

OUTDOORS

# Fossil Beds – more than just a pretty place

Report shows economic boost from tourism

Blue Mountain Eagle



**The Sheep Rock Overlook at the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument offers an expansive view.**

KIMBERLY – A new National Park Service report shows that tourism at the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument supports jobs and pumps dollars into the local economy.

The report said 183,420 visitors to the Fossil Beds in 2014 spent \$8,374,100 in communities near the park. That spending supported 131 jobs in the local area, with an estimated cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$9.8 million.

“John Day Fossil Beds welcomes visitors from across the country and around the world,” said Superintendent Shelley Hall. “We are delighted to share the story of paleontology and science in action.”

Hall also noted the ripple effects as the park introduces its visitors to Eastern Oregon.

“National park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it’s a big factor in our local economy as well,” she said. “We appreciate the partnership and support of our neighbors and are glad to be able to give back by helping to sustain local communities.”

The Fossil Beds got a boost last year when Travel Oregon touted the Painted Hills Unit as

one of the 7 Wonders of Oregon in a major marketing campaign.

Visits to the Painted Hills in 2014 increased by about 50 percent over 2013.

The 7 Wonders campaign was so successful in promoting visitation and associated economic benefits that tourism officials have extended for 2015.

The peer-reviewed visitor spending analysis was conducted by U.S. Geological Survey economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas and Christopher Huber and National Park Service economist Lynne Koontz.

The report shows \$15.7 billion of direct spending by 292.8 million park visitors in communities within 60 miles of a national park. This spending supported 277,000 jobs nationally, including 235,600 jobs in so-called gateway communities. The cumulative benefit to the U.S. economy was estimated at \$29.7 billion.

According to the report, more than 30 percent of the park visitor spending was for lodging, followed by 20 percent for food and beverages, nearly 12 percent for gas and oil, 10 percent for admissions and fees, and 9 percent for souvenirs and other expenses.

# ODFW ready to talk tags

Tag allotment changes for landowners

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will hold its annual meeting about tag setting and big game numbers next week in John Day.

The meeting is set for 5:30-7 p.m. Monday, May 4, at the Oregon Department of Forestry, 415 Patterson Bridge Road.

ODFW biologist Ryan Torland said the meeting will include a review of tag recommendations for hunting season and population status for big game species in the area.

There is one major change coming up for landowners.

ODFW is restricting landowner preference to 10 percent of the allocation of rifle buck deer tags.

For example, on the Murderers Creek Unit there are 990 rifle buck deer tags, and landowners will have 10 percent or 99 tags available for that management unit – with the

tags allocated to landowners on a lottery draw.

“Landowners need to make sure they get their landowner preference paperwork in by May 15,” Torland said.

In the past, tags were given according to the number of acres; now landowners may get one or three, depending on how many other landowners are in the pool, he said.

The meeting will give the public a chance to ask questions and learn more details.

Not much else is changing for the 2015 hunting season.

Private hunting in the Northside Unit will have an increase of cow elk tags.

Torland said the mild winter, with so much open terrain, made it difficult to survey elk.

“Counts weren’t as good as a normal winter would have been – recruitment of young was fine, but numbers counted were a little lower than we’d expect,” Torland said. Overall, he said, the numbers are slightly up.

He said the deer numbers are still to come, and fawn ratios are a little lower than expected, but still OK with the mild winter.

There will again be one Rocky Mountain goat tag this year for the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness, he said. Surveys indicate there are about 60 goats in the area.

For the big horn sheep populations, tag numbers remain the same: one for McClellan and three for Aldrich.

The big horn sheep hunt dates have been extended, Aug. 15 (or the nearest Saturday) to Oct. 31.

Buck deer tags remain the same for the Northside and Desolation units.

The East Grant Unit antlerless elk hunt also remains the same.

There are some proposed changes to condense and simplify hunts in Grant County, especially those related to damage on private lands, Torland said.

These changes affect Northside/Heppner Elk, Murderers Creek Elk and the John Day Valley Doe hunt area. For more information visit [www.MyEagleNews.com](http://www.MyEagleNews.com).

More details will be available at the May 4 meeting, or contact Torland at 541-575-1167, ext. 222, or [ryan.e.torland@state.or.us](mailto:ryan.e.torland@state.or.us).

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## PROS

Continued from Page A10

With the inclusion of the additional schools, the Lady Pros bumped up to the 3A class in the Eastern Oregon League.

“We feel like we’re welcome there,” Nash said, adding she and her assistants know the other coaches. “This feels like a better fit – the atmosphere – and the kids are

more comfortable.”

Nash added that her team is “in the mix” – capable among the league competition.

She said hitting is a team strength this season, as well as the camaraderie among the players.

Currently third in league, the Prospectors are 5-3 in league and 8-8 overall.

Vale is first at 6-2 in league and 9-7 overall; Elgin/Imbler is second, 6-2 in league and 7-8 overall.

Enterprise/Joseph/Wallowa holds fourth place with 5-3 in league and 7-5 overall.

The top four teams will advance to the district playoffs in May and, from there, the top three will advance to state.

“We definitely play state-playoff caliber teams,” coach Nash said. “We feel good about our chances.”

## TRACK

Continued from Page A10 reaching a personal record in javelin with a throw of 91-7.00.

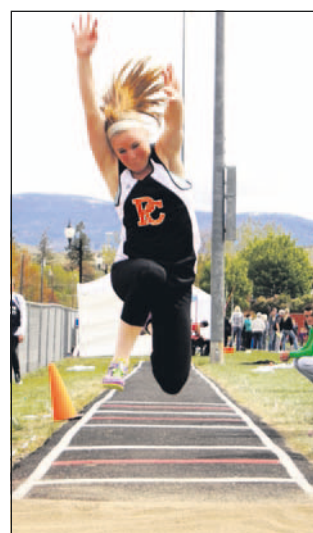
### Long Creek

Long Creek coach Mandy Blackburn’s team also attended Saturday’s meet in Union, as well the Heppner Invitational last Thursday.

In Heppner, Alvaro Lopez placed third in the 1,500-meter run.

“We also had PRs in the discus from Maria Cabral; shot put, Maria Cabral and Se Weon Park; 100 meters, Massimo Basconi, Timo Goebel, and Bow Rattanukulwattana; long jump, Bow,” Blackburn said.

She noted that Union was a large meet for them, but both Cabral and Park had personal



Contributed photo/Nancy Hitz  
**Amaya Zwegardt competes in the triple jump at the Pepsi Invite.**

bests in discus and shot put, and Bow had a personal record in the long jump.

### Grant Union

Grant Union head coach Sonna Smith took just four girls to the Union meet and they finished in fourth place.

Jozie Rude had a good day, placing first in shot put and javelin.

Kenzie Wilson placed second in the triple jump and fourth in long jump.

Chelsie Kodesh placed third in discus.

On the boys’ side, Michael Ashmead finished first in the long jump with a mark of 19-5 1/2 and is seeded second in the district.

Smith said she’s looking forward to Friday’s meet at Three Flags Field.

“We have senior recognition, and recognition of our new track,” she said.

The meet starts at 10 a.m. with field events, followed by running events at 12 noon.

Prairie City, Dayville, Long Creek and Monument teams will compete, and 11 other schools have also been invited.

## Special Olympics game set

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – The annual basketball game between Special Olympics team members and local law enforcement is back on, set for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 7, at the Grant Union Junior-Senior High School gym.

The evening includes a dessert auction, bake sale and drawing for flower baskets, plus skills contests at halftime.

Admission is \$3 a person or \$10 per family. Tickets sold for the previously scheduled April 16 game will be honored.

For more information, call Sue-Z-Qs thrift store at 541-575-0715.

2015 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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*Schedule of Events*  
10 a.m. - Registration  
11 a.m. - Business Meeting  
12:30 p.m. - Free Luncheon

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**HOT SHOT**  
OF THE WEEK

**DUANE STOKES**

School: Grant Union  
Grade: 9  
Parents: Kelly and Lori Stokes  
Sport: Golf

*What I like best about my sport:* “I like meeting new people at the (golf) meets, and it’s something I can get away and do that is fun.”

*Coach’s Comment:* “He has consistently improved each week and shot a personal best at our home match. His play and enthusiasm as a freshman shows his love for the sport. He is and will be an integral part of GU golf for the next three years.”

– Head Coach Ron Lundbom

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