SALVAGE

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That's lawful so long as the animal is dead and doesn't have to be put out of its misery with a gunshot.

But if a driver hits and wounds an animal, then has to euthanize it, only the driver can legally salvage the meat, Ratliff said. In those cases the driver is also required to immediately notify law enforcement.

The driver who hits an animal can also salvage the meat if a police officer dispatches a wounded animal.

Ratliff estimated that about half of the animals he has checked were salvaged by the driver of the vehicle.

Ratliff praised the salvage law.

"It allows people access to a resource," he said.

Ratliff said the law has added to the workload for himself and his staff, but with an average of a few cases per month, the task isn't especially time-consuming.

Although people who salvage animals do the permitting online, the law also requires that they bring the animal's head (and antlers, in the case of bucks and bulls) to an ODFW office within five business days.

That allows ODFW biologists to take a tissue sample that is tested for Chronic Wasting Disease, a potentially devastating affliction that so far has not been confirmed in Oregon.

Ratliff said the law is helpful because the animals brought in for testing are from every part of Oregon, which makes for a broader testing program than would otherwise be possible.

And ODFW doesn't have to send employees into the field to capture and take samples from animals.

Timothy Bishop/Travel Baker County

A cow and calf elk cross a highway in Baker County. A state law that took effect Jan. 1, 2019, allows people in certain cases to salvage meat from deer or elk hit by a vehicle.

Early morning encounter

Morgan, 18, who lives near Halfway, was driving her 2010 Toyota Tacoma before dawn on May 16, 2020. She and her brother, Cole Morgan, were heading to the woods to hunt wild turkeys.

Madison Morgan said she was driving at between 30 mph and 40 mph on a road in Pine Valley when a whitetail buck sprang from a patch of brush and clipped the side of her pickup.

"It ran straight out in front of me," she said.

She said her dad, Albert Morgan, had told her about the roadkill salvage law.

Morgan said her brother shot and killed the deer, which was severely injured.

One hindquarter was damaged by the impact with the pickup and couldn't be salvaged, but Morgan said the rest of the meat was fine. She estimated she ended up with about 75 pounds of venison.

"Overall it's a very beneficial law," Morgan said. "You're not wasting an animal on the side of the road."

Although the pickup was insured, Morgan said she and her family joked, while enjoying a meal of venison, that "this was the most expensive deer we've ever eaten."

Frustrated hunter

Ted Schadewitz sees quite a few dead deer on the side of the road while driving between Baker City and his home near Hunt Mountain, at the edge of Baker Valley about 12 miles northwest of town.

And since the roadkill salvage law took effect two years ago, he's stopped to look over a few carcasses.

But none was fresh.

Until Sept. 24, 2020.

Schadewitz was driving toward Baker City on Pocahontas Road about 10 a.m. when he saw a mule deer doe lying on the side of the road about 2 miles west of town.

Schadewitz, who is a long-time hunter, inspected the deer. He said it had not been dead for long.

He salvaged about 70 pounds of venison from the mature doe, discarding the area, on the animal's side, where it was struck by the car.

(Blood can ruin meat quickly.)

Schadewitz, who was disappointed that he didn't draw a deer tag last year, said he was happy to be able to put fresh meat in his freezer.

Although he doesn't drive around looking for carcasses, Schadewitz said he doesn't exactly have to search.

"We get a lot of roadkill out this way," he said. "Because of where I live I've been waiting for the chance. You've got to be there at the right time."

Ratliff endorses Schadewitz's precautions in checking a carcass — presuming you're not the person who hit the animal and don't know precisely when it died — to be sure the meat has not spoiled.

"Your nose knows," Ratliff said. "If it doesn't smell right, don't salvage it."

He recommends people examine meat near a bone, where it's likely to spoil first.

Schadewitz said the online permitting process was straightforward. He thinks the salvage law was a good addition.

"I don't like to see anything go to waste," he said.

A surprise dinner

Thomas Taylor's first taste of venison salvaged from a roadkilled deer was something of a prank.

Taylor, who grew up in Alabama and has lived in La Grande since 2011, was backpacking with a friend in 2019 at Culver Lake in the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

They were digging in to a dinner of deer backstrap, morel mushrooms, mashed potatoes and fiddlehead ferns when Taylor's friend remarked: "That's some roadkill you're eating."

The announcement didn't affect Taylor's appetite.

But it did pique his curiosity.

Taylor remembered reading a news story about the new salvage law, but he wasn't familiar with its details.

And he's never hit a deer himself.

He chuckles when he notes that he works in the auto body industry, and thus has occasion to meet people who have had a collision with a deer or elk.

Taylor said he salvaged three deer last fall.

In the first two cases, Taylor said a friend called and said they had hit a deer.

In the third instance he came across a deer while driving to work on a snowy morning.

That animal was so fresh it was still so warm that no snow had accumulated on its hide, Taylor said.

He said the online permitting process was "easy."

Taylor, who is an avid hunter, said the salvage law is sensible.

"It's so stupid, an utter waste for such a wonderful creature to not be used," he said.

GRANT

Continued from Page 1A

Although no decision has yet been made, the Baker School Board has been discussing the possibility of seeking voter approval of a pared-down bond measure since a $48 million plan was defeated in November 2018.

The District had qualified for the $4 million matching grant in that round of applications, but did not receive the state money provided by the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching (OSCIM) grant program because the measure failed.

The Board qualified for the $4 million grant a second time, but that money was not awarded after the District withdrew its 2020 plan to seek approval of a $7.5 million bond measure because of the downturn in the economy that resulted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the current plan, the $4 million bond, accompanied by the matching grant and another $4 million from the District's Capital Projects Fund, would be used to upgrade mechanical and electrical systems in all schools and to build a kitchen/cafeteria at Baker Middle School. Safety and security improvements also would be made at every school, Witty said.

The District also would plan to use a portion of its share of state money received through the Student Investment Account of the Student Success Act, approved by the 2019 Legislature, to fund the improvements, Witty has stated in prior meetings.

The Board will continue its discussion of the bond proposal during a Zoom work session beginning at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 21. More information about how to join that meeting is available by calling the District Office at 541-524-2260 or on the District's website at baker5j.org (scroll to the calendar listing Board meetings near the center of the cover page).

The public is invited to offer input during the session, Witty stated in the press release.

A final decision about whether to place the $4 million measure on the ballot will be made during the Board's Feb. 18 meeting.

Witty said the Baker School District was one of 11 approved to receive a combined $43.1 million in OSCIM grant money if their bond measures are approved in the May election.

Of those chosen for the matching grants, 60% were awarded on a priority basis to smaller, more rural districts with lower property value, Witty said. The other grants were distributed on a first-come, first-served basis according to when the applications were submitted.

As part of their applications, the districts were required to describe the types of projects the grant would fund and present a facilities assessment and a long-range facilities plan, Witty said.

Chip-sealed roads could be especially snowy this winter

ENTERPRISE — Drivers on Eastern Oregon highways that were chip-sealed last summer should expect a thicker layer of snow on those routes, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) said.

To avoid scraping away the chip seal layer, ODOT snowplow drivers will use a metal plate, called a shoe, to keep the plow blade about 1 inch above the road surface.

Chip sealing can take more than six months to fully harden, according to ODOT.

Snowplow drivers will spread gravel and de-icing liquid in some places as well.

Sections of highway that were chip-sealed last summer include:

- Highway 7 (Sumpter-Whitney), from Milepost 9.5 (Baker-Grant County line) to Milepost 35.5, near Mason Dam.
- Highway 410 (Sumpter), from Highway 7 junction to Milepost 3.7, just beyond Sumpter.
- Highway 3, from the top of Buford Grade north of Enterprise, to Milepost 38.
- Highway 82 from Minam to Wallowa, Milepost 33.7 to 46.3.
- Highway 26 from John Day to Prairie City, Milepost 162.6 to 175.

New At The Library

Patrons can reserve materials in advance online or by calling 541-523-6419. Drive-in hours at 2400 Resort St. are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

FICTION

- "American Traitor," Brad Taylor
- "Neighbors," Danielle Steel
- "Outlawed," Anna North
- "All the Colors of Night," Jayne Ann Krentz
- "The Vanderbeekers to the Rescue," Karina Yan Glaser

NONFICTION

- "The Best Flatwater Paddles in Oregon," Christopher Heaps
- "Hellfire Boys," Theo Emery
- "Escalante's Dream," David Roberts
- "Eyes to the Wind," Ady Barkan
- "Black Flags, Blue Waters," Eric Dolan

DVDS

- "Misbehavior" (Comedy)
- "Neanderthal" (Documentary)
- "The square" (Drama)
- "The wedding banquet" [Xi yan] (Comedy)
- "The Wolf of Snow Hollow" (Horror)

SCHOOLS

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After discussing the issue this week with Colt Gill, director of the Oregon Department of Education, Witty said he believes the District will be able to send the older students to in-person classes in cohort groups of 100 students twice weekly beginning Jan. 25. That's up from the 50-student class groups that have been receiving in-person instruction one day a week since Nov. 9.

Witty

Returning students to in-person instruction two days per week is the best the District can do while maintaining health protocols, Witty said.

Younger students in preschool through sixth-grade all returned to in-person classes on Oct. 14 because those groups spend most of their day in one classroom. The older students, who have been held to a 50-person class group attending school in person one day a week by current state guidelines, rotate through different classes during the day.

Maintaining health and safety protocols has kept students, staff and the community safe to date by preventing any spread of the coronavirus in the schools, Witty is quick to point out.

Those protocols include keeping sick people out of school, quarantining those who have been exposed to people who have tested positive for the virus outside the school setting and continuing to wear face masks and to follow proper personal hygiene and sanitation practices.

Witty said the District will work closely with the Baker County Health Department to make any changes. He noted that the department will be under increased pressure, especially to conduct contact tracing if necessary, should the state allow the number of students attending BMS and BHS per day to be doubled.

"Contact tracing has to be a critical tool in keeping everybody safe," Witty said. "We can't do this on our own. It has to be a collaborative effort. I'm hopeful they feel they can do it."

Witty said plans are being made to be ready if the go-ahead is given by the state.

"We've got to be ready to move," he said.

He added, however, that the District also will rely on the Health Department's advice every step of the way.

As part of the planning, two more bus drivers have been added to the transportation staff and a new bus has been purchased while keeping older buses in the fleet to allow students to maintain proper social distancing while being transported to and from school. Community Connection also has been enlisted to help haul some of the secondary students.

Witty said once the District receives written confirmation that it can move to 100 students per cohort group at the upper grade levels, word will go out to the community.

Jan. 25 was chosen for the transition because that's when the second semester of classes begins, Witty said.

Gov. Kate Brown announced Dec. 31 that the metrics requirements that had determined when schools could reopen moved from required to advisory on Jan. 1. However, Witty said following the "Ready Schools, Safe Learners" health protocols is still essential.

The protocols are the District's best protection against any possible litigation that might be made related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Witty said.

Although the state Legislature in December passed a law to limit liability to schools for COVID-19 related claims, Districts have been warned to carefully follow all state requirements as they make plans to reopen.

In a Wednesday email to Oregon School Boards Association members, the organization's executive director Jim Green urged schools "to move cautiously" to protect themselves.

Witty said the Baker School District will follow that recommendation as the new semester begins.

"The way we can mitigate the risk is by following the health protocols. And our staff has been doing that really quite well," he said.

"It's not easy on the kids, the staff or on families, but they have been willing to make it work," he added.

Complying with the health protocols also has been expensive, although federal emergency funds helped provide upgraded technology, increased staffing and helped cover the cost of additional sanitation supplies, Witty said.

"It's been well worth it, so we can get the kids in school," he said of the added expense.

ARREST

Continued from Page 1A

Schlett was driving a 2013 Toyota Highlander at excessive speeds on Pocahontas Road, about five miles west of Baker City, when he failed to negotiate a curve and crashed, according to the Sheriff's Office.

The vehicle rolled, and Main was ejected from the front passenger seat.

Schlett is also charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants, third-degree assault, reckless driving and two counts of recklessly endangering another person.

He was indicted on the charges by a Baker County grand jury.

Schlett had minor injuries.

Two juveniles who were in the vehicle suffered serious injuries in the crash.

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