

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

NORTHEAST OREGON | DEEP SNOW

Effort underway to rescue cattle, calves

BY BILL BRADSHAW
Wallowa County Chieftain

IMNAHA — An as-yet undetermined number of cattle — many of which are calving — are being rescued from deep snows on U.S. Forest Service land in the Upper Imnaha area, a variety of sources said Thursday.

The first alert came in a Facebook post Wednesday by Kathy Gisler Reynolds, a volunteer with the Wallowa County Humane Society. Photos posted on Facebook showed a cow up to its neck in snow and unable to move.

“I was alerted to it yesterday by the ranchers who have been out there trying to save them,” Reynolds said Thursday.

She listed several people who were involved in rescuing and caring for the cattle and their calves, calling some of them “heroes.”

“Some were too weak to even move,” she said of the cattle.

At an emergency meeting of the

Wallowa County Commission on an unrelated matter Thursday, Chairman Todd Nash — who is a rancher — said information on the situation at present was limited.

“The things we do know is that this was a Forest Service permit for the Upper Big Sheep Creek and the Upper Imnaha,” Nash said after the meeting. “It takes in a large area — 72,000 acres — known as the Marr Flat Grazing Allotment. They had a viable permit to go on sometime in the spring. They were supposed to have all cattle removed according to the Forest Service permit. By the 15th of October, there were still cattle that remained out there and are in very deep snow, some of them have expired. There is a rescue effort being made right now to try and rescue as many as possible. We’ve committed county resources to it. There’ve been a number of people who have volunteered or have contributed time. There’s been helicopters that have flown feed into some

that were extremely isolated and the rescue continues. Those are the basic facts that I do know.”

Nash went on to specify the county resources.

“The Road Department cleared about 10 miles of road in a heavy snowfall area on the Upper Imnaha,” he said. “They cleared about 90 trees out of the road. Compounding the heavy snowfall that came all at once, we had an event where we had rain and heavy snowfall afterward. There are trees across a lot of the access roads that they’re trying to get down right now that has exasperated those efforts to try to extricate the cattle from their situation.”

He was unsure how many cattle were involved, but was aware some were calving.

Rancher Casey Tippet said he called the Forest Service in November after hearing reports from hunters that cattle were on land where they weren’t supposed to be, but he never

heard back from the federal agency.

“Those cattle should’ve been taken off that land a long time ago,” Tippet said Thursday. “When they take strange cattle to an allotment, when winter hits they don’t know how to get out. The people who know that country should’ve been getting them out.”

Nash said various agencies have been apprised of the situation, ready to lend what aid they could. He said the Wallowa County Sheriff’s Office and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest are aware, as well as others.

“I’ve had some discussion with the Oregon Department of Agriculture on this situation,” he said. “They’re the ones with the Brand Department a lot of the (state laws) concerning the current situation.”

But mostly it’s people in Wallowa County who are getting out the effort to rescue the stranded cattle and calves.

“There’s a lot of people who are quite concerned,” Nash said.



Renee Grandi via Wallowa County Chieftain

“Lucky” is one of the calves rescued from deep snow in the Upper Imnaha area this week by ranchers in Wallowa County. He’s being cared for by Dr. Renee Grandi of Enterprise and being bottle fed three times a day.

Idaho Power takes legal action to access properties for power-line surveys

BY JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

Idaho Power Company is asking a judge to order the owners of five Baker County properties to allow the company to survey their land as part of its plan to build a major electric transmission line through Northeastern Oregon starting as early as 2023.

Attorneys representing Idaho Power filed civil petitions regarding the properties in December in Baker County Circuit Court.

The utility has been working since 2007 on the Boardman-to-Hemingway project, a 293-mile, 500-kilovolt line that

would run from near Boardman, Oregon, to Hemingway, Idaho, southwest of Boise.

Although sections of the proposed route run through public property — Idaho Power has received permission from the federal government to do so — the line, as proposed, would also cross several dozen parcels of private land in multiple counties, including Baker, Union, Wallowa and Morrow in Oregon.

Idaho Power would have to pay private landowners for an easement to build the power line across their property. This would be a one-time payment, not an annual lease, according



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald, file

The proposed Boardman-to-Hemingway power line would follow the route of an existing line that crosses state Highway 86 near Baker City.

to the boardmantohemingway.com website.

Sven Berg, a corporate communications specialist

separate parcels.

Savannah Gyllenberg said she and her husband have lived on their property for about 7½ years. She said they received packages from Idaho Power a few months ago with forms to sign granting the company access, but the couple haven’t had time to review the documents.

Gyllenberg said an existing Idaho Power transmission line crosses their property, and they have never objected to company workers entering the property to maintain the line.

In each petition, Idaho Power states that either the company or its contractor has contacted the property owners

several times to request access. The owners have not granted Idaho Power access to the properties.

Berg said the company needs access to the properties to do a variety of surveys, and according to the court petitions, the work is necessary to comply with federal and state permitting and siting requirements.

“We prefer to work directly through landowners, and we encourage people (who are respondents in court filings) to contact us as soon as they can,” Berg said. “We much prefer to handle it out of court. We don’t want to force the issue in court.”

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