

HUNTER

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“Witty self-reported the shooting and cooperated with ODFW (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists) and OSP (Oregon State Police) game troopers in the investigation of the incident,” said Harney District Attorney Tim Colahan. “The offense Witty entered his guilty plea to was reduced to a Class A violation as part of the plea negotiations.”

Witty was fined \$1,000, ordered to pay restitution of \$1,000 to ODFW, and the firearm used in the incident, a Savage Arms .223 rifle with scope, was forfeited to the state.

A family member of Witty’s said Sharon Livingston of Long Creek

came forward to pay Witty’s attorney fees — Witty was represented by Burns attorney Riccola Voigt.

“Brennon — I have to compliment him,” Livingston said. “I admire him for being truthful and forthcoming.”

The family member also said rancher Gail Enright of Mt. Vernon and the property owner where the wolf was shot each paid \$200 toward Witty’s fines.

Wolves were listed under the state Endangered Species Act at the time of the shooting, and although the ODFW Commission on Nov. 9 removed wolves from the state list, it had no bearing on Witty’s case.

Colahan prosecuted the case at the request of the Grant County District Attorney who recused himself from the case based on his

State wolf population grows

Oregon’s known wolf population continued to grow in 2015. The minimum Oregon wolf population is now 110 wolves, a 36 percent increase over the 2014 population.

ODFW documented 11 breeding pairs of wolves in 2015, up from nine last year. A breeding pair is an adult male and female wolf that produce at least two pups which survive through the end of the year. (Pups are born in mid-April each year.) Reproduction was confirmed in 14 groups of wolves, and 33 pups born in 2015 are known to have survived through Dec. 31. ODFW also documented three new pairs of wolves. Known wolf groups occurred in parts of Baker, Grant, Jackson, Klamath, Lake, Morrow, Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties.

The rate of depredation of livestock by wolves decreased in 2015 despite the increase in wolf population. ODFW investigations confirmed nine incidents of wolves killing livestock and

two probable incidents. A total of 10 sheep, three calves and one working dog were killed by wolves, and another two calves and one lamb were injured. This is down from 11 confirmed incidents and 32 livestock (2 cattle and 30 sheep) lost last year.

While no wolves were killed by ODFW, agents or landowners due to livestock depredation, ODFW documented seven wolf mortalities in 2015. A five-month-old pup was found dead in the Catherine Pack rendezvous area and appeared to die of natural causes. One wolf that died had a rodent in its stomach and the wolf tested positive for a chemical that is poisonous to animals. The cause of the death of the Sled Springs breeding male and female found dead in August is unknown. Three wolves were illegally shot.

To see the full report or learn more about wolves, visit odfw.com/wolves.

She said the forfeiture of the rifle was something Witty offered in exchange for the district attorney’s stipulation to not request the hunting license suspension, which would have been suspended for 36 months.

“I agree with Mr. Colahan that Mr. Witty went above and beyond in cooperating,” Voigt said.

Under House Bill 4040 A, the legislature would ratify last year’s decision by state wildlife officials to delist wolves, effectively neutralizing a legal challenge filed by several environmental groups in the Oregon Court of Appeals.

The Senate will soon vote on HB 4040 A, having passed a key legislative committee on Feb. 23 and earlier having passed the House.

acquaintance with the Witty family.

Voigt said she would have liked to see Witty’s fines reduced, but during

negotiations, “there were things we felt were more important, including removing the hunting license suspension, the violation treat-

ment (having the charge reduced to a violation) and dismissal of the other count which was another A misdemeanor.”

COURT

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Dorman Gregory, who was a firefighter on the Malheur National Forest for 37 years, said extreme weather conditions caused the fire to grow uncontrollably. He said the fire burned even in areas that had been well treated, and nothing could have been done.

Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin brought copies of a 2015 fire report with an appendix about the Canyon Creek Complex. He said the agency has nothing to hide, and he was willing to talk to people about the fire and provide additional information.

Kenny Delano, Mt. Vernon, said when a crime is committed, you don’t ask the criminal to investigate.

John Day resident Howard Gieger said he was a fire investigator for insurance companies for 33 years. After looking at the report, he said he believed items were missing. He said people needed to know the facts, but he did not believe the county should pay for it.

County Judge Scott Myers said the subject was very polarizing, and he said many of the people who spoke were affected by the fire. He said he was not sure whether the forest commissioners could be objective if they oversaw the investigation. He also said he believed the Forest Service had provided the information requested.

Commissioner Chris Labhart said he believed an investigation was warranted but that it should be initiated by individuals or groups and not be funded by county resources.

Commissioner Boyd Britton said he knew the firefighters felt terrible they were unable to contain the fire.

“I feel horrible for all those folks that lost their homes,” he said, but added that no one lost their life.

The vote was unanimous to deny the request to fund the investigation.



County Judge Scott Myers speaks about a request for an investigation into the Canyon Creek Complex fire at the Grant County Court meeting Feb. 24. The County Court ultimately denied the request.

The Eagle/Sean Hart

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MOVIE SCHEDULE MAR. 4 - 10

ZOOPTOIA PG
Disney Animation. Fugitive con artist fox and a rookie bunny cop work together to uncover a conspiracy.
FRI & SAT (4:00) 7:00 9:35
SUNDAY (4:00) 7:00
MON-THURS 7:00

LONDON HAS FALLEN R
In London for the Prime Minister's funeral, Mike Banning discovers a plot to assassinate all the attending world leaders.
FRI & SAT (4:10) 7:10 9:40
SUNDAY (4:10) 7:10
MON-THURS 7:10

GODS OF EGYPT PG-13
A mortal teams up with the god Horus in an alliance against Set, the merciless god of darkness who has usurped Egypt's throne.
FRI & SAT (3:50) 6:50 9:30
SUNDAY (3:50) 6:50
MON-THURS 6:50

\$9 Adult, \$7 Senior (60+), Youth

WINNER

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“Most of it is in savings, and we sent all four of our kids some money to help them out,” Dave said.

He said he plays the lottery “fairly regularly,” including Powerball, Mega Millions and Oregon’s Game Megabucks.

He said if he’d bought the multiplier, he would have doubled his money.

The last time he won a sizable amount of lottery money was about eight years ago when he brought home \$590, hitting five of six numbers, Dave said.

“I feel great about winning \$50,000,” he said. “It puts me back ahead.”

Bill Wyllie, manager of Chester’s Thriftway in John Day, said the employees at the store were excited to hear they’d sold a winning ticket.

“I think that’s cool that

we sold big winner and hope we can do it again soon,” he said.

The overall odds of winning a Powerball prize are one in 24.9. Odds of winning the jackpot are one in 292,201,338.

Proceeds from Oregon Lottery sales help fund public education, parks, economic development and watershed projects.

For more information, visit www.oregonlottery.org online.

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