

# Wolves won't be delisted without a fight

Cattlemen are cheering an announcement that the Department of the Interior will soon propose a plan to end federal protections on grey wolves.

On March 6, Acting Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt announced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will soon come up with a plan for delisting wolves, returning management to the states and tribes.

"Recovery of the grey wolf under the Endangered Species Act is one of our nation's great conservation successes, with the wolf joining other cherished species, such as the bald eagle, that have been brought back from the brink with the help of the ESA," said Fish and Wildlife spokesman Gavin Shire.

While we agree that this is good news, the proposal has a long way to go before becoming reality.

Since they were reintroduced in 1995, grey wolves have enjoyed intensive federal and state management.

When biologists first considered how long it would take wolves to become re-established in the Pacific Northwest, they had no idea the species would thrive the way it has. They started with 31 wolves transplanted from Canada to Idaho and 35 transplanted to Yellowstone National Park. Now hundreds of wolves blanket Idaho and parts of Montana and Wyoming and range as far west as the Cascade Mountains in Oregon and across much of Washington state.

The number of wolf packs in the Northwest contin-

ues to multiply with no help from state or federal wildlife managers. Wolves also show up in the most unlikely places. OR-7, a wolf originally from northeastern Oregon, wandered as far south as California before returning to Oregon and establishing his own pack. Recent attacks suggest a wolf or wolves have now made it to Curry County and the Oregon coast.

Wolf attacks on cattle and sheep grazing on federal and private lands are common. Ranchers can rightfully claim that they have involuntarily paid a big part of the price to re-establish wolves throughout the West.

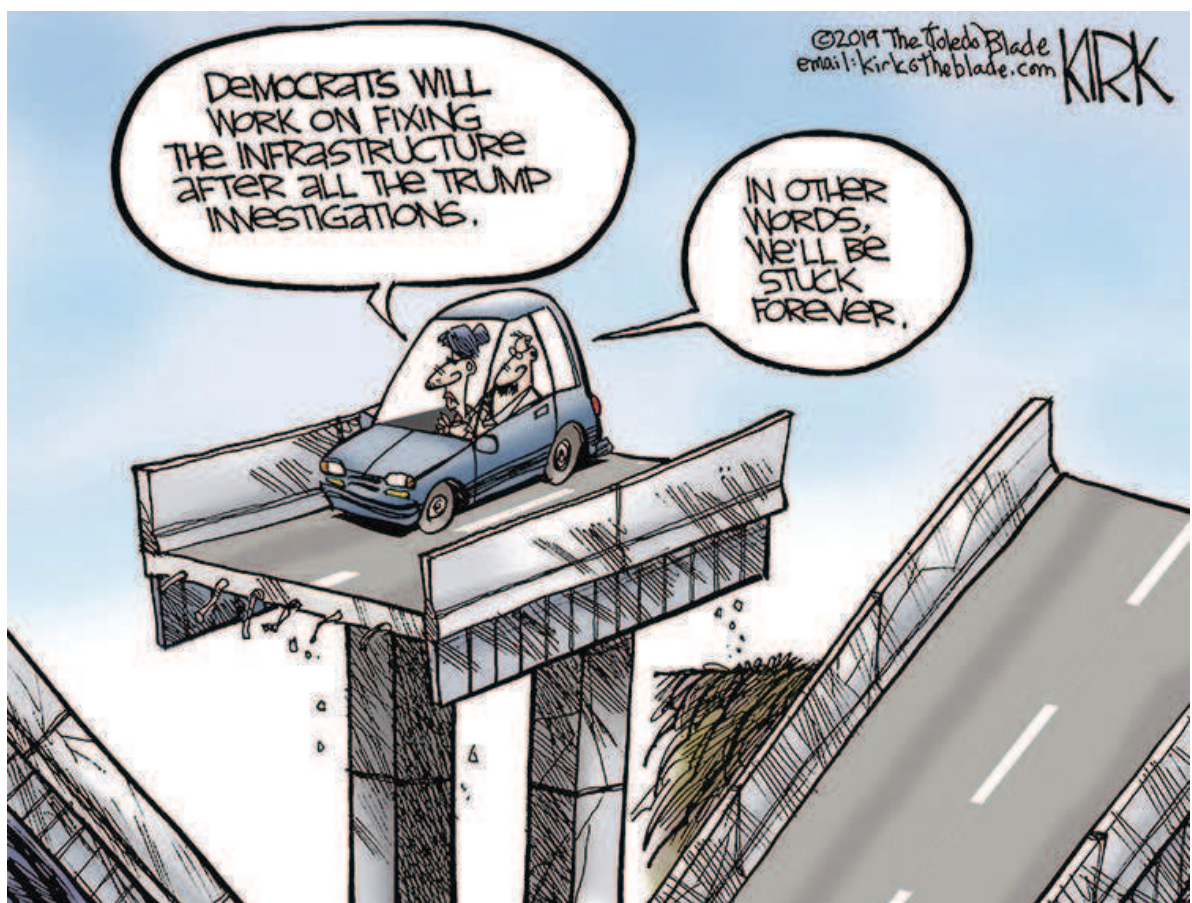
Now federal regulators say their work is done and it's time to take the grey wolf off the federal Endangered Species List. That will hardly signal open season on wolves, as they still enjoy robust state protections.

But environmental groups disagree.

"Given that grey wolves in the Lower 48 states occupy such a small percentage of their historical habitat, it is almost laughable for the Fish and Wildlife Service to determine that they are successfully recovered," said John Mellgren, an attorney with the Western Environmental Law Center.

"On its face, this appears to be politically motivated," Mellgren said. "We look forward to reviewing the draft delisting rule, and look forward to taking the Fish and Wildlife Service to court should its proposal not be based on what the science tells us."

Let the lawsuits begin.



# Sticking with you



Brianna Walker

"Mom-meeeeeeeee!" my 3-year-old screamed at the top end of his vocals. "Help me!"

One would think that, upon hearing this noise, I would have dropped everything and headed out to help my son. But I was in the middle of switching a load of laundry — and honestly, my youngest son seems to use that tone of voice for many things. It could be that his cracker fell on the floor, the bookcase toppled over on top of him or maybe just that he needed another glass of water. The next shout made me drop my laundry basket.

"Bloooooooood. Blood. Mommy, Blood!"

I bounded up the stairs two at a time. My toddler was sitting on the counter, a Pampered Chef knife and sheath lay next to him along with little droplets of blood. He wasn't crying, but he was looking at his bleeding index finger in panic.

I pinched his finger, and hauled him into the bathroom. He had done a good job of cutting it, and it took a bit for the bleeding to subside. He wasn't excited about a bandage on his finger — he thought that a kiss would be a better idea. It seemed to take a lot of talking to convince him that mommy's kisses were like Santa — they're the ones with the magic — but sometimes they need the elf bandages to help get the work done. It took a bit, but he finally decided bandages would be OK as long as they were kissed too.

A bandage on a 3-year-old doesn't last very long — between

dirt and play and water — and I seemed to be changing or replacing it every few hours. Somewhere in this period, my son's other fingers started to feel real bad for his index finger. Suddenly, they all needed bandages. Again, bandages on 3-year-olds don't last long — whether they are on real or sympathetic hurts. We blew through an entire box in just a few days and started on a second. It soon became apparent that it would be more economical to buy something other than the fabric, flex bandages — seeing as how the chance of one of them lasting from breakfast to lunch was about as good as coaxing an egg out of my rooster.

My toddler became obsessed with his bandages. Thankfully, over the course of a few weeks, his other fingers stopped having "hurt pains," and we could cut back on the bandage usage. Well, at least the bandage usage on his un-cut fingers. The bandages that were saved now were used to "help" the toilet seat stay down and the bathroom door to stay shut. A crack on my cellphone screen was "fixen" (the opposite of broken) with a brightly-colored bandage. Bandages also started popping up on torn items of clothing, or on body parts that had moles or bruises.

Bandages even ended up in my hair after my toddler saw me doing a french braid one morning. "What doing, Mommy?" he

asked.

"Fixing my hair," I replied. "Oh, why Mommy's hair broken?" he asked, his big blue eyes looking genuinely concerned about my hair.

Anything that appeared broken was fixen with the help of a bandage — everything, that is, except the initial cut on my toddler's index finger.

He would hold his finger out of the water during baths or cry when made to wash his hands — because his bandage would get wet. Playing with the baby lambs was fun — until they started to nibble on the finger with his bandage. Meanwhile, weeks passed and the bandage boxes rotated through our medicine cabinet. The cut under the bandage has long since healed, with hardly even a scar to mark its history, but try convincing my 3-year old. I think you'd have better luck talking to my rooster.

I wonder if it's a 3-year-old thing. My oldest got his thumb slammed in a car door and wore a thumb protector for months. Even after he had lost his thumbnail and a new rosy-pink one had grown back in its place, he still insisted that he needed that protector.

As parents, we should never worry that our children aren't listening — because they are always watching us, ready to imitate our worst habits. Makes me wonder what I don't need that I won't let go of? (And, no, it can't be a closet full of shoes — regardless of what my husband might say!)

Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Withdrawal decision highlights fundamental problems

**To the Editor:**  
The Forest Service's recent decision to withdraw its revised forest plan, as relieving as it is, sheds light on some fundamental problems within the organization.

What we see in the Forest Service's failure to institute a new plan, after 15 years in the making, is that it isn't in touch with reality. For starters, many things can happen in 15 years. A plan that takes 15 years to complete will be obsolete by the time it's finished. This is something Forest Service decision makers remain incapable of wrapping their heads around.

Also consider the length of the plan itself. At over 5,000 pages, the revised plan was more than four times the length of the average Bible (about 1,200 pages). A 5,000-page plan would be so difficult to navigate that it would essentially be worthless, as the revised plan turned out to be.

What we can glean most of all from this is the glaring lack of accountability demanded of Forest Service leadership. After 15 years, and presumably millions of

dollars spent, the Forest Service has nothing to show. If a blunder of this magnitude had occurred in the private sector, people would have lost their jobs. It's doubtful that a single reprimand was issued to those responsible for this massive waste of public resources.

In conclusion, the Forest Service needs to adopt some basic common sense. It needs to join us here in the real world, stop making excuses and begin managing our forests, as it was created to do.

Gregg Boethin  
Canyon City

### Controlled burns 'have not been enough'

**To the Editor:**  
Revised rules that protect air quality in areas of Oregon susceptible to smoke from controlled forest burns have gone into effect, adopted by the Oregon Board of Forestry and approved by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

This sounds great, but after reading the rest of the story, you find out that nothing has changed except the cost and responsibility for the health of our county's chil-

dren and elderly will be on us.

Our great leaders in Salem want a cap and trade for industry in Oregon to reduce CO2 and carbon ash pollution. (They want more tax money.)

While the U.S. Forest Service is increasing controlled burns yearly, Oregon Department of Forestry recorded, for 2018, 181,282 acres of controlled burns, which amounted to an estimated 1.3 million tons of woody debris. The acreage is increasing each year.

I have had contact with numerous Forest Service employees, and all think controlled burns is the answer to our wildfire problem. After stopping forest fires for over 100 years, and in the last 40 to 50 years not managing our pine forest correctly, controlled burns and what little proper forestry practices that have been done, have not been enough. A comprehensive plan based on true forestry practices, and not what well-meaning people pushing politicians think, is best. Look around you, we have a problem. All leadership needs to pull theirs out of the sand, stop thinking of themselves and use common sense to solve the building problems.

Ken Koser  
Prairie City



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Published every Wednesday by ECMEDIA group

**Grant County's Weekly Newspaper**

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**1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES**  
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Grant County .....\$45  
 Everywhere else in U.S.....\$57

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

**Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.**

**POSTMASTER**  
 Send address changes to:  
 Blue Mountain Eagle  
 195 N. Canyon Blvd.  
 John Day, OR 97845-1187  
 USPS 226-340

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