Oregon FFA convention offers students view to future

By Eric Mortenson EO Media Group

CORVALLIS — If the 1,400 students attending the Oregon FFA state convention had some questions about career prospects, Alexzandra "Alex" Murphy was offering some answers.

Murphy teaches a new precision irrigated agriculture program at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton, and she said ag employers are clamoring to hire people trained in new technology.

"People have been asking me for students," she said while stationed at a college information booth. "There is a huge demand for workers. Everywhere I go, they say, 'We want more good work-

Students with FFA experience are particularly attractive to employers, she



Murphy



Shea **Booster**

said, because they're already

tuned into multiple facets

of agriculture. And it hasn't

been difficult recruiting stu-

dents to study precision ag

applications, Murphy added.

kids who don't get excited about technology," she said with a laugh. "Turning off your (irrigation) pivot with a

cell phone is awesome."

"I don't know too many

Blue Mountain Communi-

ty College was among the ca-

reer vendors participating in

the convention, held March

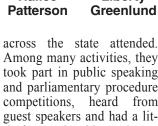
18-21 at Oregon State Uni-

versity. Students from Future

Farmers of America chapters







State officers for 2016-17 were selected as well. They are: President Shea Booster, of Bend; Vice President Hailee Patterson, of Imbler; Secretary Liberty Greenlund, of Yamhill-Carlton; Treasurer Raymond Seal, of Joseph; Reporter Zanden Unger, of Dallas; and Sentinel Bryson Price, of Sutherlin.



Bryson

Price



Raymond Seal



Unger

them back.



Kelly Barnes

To the Oregon FFA stu-

He asked them to realize

dents, Barnes listed three ar-

they have ingrained habits or

daily routines, things they do

without thinking that may be

wasting time or even holding

certain way, what happens

"When we do things a

eas for consideration.

excited or inspired. "You put good things in, good things come out," Barnes said.

lives. While many students

will say they don't act badly because of coarse entertain-

ment, for example, they will acknowledge that other inputs

make them feel sad, happy,

Last, Barnes talked about the "rule of five." He asked students to think of their interactions with five friends. Of that group, he said, who is the smartest, has the most goals, makes the best decisions and is looked at as a leader.

The rule of five says you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with," he said. "If you're the smartest, who's pushing you to be smarter?

"Find people who are going to push you," Barnes concluded. "Surround yourself with people who are better than you."

Among many activities, they took part in public speaking and parliamentary procedure competitions, heard from guest speakers and had a little fun on the side, such as a session on western dancing.

While advisers such as Murphy of BMCC were available to offer career advice, other convention speakers had something to say about life in general. Kelly Barnes, a motiva-

tional speaker from Oklahoma, used a fast-paced presentation to suggest students should examine their lives and make changes. Barnes, who grew up on

family dairy and beef operations, said he found his calling during an FFA leadership conference and now spends his time talking to corporate and educational groups.

when someone asks you to change?" he asked. "The answer is no." review what he called their

Barnes said students should "inputs," the music, movies, books or organizations such as FFA that influence their

Sharp disagreements mark path as Oregon begins wolf plan review

By Eric Mortenson EO Media Group

SALEM — Opposing sides in Oregon's continuing wolf argument both believe some aspects of the state's management plan should be reviewed by independent par-

Speaking March 18 to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Commission, conservationists repeated their view that an external scientific review should have been done before the commission took wolves off the state endangered species list last November.

Livestock, hunting and farming interests, meanwhile, suggested a third-party should make the call on whether livestock attacks are listed as confirmed wolf depredation or only "probable," which don't count toward lethal control

decisions. On just about every other aspect of wolves in Oregon, however, the two sides disagree. Panelists representing both sides were invited to meet with the ODFW Commission and stake out their positions as the state begins what is expected to be a ninemonth review of the wolf management plan.

The review begins as cattle and sheep producers, hunters and the Oregon Farm Bureau have scored a couple of key victories. First was the commission's delisting decision



Eric Mortenson/Capital Press

Michael Finley, right, chair of the ODFW Commission, discusses wolf management with Rob Klavins, left, of Oregon Wild and Amaroq Weiss, second from left, of the Center for Biological Diversity.

in November, and the Oregon Legislature followed that up by passing a bill that protects the decision from legal challenge. Since then, the state's annual wolf survey showed the state population grew 36 percent in 2015. Wildlife biologist Russ Morgan, ODFW's wolf recovery manager, said the numbers represent a continuing success story as wolves expand in number and range.

Panelists from Oregon Wild, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and Cascadia Wildlands repeated their view that delisting was premature and not supported by independent scientific review. Rep resentatives said they oppose a state population cap or range limits on wolves. They also oppose sport hunting of wolves, which some think could be an

eventual result of delisting and plan revision.

Amaroq Weiss, of the Center for Biological Diversity, said some Oregon actions undermine wolf protection. The Legislature passed a bill increasing the fines for poaching, she said, but excused "unintentional take."

"The law provides an absolute defense for someone who shoots a wolf and claims he thought it was a coyote," she said, noting the case of an Oregon hunter who was prosecuted for a 2015 incident. "The state is saying, claim it was an accident and we'll turn our back."

Rob Klavins, Northeast Oregon field coordinator for Oregon Wild, said wolf poaching has increased, the delisting and legislative action was "unfair and unethical" and discussions

are marked by "renewed conflict and controversy" even as a majority of Oregonians favor wolf protections.

"We're skeptical, but we are here again," he told the commission.

The other side had points to make as well.

Mary Anne Nash, an attorney with the Oregon Farm Bureau, said conservationists' complaints about transparency and scientific review are "in the eye of the beholder."

"They mean their preferred outcomes, and their science," she said.

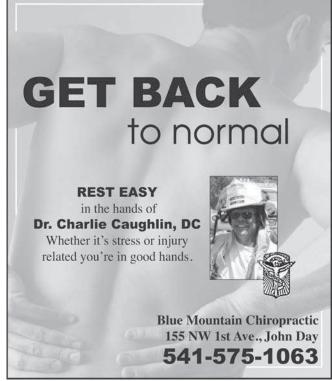
Dave Wiley, with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, said ODFW must protect Oregon's deer and elk herds as wolf packs expand.

Jim Akenson, conservation director for the Oregon Hunters Association, said it's "wonderful" to restore wolves to the ecosystem, "But at some point there needs to be management. We've reached that point," he

Wallowa County rancher

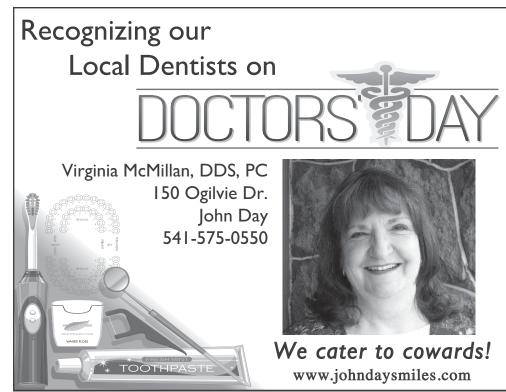
Todd Nash, head of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association wolf task force, said ODFW has too high a bar for confirming wolf attacks and an outside party

ought to do it instead. He and others also favor establishing geographic management zones in which wolves could be controlled on a more local basis.





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