



GO! MAGAZINE
What's happening
around NE Oregon



OREGON A5
Few using state's
COVID vaccine card



THE WEST A6
Groups supporting
River Democracy Act

Baker City Herald

IN THIS EDITION: LOCAL • BUSINESS & AG LIFE

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INSIDE TODAY

A 30-page special section focusing on the farming and ranching industry will be included with the July 21 issue. Topics include how a damp spring helped ease the drought and improve prospects for wheat, hay and other crop yields, a beneficial trend that's being offset by escalating costs for diesel and other production expenses.

QUICK HITS

Good Day Wish To A Subscriber

A special good day to Herald subscriber Carrie Folkman of Baker City.

BRIEFING

Biologist to talk about beavers, grazing, water supplies Aug. 3

Carol Evans, a retired biologist from the Bureau of Land Management, will talk about livestock grazing management, and how it can attract beavers to streams, during a free presentation Aug. 3 at the Baker County Library, 2400 Resort St. The presentation, sponsored by the Powder Basin Watershed Council, will start at 6 p.m.

Evans' presentation, "How to Move Mountains and Make it Rain!," discusses projects in Nevada in which grazing changes spurred the growth of stream side plants, which led beavers to colonize the areas and, by building dams and storing water, increased water supply.

WEATHER

Today
94/51
Sunny

Friday
87/45
Sunny

Full forecast on the back of the B section.

The space below is for a postage label for issues that are mailed.



Baker County's campaign gets federal financial boost

Saving sage grouse

Nick Myatt/Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, File

Sage grouse males inflate their air sacs during the spring mating ritual.

BY CLAYTON FRANKE
cfranke@bakercityherald.com

Emmy Tyrrell calls sage grouse the "mountain men" of birds.

That's because they don't like to be around people.

Unfortunately for the chicken-size birds, many of the places they live — tracts of land dominated by sagebrush, including in Baker County — are popular with people, too.

But a Baker County program coordinated by Tyrrell, which aims to improve conditions for sage grouse on private lands, recently received an influx of dollars.

Baker County will receive \$100,000 from last year's federal infrastructure bill.

Four other Eastern Oregon counties will get the same amount — Crook, Harney, Malheur and Lake.

The three latter counties harbor the large majority of Oregon's sage grouse habitat, most of which is on public land.

Baker County is at the northern fringe of the sage grouse's range in Eastern Oregon, and the county's sage grouse population accounts for less than 10% of Oregon's total. Much of the county's sage grouse habitat, unlike in those three other counties, is on private property.

The federal dollars augment a \$6.1 million, six-year grant that Baker County received in 2019 through the

Lottery-funded Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. The state money is also intended to pay for sage grouse conservation projects in the county.

That can include a variety of things.

Among the projects planned in Baker County are deterring ravens, which prey on sage grouse eggs, and building an ATV wash station at the Virtue Flat OHV Area east of Baker City to reduce the spread of noxious weeds and invasive grasses that can degrade sage grouse habitat.

Another key part of the effort is the Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA). These are agreements between the federal government and private landowners whose property includes sage grouse habitat, in which the landowners agree to take actions, such as altering cattle grazing schedules, to benefit sage grouse. Landowners don't receive payments through the agreements.

Tyrrell said the federal money will partially pay for her position as CCAA coordinator with the Powder Basin Watershed Council. She said she's also working on an application for another grant through the Watershed Enhancement Board after the current grant ends in 2025.

Tyrrell's job is to act as a liaison between landowners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to help start — or continue — conservation measures

and ranching practices that benefit sage grouse.

To ensure that conservation projects are consistent across counties, CCAAs usually follow a specific outline — what's called a "programmatic" CCAA — with a basic formula for how the agreements work. The FWS established the formula in 2015.

"These programmatic (CCAAs) have these really fantastic plans laid out and we can really tailor these plans very specific to whatever the landowners goals are what exists on the landscape instead of the one size fits all," Tyrrell said.

Besides crafting these agreements, Tyrrell works to recruit new landowners into the program.

Statewide, 500,000 acres of private land are enrolled under CCAA agreements for sage grouse, Tyrrell said.

That includes 42,000 acres — among eight different property owners — in Baker County, with a small portion just across the border with Union County.

Any property that contains habitat accessible to the Baker sage grouse population — which inhabits an area northeast of Interstate 84 and south of the Wallowa Mountains, as well as a few other places in southern Baker County — can be enrolled in the program.

Tyrrell said she's in the process of enrolling 9,000 more acres divided among three properties.

See **Grouse** / A3

HEREFORD

Woman dies in 4-wheeler accident

Searchers found Kate Sullivan two days after she was last seen

BY JAYSON JACOBY

jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

A Hereford woman died in a four-wheeler accident west of Dooley Mountain Summit late last week.

Kathleen Marie "Kate" Sullivan, 66, was killed when her four-wheeler rolled in the Bald Mountain area, about two miles west of the summit on Highway 245, said Ashley McClay, public information officer for the Baker County Sheriff's Office.

Members of the county's search and rescue team found Sullivan's body about 10:43 a.m. on Saturday, July 16, McClay said. Her dog, who had accompanied her on a ride to set out salt blocks for cattle, had stayed with Sullivan, and was not injured, McClay said.

See **Accident** / A3

County's new tourism director on the job

County hired Jessica Hobson on 2-year contract

IAN CRAWFORD

icrawford@bakercityherald.com

Local publisher Jessica Hobson is wading into the fray of Baker County's summer activities as the county's newly hired tourism marketing director.



Hobson

The two-year contract started July 1.

"Just hoping to get tourists to help local vendors and businesses here in town," Hobson said.

The contract, which Baker County commissioners approved in late May, is for \$65,000 per year. Hobson is a contractor, not a county employee.

See **Director** / A3

State council to discuss B2H on Friday

BY ANTONIO ARREDONDO
East Oregonian

SALEM — The latest review of moving the massive Boardman to Hemingway power transmission line from proposal to reality is this week.

Originally proposed in 2010, the B2H line travels from the Longhorn Substation in Boardman to the existing Hemingway Substation in Idaho. Primarily 500 kilovolts, the line would be approximately 300 miles long. Idaho Power Co. is primary energy producer behind the project. The Oregon Department of Energy's Energy Facility Siting Council meets is Friday, July 22, and B2H is on the docket. The council plans to go over the proposal for the project and its application history and conduct straw polls to determine if any changes need to be made. This review is the latest step in a checkered past for the transmission line.

See **B2H** / A2

How to participate

The July 22 meeting is from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Boardman to Hemingway transmission line is one of many items on the docket for the council, with others ranging from wildlife protection to carbon dioxide emissions.

For those interested in attending the meeting, the event is available online. People who want to participate may address the council during the public comment portion and at other designated agenda points. For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/energy/facilities-safety/facilities/Pages/Council-Meetings.aspx.



A fence line traces the approximate route of the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line Feb. 2, 2022, along the edge of Richard and Jean Hemphill's family property near Pilot Rock.

East Oregonian, File



TODAY
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