

# Community

## Invasive weed of the week

By Jeffrey Pettingill

### The Enemy

Diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*)

### The Strategy

This annual (and sometimes biennial) noxious weed is a native of Eurasia and spread into the U.S. around the 1900s. It is one of the only knapweeds that spreads by tumbling by the wind like Russian thistle.

The plant has a white flower, grows to a height of 24 inches, and has a short taproot. The leaves, like most knapweeds, are pinnately divided and lighter green than its relatives. The bud is host to bracts which project away from the bud and become quite rough to the skin.

### Attack

Diffuse knapweed spreads into lightly disturbed areas, and in some cases can invade crops such as alfalfa and grains. The plant is efficient at robbing the soils of nutrients and water and because it spreads quickly it can dominate a site to where there is no forage for livestock and wildlife. It particularly loves dry and gravelly sites.

### Defense

Diffuse knapweed is easily controlled mechanically. Once the plant shows up in abundant numbers then control methods should change to herbicides. Currently there are no biological controls available, even livestock will not eat the stuff. Herbicides



Jeffrey Pettingill/Contributed Photo

Diffuse knapweed can grow to a height of 24 inches, and is topped with white flowers.

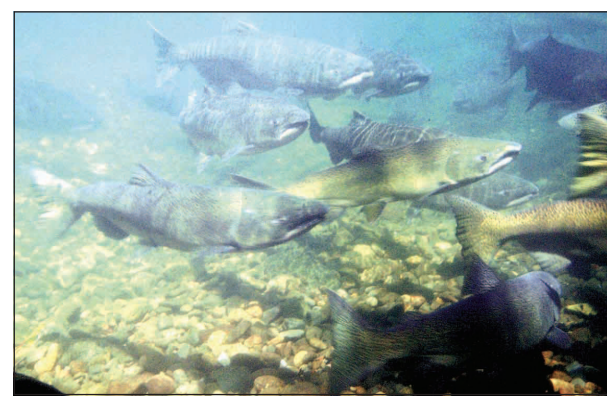
of choice include any of the Pyridine family: Tordon 22K, Milestone, Curtail, Redeem, or Chaparrel. Dicamba based products will work early in the season and I strongly recommend not to use Roundup or 2,4-D. As this is like the other knapweeds getting an early start is most effective, but remember they spread fast and produce a lot of seeds. Seek professional help as one cannot combat an enemy if one does not completely know the enemy.

*Jeffrey Pettingill is the weed control supervisor for Baker County. He encourages people with noxious weed questions to call him at 541-523-0618 or 541-519-0204. He also encourages people to like the Baker County Weed District's Facebook page.*



Rich Olds/Contributed Photo

Diffuse knapweed, which is not palatable to livestock, can quickly dominate a site, robbing the soils of nutrients and water.



EO Media Group File

Chinook salmon.

## Chinook season begins today in Hells Canyon

ENTERPRISE — The spring chinook salmon fishing season starts today, April 24 on the Snake River from the Dug Bar boat ramp upriver to the boundary below Hells Canyon Dam.

Snake River spring chinook are migrating up the Columbia River and will be arriving in the Oregon section of the Snake in the upcoming weeks, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

“While it will take a bit for the fish to get here, we like to have the fishery open when they arrive,” said Kyle Bratcher, acting district fish biologist at ODFW’s Enterprise office. “Despite the lagging spring chinook runs across the Columbia Basin, the dead-end nature of this fishery allows us to provide some opportunity despite the depressed run.”

The daily bag limit is four hatchery chinook per day of which only one may be an adult salmon over 24 inches. Anglers must cease fishing for all salmon once they have retained one adult hatchery chinook or four hatchery jack salmon, whichever comes first.

Barbless hooks and a Columbia Basin Endorsement are required when fishing for salmon, steelhead and sturgeon in the Snake River.

Managers with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Idaho Fish and Game expect a modest run of about 1,000 hatchery spring chinook to return to the base of Hells Canyon Dam. Fishing probably won’t be allowed this year in the Imnaha and Grande Ronde rivers.

“Hatchery fish returning to Hells Canyon Dam have two purposes: provide broodstock for the next generation, and recreational and tribal harvest,” Bratcher said. “So, a portion of the fish not collected for broodstock can be made available to anglers.”

## Commissioners talk zoning rule changes

By Samantha O’Conner  
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Baker County Commissioners on Wednesday, April 21 approved the first reading of an ordinance amending the county’s zoning ordinance.

Commission Chairman Bill Harvey abstained from voting, saying he disagreed with a change proposed by the county road department.

Commissioners Mark Bennett and Bruce Nichols voted for the first reading.

The change the road department proposed calls for people with residential developments with three or more lots that connect to a paved county road have the access road paved for at least 55 feet from the intersection. The purpose is to prevent gravel from eroding the paved county road.

Harvey said he’s concerned the change would affect all residents who have a gravel road or driveway connecting to a paved county road.

“You cannot require everybody who accesses that road to pave 55 feet into the property,” Harvey said.

But Holly Kerns, the county’s planning director, said the proposed change

would apply only to new developments with three or more lots.

Harvey also expressed concerns about other proposed changes, including one requiring people developing a property to verify that all applicable laws are current when they apply for permits.

“This is outside the realm of understanding for most applicants,” Harvey said. “(They) wouldn’t even know where to go look. How are they supposed to be able to verify laws in regards to the application?”

Kerns said the purpose of the change is not to ensure that applicants know the status of laws, but that they understand what the criteria are for the proposed development.

“The applicant owner has some accountability and responsibility, not that they have to go out and do a whole legal research, but they do have to understand that it changes and it isn’t the county’s fault,” Bennett said.

Harvey also asked about a requirement for “impact studies” for developments.

“Why would they need an impact study?” he said.

Kerns said such studies would be needed only for very large developments.

“If there is a potential for a significant impact, we have the ability to ask the applicant to show us the data so we can understand what that impact is and then the planning commission can make appropriate decisions about whether or not the applicant needs to bear some responsibility for mitigating that impact, whatever that is,” Kerns said.

Harvey asked that that section of the ordinance be changed to read “if necessary.”

“As an applicant I’m assuming that I’m going to have to do an impact study because it says necessary,” Harvey said.

Harvey, who is a building contractor, said he was reviewing the proposed zoning changes from the perspective of a potential applicant.

“I’m addressing these issues because from an applicant’s position, there are requirements in there that may be expensive (and that) to me that are unnecessary,” he said.

Commissioners will have another public hearing, and may formally approve the zoning changes, on May 5.

## WELL

Continued from Page 1A

The company had estimated the well, which has a casing 12 inches in diameter, would be about 700 feet deep.

Owen said a brief pumping test showed good water quality.

A liner for the well, which will be custom made, has been ordered and should arrive within a couple weeks, she said.

Schneider Water Services workers will return in May to install the liner, install a test pump, finish pump tests and video the well. They should be finished by early June, Owen said.

The City Council voted in April 2020 to hire the company to drill the well, at a cost of \$677,000.

Drilling started in early October 2020, and initial progress was slower than the company expected as

the drill encountered thicker layers of clay soils than anticipated based on the drilling logs from an older well elsewhere on the golf course.

The second, and more expensive, phase of the well project will go out for bid soon, Owen said.

The work includes building a well house and installing the piping to connect the well to the distribution system. That phase will cost an estimated \$2 million. Owen said work likely will start in September 2021.

The well should be available to start delivering water to homes and businesses in the spring of 2022.

Owen said the goal is for the well to produce about 1,500 gallons per minute, approximately 2.16 million gallons per day.

The city will use the well both during the summer, when water demand peaks but the volume from the

streams and springs in the city’s watershed drops. The well will also be beneficial in some years during spring, when rapidly melting snow in the watershed, which is in the Elkhorn Mountains west of town, can temporarily cloud streams with silt.

The new well is one of the major projects that prompted the City Council to boost

water rates by 10% in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Those increases will pay for the well and for the continuation of a long-term effort to replace the century-old, leaky concrete pipeline that brings water to town from the city’s watershed.

The new well will be the city’s second.

The other well, which the

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### FICTION

- “The Hemingway stories,” Ernest Hemingway
- “What Doesn’t Kill Her,” Christina Dodd
- “Country Proud,” Linda Lael Miller
- “Finding Ashley,” Danielle Steel
- “Sooley,” John Grisham

### NONFICTION

- “How to Avoid a Climate Disaster,” Bill Gates
- “Dusk Night Dawn,” Ann Lamott
- “The Code Breaker,” Walter Isaacson
- “The God Equation,” Michio Kaku
- “Broken,” Jenny Lawson

### DVDS

- “IP Man 4” (Action)
- “Jesus” (Documentary)
- “Monster Hunter” (Sci-Fi)
- “Spontaneous” (Horror)
- “The Kid Detective” (Comedy)

city drilled in 1977 near its water treatment plant and reservoir on the hill near Reservoir Road, is about 800 feet deep.

Owen said the new well, like the existing one, will be part of the city’s Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) system.

Baker City was the first Oregon city to receive a

state permit allowing it to divert water from surface sources — the watershed streams and springs — into a well during the winter when the watershed produces far more water than the city needs.

That water is stored in the well aquifer and can be pumped later into the city’s distribution system.

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