



# Officials support ATV use on state highways



Eagle file photo  
**Clint Benge, left, and Tim Nelson ride in a Razor side by side to Chester's Thriftway on April 19, 2013, taking advantage of the John Day city ordinance allowing ATVs on certain city streets. The city council recently gave consensus to create a work group to determine possible routes ATVs could travel on state highways within the county.**

By Richard Hanners  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

A local effort is under way to get approval for use of ATVs on state highways in Grant County.

Senate Bill 344, introduced by Sen. Ted Ferrioli in 2017 and passed unanimously in the House and 29-1 in the Senate, allows the Oregon Transportation Commission to designate specific routes on state highways where ATVs could travel.

ATVs are currently allowed to cross state highways at an intersection or at

a place more than 100 feet from any highway intersection. The goal of SB344 was to allow ATV riders to leave a trail at a highway and then travel on the highway a short distance to the start of another trail. Drafted by a work group made up of ATV users, vehicle dealers and the state Parks and Recreation and Transportation departments, the legislation allows a road authority to authorize ATV use within highway rights of way in counties with less than 20,000 people.

While many rural Oregon cities and counties adopted

ordinances to allow ATV use on city and county roads, state highways typically serve as the main access road in rural communities.

The legislation established a seven-member All-Terrain Vehicle Access Routes Advisory Committee to review applications for routes. Six members are appointed by the state parks and recreation director, and one is appointed by state transportation director.

The John Day City Council gave its consensus support Dec. 11 to forming a working group with other nearby communities to identify proposed routes in Grant County and to consider a joint application for designation.

John Day City Manager Nick Green described a presentation by Ian Caldwell, an OPRD grants and community programs representative for central and Eastern Oregon, at the Nov. 21 meeting of the South East Area Commission on Transportation.

The purpose of the legislation is to promote tourism and local recreational uses by connecting towns with trails. Those goals align with

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# COMPOSER CELEBRATES MALHEUR REFUGE



## ‘There’s a cacophony of bird sounds that washes over you’

By Kathy Aney  
 EO Media Group

As the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge unfolded in early 2016, Jay Bowerman watched with growing incredulity. The feeling escalated as the armed militants protested federal regulations regarding public lands by squatting for 41 days inside the headquarters of the federal bird refuge. The occupation, he felt, had tainted one of Oregon’s most beautiful spots.

“It was disturbing,” Bowerman said. “Malheur deserves to be remembered not for its armed occupation, but for its natural beauty, wildlife diversity and rich cultural heritage.”

After the court verdict in which seven occupiers were acquitted, Bowerman found comfort in listening to a haunting orchestral work called “Cantus Arcticus” (subtitled “Concerto for Birds”) by Finnish composer Einojunhani Rautavaara. The work has birds sounds layered in with the music.

“I listened to the music over and over and over,” he said. “It was so soothing.”

He wondered if music could help the people who love the refuge to heal from the occupation. Bowerman isn’t a guy who thinks thoughts and lets them float away.

The son of legendary University of

Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman, Jay Bowerman was U.S. champion in the biathlon in 1969. He served as executive director of the Sunriver Nature Center and Observatory for 30 years and now researches and writes about such things as amphibians, spotted frogs, fungi and leeches.

He pitched the idea of the musical tribute to his wife, Teresa, and to Michael Gesme, music director and conductor with the Central Oregon Symphony. Intrigued, Gesme suggested composer Chris Thomas for the job.

Thomas, a Pendleton native who now lives in Bend, composes and orchestrates for television and movies. Thomas, 36, was nominated for Best Orchestrator by the Film and TV Music Academy in

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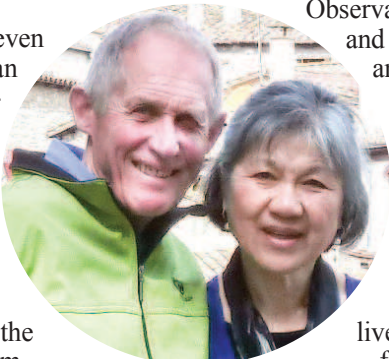


Contributed photo/Jen Klewitz

**ABOVE:** Chris Thomas spent a year and a half composing the Malheur Symphony as a way to push aside the Malheur occupation and focus instead on the beauty of the place.

**TOP IMAGE:** Curlews and their operatic call inspired composer Chris Thomas to write the ‘Curlew Scherzo,’ the fourth movement of the Malheur Symphony.

EO Media Group/Kathy Aney



Contributed photo

**Jay and Teresa Bowerman helped launch the Malheur Symphony project.**

## Ranchers upset by wild horse release on Malheur National Forest

By Mateusz Perkowski  
 EO Media Group

An apparent relocation of wild horses to Oregon’s Malheur National Forest has upset ranchers who say the area is already overstocked with the animals.

Rancher Mike Moore said he encountered a Forest Service vehicle pulling a trailer on Dec. 14 in the Murderers Creek allotment of the national forest, which is an unusual sight, especially during winter.

Responding to questions, the “sheepish” Forest Service employee driving the vehicle admitted the trailer contained several wild horses gathered from

the neighboring Ochoco National Forest that were to be released in the area, Moore said.

“I just think this is wrong. You can’t be taking horses from one forest to another, that isn’t right,” he said. “We’ve got too many horses, and they’re not helping by bringing more horses from another forest to this forest.”

Representatives of the Malheur National Forest said they’re coordinating with the Ochoco National Forest to understand why some horses were taken to the Murderers Creek allotment from the neighboring national forest and would soon issue a statement about the situation.

Wild horses are a contentious subject in the Malheur National Forest, where ranchers say the animals trample stream banks to the detriment of federally protected fish, preventing cattle from being allowed to graze on affected allotments.

The maximum “appropriate management level” for the Murderers Creek herd management area is 140 wild horses, whereas the most recent estimate for the actual population is 339 horses.

Loren Stout, a rancher who grazes cattle on the Murderers Creek allotment, said the actual population

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EO Media Group/Mateusz Perkowski

**A wild horse grazes near a gravel road in Oregon’s Malheur National Forest. The recent release of several wild horses in the national forest has stirred the ire of local ranchers who say it violates a legal settlement.**