

WOLF

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want to move forward.” Conservation groups oppose the idea. In a joint statement released Oct. 29, the Pacific Wolf Coalition said the staff recommendation is flawed and has not been peer reviewed as required by state law. The coalition includes Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands and the Center for Biological Diversity. Michael Paul Nelson, a College of Forestry professor of environmental ethics and philosophy at Oregon State University, called delisting “logically indefensible” when wolves are present on only 12 percent of their potential range in the state.

“Dropping state protections for wolves right now would suggest that politics, rather than science and law, are guiding wildlife management decisions in Oregon,” Nelson said in a statement issued by Pacific Wolf Coalition.

ODFW disagrees. “We have reviewed and used documented and verifiable information to formulate our results,” ODFW spokeswoman Michelle Dennehy said. “We are confident in our process and that we are following statutory and regulatory requirements.”

If the ODFW commission agrees with the staff recommendation, it would mean wolves in the eastern third of the state are not protected under either state or federal

endangered species laws. Federal ESA protection would still be in force in the rest of Oregon.

That wouldn’t mean open season on wolves, however. The state wolf plan would remain in force, and it allows ODFW-approved “controlled take,” or killing, of wolves in cases of chronic livestock attacks or if wolves cause a decline in prey populations, chiefly elk and deer. Ranchers, as they do now, would be able to shoot wolves caught in the act of attacking livestock or herd dogs. None have been killed in that manner.

Oregon’s wolf plan does not allow sport hunting of wolves in any phase of the recovery timeline, Dennehy said.

The ODFW staff recommendation was not a surprise. A biological status review completed earlier this fall said gray wolf recovery in Oregon has met the delisting criteria in every instance.

The ODFW recommended the delisting after an in-depth examination found biological data indicates the fulfillment of five criteria spelled out by the state’s Endangered Species Act:

- Wolves are represented over a large geographic area of Oregon, are connected to other populations, and nothing is preventing them from occupying additional portions of Oregon.
- The wolf population is projected to continue to increase. The overall probability of extinction is very low and genetic variation is high.
- Wolf habitat in Oregon

is stable and wolf range is expanding.

• Over-utilization of wolves is unlikely as the Wolf Plan continues to provide protections for wolves and any commercial, recreational or scientific take in the future is regulated by the commission.

• The Wolf Plan ensures protection of wolves in the future, regardless of ESA status.

State wildlife biologists, headed by ODFW’s Russ Morgan, believe the criteria have been met. Morgan describes Oregon’s wolf population as steadily increasing in number and geographic distribution.

The first wolves migrated to Oregon from Idaho, where they had been released as part of a national recovery program coordinated by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The first Oregon pack was documented in 2008, and the confirmed wolf population stood at 85 as of July 2015. Since then, three wolves have died: The Sled Springs pair were found dead of unknown cause in Wallowa County in late August, and a Grant County man hunting coyotes on private property in early October reported shooting a wolf designated as OR-22. A district attorney is reviewing evidence in the case.

The Nov. 9 ODFW Commission meeting begins at 8 a.m. at the department headquarters, 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE, Salem. Wolf delisting is the only topic on the agenda.



Photo contributed by Malheur National Forest

The Malheur National Forest is laying wood mulch down in areas burned by the Canyon Creek Complex fire to prevent soil erosion and potential flooding.

FIRE

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In recent weeks, helicopters dumped anywhere from 75-90 loads of mulch per day, Gregory said. Each load contains about 2,500 pounds of mulch, and it usually takes about a dozen drops to cover one acre of land, he said.

“The hard part is figuring out at what height and what speed to get the best coverage,” he said.

Local contractors were hired to grind up the mulch using wood and small-diameter trees logged directly from the forest, Gregory said. Mulching has been reserved for high-intensity burned areas, along ridgetops where the ground isn’t flat, but isn’t too steep, either.

Gregory said it has been impressive watching the pilots do their work. They typically fly about 350 feet over ground level at just more than 23 miles per hour.

In addition to mulching, forest workers also finished placing wooden structures known as log jams over portions of Canyon Creek, Vance Creek and Overholt Creek designed to catch burned-up debris that could wash down in a storm and cause flooding.

Other projects identified in the BAER include cutting down hazard trees and storm-proofing roads, Gregory said. He expects an AmeriCorps team will arrive next week to begin rehabbing more than six miles of trails in the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness — including the popular Joaquin

Miller Trail.

So far, the Forest Service has spent roughly a half-million dollars treating the fire area.

“We’re working as hard as we can, as quickly as we can, to limit the damage of erosion and flooding before winter hits,” Gregory said.

The BAER has been approved by the Forest Service’s Northwest Region Office as well as in Washington, D.C., and has involved partnerships with local agencies and companies.

Eric Bush, John Day Airbase Manager and Malheur Unit Aviation Officer, said he is very pleased with the professionalism and safety of everyone working on the project.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

COPS & COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Sheriff

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Sheriff’s Office reported the following for the week of Oct. 23-29:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 4
- Average inmates: 13
- Bookings: 9
- Releases: 12
- Arrests: 2
- Citations: 1
- Fingerprints: 3
- Civil papers: 14
- Warrants processed: 7
- Asst./welfare check: 3
- Search and Rescue: 2
- A female juvenile was cited for harassment and menacing.
- Hal Gilliam, 49, Prairie City, was cited for DUI and refusal to take a breath test.
- Ethan Thomas, 25, John Day, was cited for driving uninsured and improper display of validating stickers.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 160 calls during the week of Oct. 26-Nov. 1. Along with the various traffic warnings, trespassing, injured animals, noise complaints and juvenile complaints, these calls included:

- **John Day Police:** Oct. 28: Cited a Prairie City man for driving while suspend-

ed-violation; cited a minor for possession of marijuana.

Oct. 29: Cited a Prairie City man for failure to obey a traffic control device; advised of a FedEx box turned upside down.

Oct. 30: Cited a Eugene man for speeding; cited a John Day woman for speeding; cited a McMinnville man for speeding.

Oct. 31: Report of a man threatening children on Brent Street.

Nov. 1: Arrested a Prairie City man for menacing.

- **Grant County Sheriff:** Oct. 27: Criminal mischief reported in Mt. Vernon.
- Oct. 28: Criminal mischief reported south of Dale.
- **John Day ambulance:** Oct. 28: Responded for a hunter who fell off a ledge in the 3670 Road area.

Oct. 29: Responded for a 75-year-old man.

Oct. 30: Dispatched for a man with low blood pressure; dispatched for a man with difficulty moving and breathing; responded to a report of someone in pain.

Nov. 1: Responded for an 84-year-old woman with a possible heart attack.

Justice Court

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Justice Court reported the following fines and judgments:

- Exceeding speed limit: Jephtha Lee White, 61, John Day, 48/25 zone, fined \$220.
- Open container of alcohol: Ronald G. Norris, 51, Colton, fined \$260.
- No operator’s license: Melinda Paris Cox, 41, John Day, fined \$220.



The Warm Springs Tribe have free riparian plants available to Canyon Creek residents. Please contact Alexandra Reinwald, 541-777-2832, at the Tribe’s nursery in Prairie City.

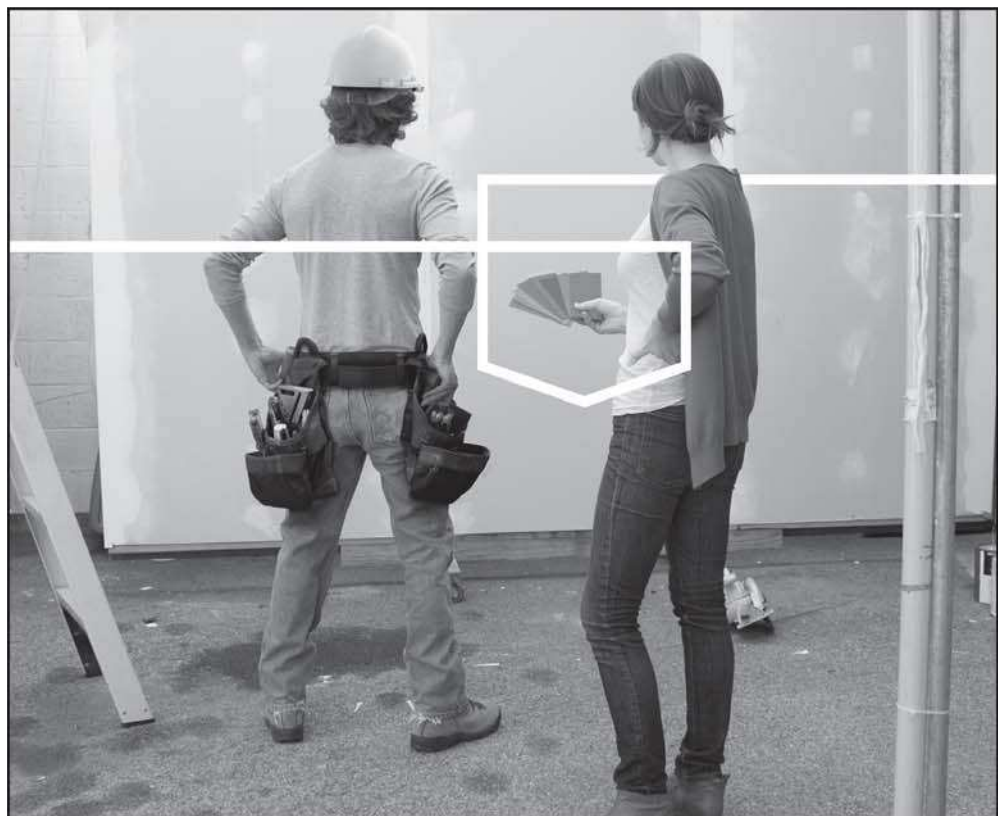
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