Vaile said.

The Rogue Pack has garnered much attention since it was established by Oregon’s famous wandering wolf, OR-7, traveling more than 1,000 miles from the Wallowa Mountains to the southern Cascade Range. The pack was first recognized in 2014, and has produced pups every year since then, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The fence at Mill-Mar Ranch was built by Carpenter’s High Desert Fencing in Bonanza. It took about three weeks to finish the job, Birdseye said.

“I was impressed with that operation,” Birdseye said. “We’re just hoping (that it works). I guess we’re gonna find out here shortly.”

ARREST

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Juan Anthony Martinez-Moschella, 25, was arrested at 8:27 a.m. Tuesday after police received information he was in the area of the Baker Truck Corral on east Campbell Street.

“With this arrest, Martinez-Moschella’s crime spree has come to an end,” Police Chief Ray Duman stated in a press release.

Martinez-Moschella was the victim of an Oct. 7 shooting in which he was seriously injured by a man wielding a handgun. Martinez-Moschella was flown by Life Flight to a Boise hospital where he was treated and later released.

The Baker County Major Crime Team has identified a suspect in the shooting, but no arrest has been made. Duman says the person is known to have left the area.

Martinez-Moschella, who police describe as a transient, was arrested Tuesday on these charges:

- Three counts of felon in possession of a firearm, a Class C felony.
- Felon in possession of a short-barrel shotgun, a Class B felony.

- Pointing a firearm at another, an unclassified misdemeanor.
- First-degree burglary, a Class A felony.
- One count each of possessing and distributing methamphetamine, a Class C felony and a Class B felony respectively.
- Interfering with police, a Class A misdemeanor.
- Tampering with evidence, a Class A misdemeanor.

Duman stated that officers from the Baker County Sheriff’s Office, Baker County Parole and Probation and Oregon State Police have assisted the city with numerous investigations involving Martinez-Moschella.

“Finally it all came together,” Duman said Tuesday.

Police learned that Martinez-Moschella, who came to Baker City from Florida, had been seen near the Baker Truck Corral at 515 Campbell St.

When police attempted to arrest him, he entered a motor home parked in the area and attempted to hide a handgun and drug evidence without success.

Duman said the gun was identified as a .380 handgun taken in a theft from the

Campbell Street home of Kristy Backlund, 44, sometime last month.

“He knew the jig was up,” Duman said. “He thought he could get away, but this time it didn’t happen.”

Duman said Martinez-Moschella has criminal records in Florida, Texas and Oregon.

“He’s been very active in this community,” Duman said. “He’s been a one-man menace.”

Duman said police have been thwarted in some regard because people have been afraid to report crimes that he’s committed.

“He’s often armed and people have been scared of him,” Duman said.

“Now that he’s in custody we’re hoping a lot of victims with information will come forward and help us with some of these other crimes,” he said.

Additional information will be presented to the Baker County District Attorney’s Office for consideration by a grand jury, he added.

More information regarding Martinez-Moschella and his crimes will be limited because of additional ongoing investigations, Duman said.

Fewer hate crimes in Oregon in 2018

By Jake Thomas
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — The number of hate crimes reported in Oregon dropped in 2018 after a three-year increase, according to a new report released earlier this week by the FBI.

There were 118 hate crimes reported last year in Oregon, a drop from 146 in 2017.

Previous FBI reports show that hate crime incidents in Oregon spiked at 187 in 2008 before declining. They rose

again in 2016 to 104.

The FBI defines a hate crime as an offense such as vandalism or assault, motivated by bias against the victim’s race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender or other protected characteristic.

While the FBI statistics are widely cited, they are considered incomplete because they rely on local law enforcement agencies to voluntarily report incidents. In Oregon, large swaths of the state reported

no incidents in 2018.

“We feel that it’s not a complete picture,” said Shushma Raghavan, field director for social justice group Unite Oregon.

She said that the small drop is likely not significant because the numbers don’t tell the whole story and that minorities continue to experience hate and violence at alarming levels. Raghavan said she is hopeful that Oregon’s recently updated hate

crimes law will collect better data on the problem.

Despite the overall decrease, more police agencies reported, with 24 cities represented compared to 20 the year before. Notably, Astoria, Bend, Grants Pass and Hermiston reported incidents in 2018.

The FBI report shows that Oregon followed national trends. Law enforcement reported a total of 7,120 hate crime incidents in 2018,

Baker man accused of using weapon in car theft

By Chris Collins
collins@bakercityherald.com

A Baker City man was arrested Tuesday for threatening another man with a weapon and stealing his car.

Colvin William Cutshall III, 30, who police describe as a transient, was arrested at 2:49 a.m. on 16th Street near Auburn Avenue. He is being held at the Baker County Jail on one count each of second-degree robbery, a Class B felony; and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, a Class C felony.

Police Chief Ray Duman said Cutshall took a 1994 Honda Civic belonging to Alen Brown, 19, of Baker City.

Cutshall reportedly had hitched a ride with Brown from Haines to Baker City on Sunday. When they stopped at Gas & Snack at 2212 10th St., Cutshall threatened Brown, who did not resist and left the vehicle, Duman said.

Cutshall also is being held on a Union County warrant charging him with third-degree theft for allegedly taking a can of spray paint from the La Grande Thatcher’s Ace Hardware Store. He was arrested at the jail Tuesday on two Baker County Circuit Court warrants charging him with violating terms of his probation.

Governors commit to new I-5 bridge

By Lauren Dake
Oregon Public Broadcasting

The governors of Oregon and Washington joined forces Monday to show a unified commitment to replacing the Interstate 5 bridge.

Democratic Govs. Kate Brown, of Oregon, and Jay Inslee, of Washington, met in Vancouver, Washington, to announce the first formal steps to develop a finance plan and reevaluate previous studies of replacing the bridge.

They are allocating \$44 million to the initial effort of what could eventually be a multibillion-dollar bridge replacement project.

“This joint effort to replace the interstate bridge is critical to the safety and economies of both Oregon and Washington, and an important step forward as we invest in the growth of our region,” Brown said.

This is not the first time the two states have tried to work together to replace the aging and congested I-5 bridge. A planning process that began in 2001 ended up costing about \$200 million before the project imploded.

DRY SPELL

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After 30 straight days without measurable rain at the Baker City Airport, a Pacific storm dropped a little more than one-tenth of an inch of rain between about 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. Tuesday. Showers later brought the daily total to 0.12 of an inch.

The last time the rain gauge at the Airport collected more than a trace of moisture was on Oct. 19, when .09 of an inch fell.

Although fall isn’t the soggiest season around here — late spring is, with May the wettest month on average, and June ranking second — it’s unusual to go without measurable rain for a 30-day period spanning parts of October and November.

The average rainfall for that period is about 0.80 of an inch.

The dry spell, which was caused by a persistent ridge of high pressure off the Oregon Coast that diverted storms to the north, was notable not only for its length but for its warmth.

The high temperature was above average at the Airport on each of the first 19 days of November. That strike might end today, as the forecast high of 45 is only 1 degree above average for Nov. 20.

Wintry weather is forecast to arrive late in the weekend and continue into Thanksgiving week. Snow showers are possible in Baker City Sunday night through Tuesday, with high temperatures in the mid to upper 30s and lows in the 20s.



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