

WOLVES

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ODFW employees and the ranchers, Deward and Kathy Thompson, also tried to find the wolves on Friday, July 30, but they saw only the two adult wolves, both of which have tracking collars.

The permit issued Thursday is valid through Aug. 21, or until up to four wolves have been killed, whichever happens first.

Dennehy said the permit is intended to stop chronic attacks by wolves on livestock “by reducing the pack’s food needs and disrupting the pack’s

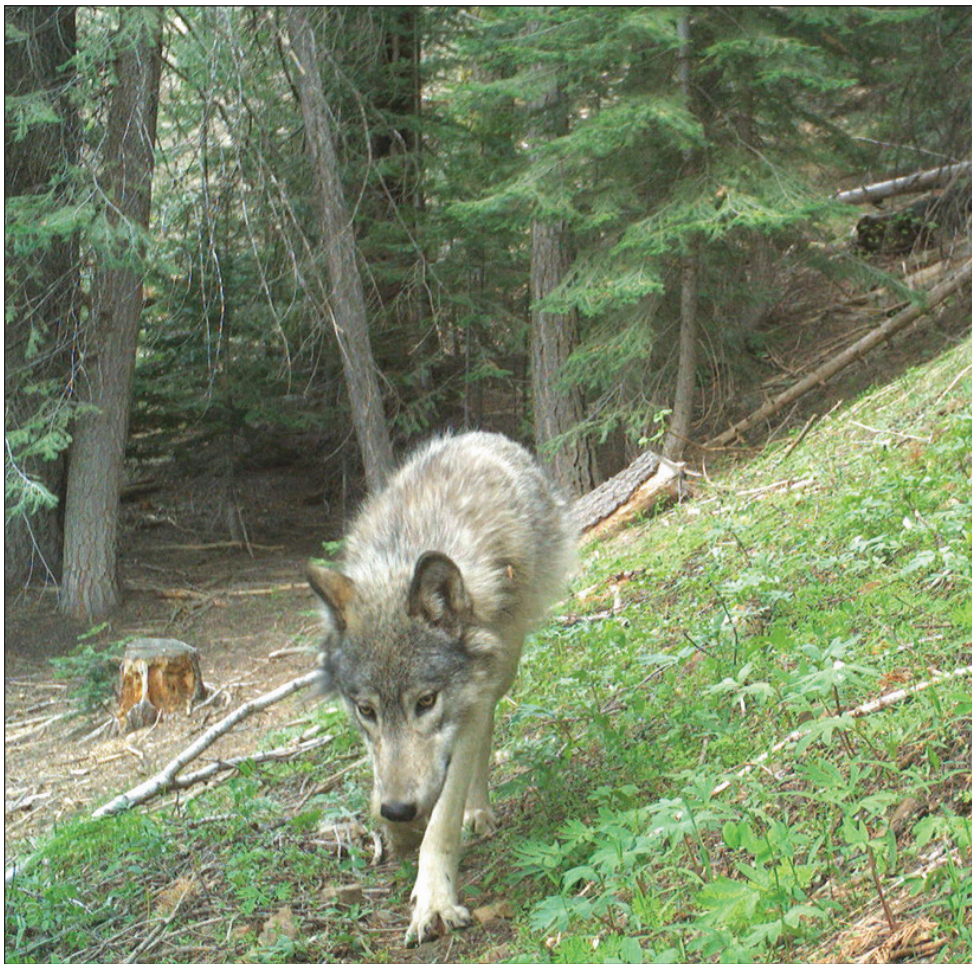
behavior so they don’t associate livestock with an easy meal.”

Baker County Commissioner Mark Bennett requested the kill permit on Tuesday, July 27. Bennett, who is chairman of the county’s wolf committee, included with his request to ODFW a letter from the Thompsons. They wrote that the attacks on their cattle started this spring after the Lookout Mountain pack’s latest, and so far largest, litter of pups was born.

“Killing pups is not something we want to be doing,” Dennehy wrote to the Herald. “But in this case, despite nonlethal measures, chronic depre-

ation continues which we have a responsibility to address. We hope to avoid killing the breeding male and female, so that the pack persists and the remaining pups still have two experienced hunters to provision them. Killing the breeding male or female increases the chance that the pack will break up.

“Reducing the caloric needs of the pack reduces the amount of killing they need to do in order to feed the pups. The Lookout Pack had at least seven pups this spring and late summer is a lean time for wolves. With two pups removed there is less need for meat for the pups.”



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Contributed Photo

A trail cam photo from May 30, 2021, of one of the two yearling wolves in the Lookout Mountain pack.

VIRUS

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Matt Hutchinson, manager of the Baker Valley Vector Control District.

It was the first confirmation of the virus in Oregon in 2021.

None of the hundreds of mosquitoes trapped in Baker County in 2020 tested positive for West Nile virus. It was the first year without a positive test in the county since 2018.

Although Hutchinson maintains a network of more than a dozen mosquito traps across the district, which encompasses 200,000 acres, mainly in Baker, Keating and Bowen valleys, the infected mosquitoes were collected from a trap put out by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Hutchinson said ODFW for the past few years has been collecting mosquitoes in habitat for sage grouse, a bird that has been a candidate for federal protection due to its dwindling populations. He said sage grouse are among the birds that are vulnerable to West Nile virus. The virus can also kill crows, ravens, magpies and jays, and Hutchinson said birds of prey are also susceptible.

So far this summer, Hutchinson said he has sent about 80 “pools” of dead mosquitoes collected from traps, both the district’s and ODFW’s, to a lab at Oregon State University to be tested for West Nile virus.

A pool of mosquitoes usually consists of 10 to 50 insects.

Most of the mosquitoes trapped recently are the culex tarsalis species of permanent water mosquito, which are most likely to spread the virus, Hutchinson said.

The mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus are culex pipiens, a related type that is equally likely

to transmit the virus, Hutchinson said.

Over the past several years, the Keating Valley area, including where the infected mosquitoes were trapped this July, has been a “hot spot for our West Nile activity,” he said.

The virus typically has first been detected from mid to late July, and the culex tarsalis mosquitoes remain common through August across the district, including in Baker Valley. In general, mosquito numbers have been below average this summer, Hutchinson said, a trend he attributes to the drought and the resulting scarcity of standing water where mosquito eggs hatch.

Following the positive test for West Nile, health officials are advising people in Baker County to take precautions against mosquitoes to avoid the risk of infection, including preventing mosquito bites. Most people infected with West Nile virus will show little or no signs of disease.

About one in five people who are infected develop a fever with other symptoms such as headache, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea, or rash. Most people with febrile illness due to West Nile virus recover completely, but fatigue and weakness can last for weeks or months. It is important that you contact your health care provider if you experience any of these symptoms.

The incubation period is usually two to 14 days. Rarely, infected individuals may develop neuro-invasive disease (infection of the brain or spinal cord) that can be severe or may cause death. This is especially of concern to people 50 and older, people with immune-compromising conditions, and people with diabetes or high blood pressure.

Communities and individuals living in or

spending significant time outdoors, particularly near irrigated land, waterways, standing water, and used tires — including those working in agriculture, such as migrant and seasonal farm workers — may be at increased risk of mosquito bites and related diseases.

“Although mosquitoes are an inevitable part of summer, mosquito bites don’t have to be — they are preventable,” Dr. Emilio DeBess of the Oregon Health Authority said in a press release. “You can take simple steps to protect yourself and reduce the risk of contracting West Nile disease.”

DeBess offers these tips for protecting yourself against mosquitoes:

- Eliminate sources of standing water that are a breeding ground for mosquitoes, including watering troughs, bird baths, ornamental ponds, buckets, wading and swimming pools not in use, and old tires.

- When engaged in outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active, protect yourself by using mosquito repellents containing DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus or Picardin, and follow the directions on the container.

- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants in mosquito-infested areas.

- Make sure screen doors and windows are in good repair and fit tightly.

Last year was relatively mild for West Nile in Oregon, with only three mosquito pools and one bird found to be positive for the virus.

In 2019, nine human cases of West Nile virus infection were reported in Oregon, with 85 mosquito pools and seven horses also found to be positive for the virus. In 2018, there were two human cases, with 57 mosquito pools and two horses testing positive.



August Frank/LewistonTribune

Nakia Williamson-Cloud leads horseback riders down West Wallowa Avenue in Joseph on Thursday, July 29, 2021. A special ceremony occurred in Idaho on July 31 to rename a historic collection of artifacts owned by the Nez Perce Tribe.

Nez Perce stage blessing ceremony on traditional homeland

By Eric Barker

Lewiston Morning Tribune

JOSEPH — Quincy Ellenwood smiled as a pair of young Nez Perce men rode their horses across a hay field here Thursday, July 29.

Their pace — slow and steady — quickened without warning. Soon the two men, one shirtless and the other wearing a beaded vest, raced across the grassy slope.

“There they go, look at them. They get to do that now,” said Ellenwood as he fanned himself with an eagle wing. “Can you imagine how a whole camp was here and boys and young men and young ladies would ride their horses all around. It was like that all day, every day.”

As he spoke, other Nimiipuu people sang, danced and drummed in a longhouse, celebrating and blessing the 148-acre property the tribe purchased last December.

“The people are excited to come back home,” said Casey Mitchell, a member of the tribe’s executive committee. “When we sing our songs and we dance, we are letting our ancestors know we are back and that our love for this land will never die.”

Known as Am’sáaxpa, or place of the boulders, the land is a traditional campsite and one of the last places occupied by Chief Joseph and his band before they left the Wallowa Valley and their Northeastern Oregon homeland under threat of military force in the spring of 1877.

The Army was forcing them to live in Idaho and within the boundaries of a reservation defined by the 1863 Treaty. At just 770,000 acres, it was a fraction of the territory they were promised in the Treaty of 1855 and smaller yet than the tribe’s 17 million acre traditional homeland.

Tribal Chairman Samuel Penney said to this day Nez Perce people call it the “Steal Treaty” because few of the tribe’s bands signed on to the rushed agreement precipitated by pressure from settlers and the discovery of gold near Pierce. But in the government’s eyes, the treaty was valid and Nez Perce from places like the Wallows, the Salmon River, White Bird and the Palouse were forced to relocate.

Later that summer, friction over the treaty and the forced exile led to war. A faction of the tribe engaged with the army in a series of battles that stretched nearly 1,200

miles across Idaho and Montana. Chief Joseph eventually surrendered in the Bear Paw Mountains. He and many of his people were never allowed to return to the Wallowa Valley.

Despite the official exile, other Nez Perce people have been coming to the valley for more than a century to practice their religion, visit grave sites, hunt, fish, dig roots and pick berries. For decades they have participated in the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo that is being held this week. But the purchase gives them a place to stay, to be more than visitors in their own homeland.

“We are resilient people. We were forced out of here, but now look, we’ve come back,” said Ellenwood, also a member of the tribe’s executive committee. “We never really left but now it’s in black and white. It’s ours.”

A few hours earlier, tribal leaders on horseback headed a procession of riders and walkers from Joseph High School west along Wallowa Avenue, following the tribe’s traditional Imnaha Route to the property. Some wore traditional dress while others stuck with modern outfits. Among the crowd were elders, toddlers and every age between.

“I think it’s really cool seeing all of us come together and being able to walk on our homelands and take back our culture,” said Gabby Lewis, 23, of Spokane.

The short, 1-mile ride and walk was a symbolic nod to the heartbreaking trip Joseph and his people made as they left the scenic valley framed by towering peaks.

“There was a point where our elders turned back and thought they would never come back to this place and many never did,” said Nakia Williamson, director of the tribe’s cultural resource program.

“As our people left on horses, we wanted to return on horseback.”

It was also a day for healing. Some of the differences and rifts — brought on by those who signed onto the 1863 Treaty and those who didn’t, those who practice traditional religion and those who follow Christianity — have persisted. The nontreaty Nez Perce were sent to Oklahoma and later to the Colville Reservation in northeastern Washington.

“Our people are buried in different areas, but this is where they are from,” said Jewie Davis, a Nez Perce man who lives at Nespelem on the Colville Reservation. “Those of us descended from Nespelem and those from Lapwai and those from Pendleton — there needs to come a time and a day when there is healing between all of us.”

Shannon Wheeler, vice chairman and a descendant of Chief Joseph’s sister, said the Place of the Boulders belongs to everyone.

“We are all the same people. We are no different,” he said. “We can point to the things that separated our people. That is behind us.”

“We are all equal to the land. That is what this place is for. That is what this blessing is for.”

It’s also a chance to strengthen relationships with the land that Williamson said are central to the Nez Perce. The land is more than just crops it can grow or animals it can support.

“The land and us is the same,” he said. “What you call resources is a part of our life, and so when we advocate for these resources we not only advocate for our life but all of humanity, all of you and for us to continue this life that has been carried on for thousands of years, thousands of generations.”

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