

EOMG hosting online candidate forums

2nd Congressional District forums set for May 1-2

Blue Mountain Eagle



ence due to COVID-19 concerns, are scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Friday, May 1, for the Democratic candidates and 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, May 2, for the Republican candidates.

“A crucial mission of local newspapers is to inform the public about matters that can affect their lives and their community,” said Kathryn B. Brown, vice president of EO Media Group. “EO Media Group is glad to be able to provide this online forum to give voters the opportunity to

HOW TO WATCH

What: Oregon 2nd Congressional District candidate forums

When: Democrat forum is 6:30 p.m., Friday, May 1; Republican forums are 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, May 2.

Where: Streaming live on the Blue Mountain Eagle Facebook page. Forums can be rewatched after the event at MyEagleNews.com or on EOAlive.tv.

Questions: Submit questions in advance by email to CD2forum@eomediagroup.com or on Facebook Live during the event.

get to know more about the CD2 candidates before the May 19 primary election.”

There are 16 candidates — five Democrats and 11 Republicans — running for the seat U.S. Rep. Greg Walden has held since 1998. Walden, the top Republican

on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and Oregon’s only Republican in Congress, announced in 2019 he will retire in January 2021.

With 11 Republicans entered in the primary, Brown said it was neces-

sary to hold two forums on May 2.

“It was important to us to make sure there was enough time for voters to hear from all of the candidates without sitting through an overly long forum,” she said.

The forums are being streamed by La Grande-based Eastern Oregon Alive TV, a local internet TV station. The forums will be available for viewing on the Blue Mountain Eagle website or on EOAlive.tv following the events.

“Voters will have the chance to rewatch or watch for the first time if they missed the live stream,” Brown said.

The forums are being

moderated by Chris Rush, the regional publisher of the EO Media Group’s east side publications, including the Blue Mountain Eagle. Voters can submit questions to CD2forum@eomediagroup.com in advance of the forums or on Facebook Live during the event.

Oregon’s 2nd Congressional District is the largest of Oregon’s five districts, and is the seventh largest district in the nation, covering all of Eastern Oregon and the Medford area.

Ballots are sent out April 29, and the primary election is May 19. The top vote getter in each party advances to the general election later this year.

Oregon wolf population increases 15% in 2019

By George Plaven
EO Media Group

Oregon’s wolf population continued to rise in 2019 while the number of confirmed attacks on livestock fell by nearly half, according to state wildlife officials.

Ranchers in rural Oregon, however, say the number of “confirmed” wolf attacks is nowhere near the actual number, and many producers have simply given up reporting cases of dead or missing livestock after growing frustrated with how the predators are being managed.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife released its annual wolf report April 15, documenting at least 158 wolves statewide. That is a 15% increase over 2018, when biologists counted 137 wolves.

Oregon now has 22 established wolfpacks, up from 16 the previous year. A pack is defined as four or more wolves traveling together during winter. ODFW also identified nine

other distinct groups of 2-3 wolves that do not meet the strict definition of a pack.

Most wolves are densely clustered in northeast Oregon, with a few packs spreading into the northern and southern Cascades. ODFW says the total wolf population is likely higher, and the annual survey is only a minimum count based on verified evidence such as visual sightings, tracks and photos taken by remote trail cameras.

The number of wolves in Oregon has steadily risen since counting began in 2009, when fewer than 20 animals were identified. Gray wolves are still listed as a federally endangered species in Western Oregon, though they were removed from the state endangered species list east of highways 395, 78 and 95 in 2015.

Roblyn Brown, ODFW wolf coordinator, said wolves are expanding their range with three new packs in the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon, south of Inter-

state 84. In Western Oregon, the Indigo pack was also officially confirmed in eastern Lane and Douglas counties.

No wolves were poached in 2019, though five were struck and killed by vehicles and another died from disease. A rancher in Baker County also legally shot a wolf he caught in the act of chasing a herding dog on his ranch near Halfway in March.

Meanwhile, the number of confirmed wolf attacks on livestock fell 43% in 2019. ODFW staff investigated 50 possible cases of wolf-livestock depredation, with 16 incidents confirmed, one “probable,” 12 possible or unknown and 21 non-wolf related. Overall, ranchers lost one adult cow, one steer, 11 calves, six sheep and one guard dog to wolves.

Brown said she is impressed with ranchers’ ingenuity as they implement new non-lethal tools to protect their livestock without harming wolves.

“The wolf population con-

tinues to expand into areas where livestock producers have less experience with wolves,” Brown said. “We appreciate all livestock producers for their efforts to co-exist with wolves.”

Danielle Moser, wildlife program coordinator for Oregon Wild, a Portland-based environmental group, said figures in the 2019 ODFW wolf report are “more strong evidence that focusing on non-lethal measures to reduce wolf-livestock conflict works.”

But the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association disputed the state’s numbers, and argues that more wolves will continue to pose problems for ranchers going forward.

Jerome Rosa, OCA executive director, said ranchers are increasingly not reporting dead or missing livestock to ODFW. In some cases, Rosa said it takes biologists days to arrive for an inspection. By that time, he said the evidence is too far degraded to get a confirmation.

“(Ranchers) gave up on the system,” Rosa said. “The frustration out there on the countryside has just gotten higher.”

Rodger Huffman and Veril Nelson, co-chairmen of the OCA wolf committee, released a joint statement saying ranchers do everything they can to prevent wolves from killing livestock — usually at a cost to their own mental and financial stress — and is “more a matter of survival than attempts to co-exist.”

“We also know that ‘confirmed’ losses of livestock are nowhere near the actual losses, both by death and other losses wolves in livestock indirectly contribute to,” Huffman and Nelson said. “When government regulation and management do little or nothing when there are rare confirmations, we know producers quit reporting.”

The state awarded \$178,319 to ranchers in 11 counties to compensate them for livestock losses, as well as for non-lethal deterrents such

as fladry fencing, alarm boxes or range riders.

Huffman and Nelson said the compensation program is “severely underfunded,” and discourages ranchers from participating due to its complexity and, ultimately, small percentage of payouts to help ranchers stay in business.

While the wolf population is increasing, one of Oregon’s most famous wolves, OR-7, may be dead.

The famous wandering wolf and breeding male of the Rogue Pack was photographed in the fall but not documented during the winter count, ODFW said. His mate is still present, though the pack apparently did not reproduce in 2019. OR-7 is estimated to be 11 years old.

“We don’t know if OR-7 has died, but it would be reasonable to assume considering his age, which is old for a wolf in the wild,” said Brown, the agency’s wolf coordinator. “It is natural for packs to change over time as individual wolves are born, disperse or die.”

OREGON'S 2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FORUM

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Get to know the Republican candidates for U.S. Congress without leaving home.

Primary election is May 19

Forums will be video recorded without audience due to COVID-19 concerns.

Streaming live on this newspaper’s Facebook page:

Saturday May 2, 2020 • 5 p.m. & 7 p.m.

Watch after the event on this newspaper’s website or on EOAlive.tv

Submit your questions in advance by email to:
CD2forum@eomediagroup.com
or on Facebook Live during the event.

Moderated by Chris Rush - Regional Publisher,
EO Media Group



Live stream and video by EO Alive TV



• A forum for the Democratic candidates will be held on May 1 •



OREGON'S 2ND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FORUM

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Get to know the Democratic candidates for U.S. Congress without leaving home.

Primary election is May 19

Forums will be video recorded without audience due to COVID-19 concerns.

Streaming live on this newspaper’s Facebook page:

Friday, May 1, 2020 • 6:30

Watch after the event on this newspaper’s website or on EOAlive.tv

Submit your questions in advance by email to:
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or on Facebook Live during the event.

Moderated by Chris Rush - Regional Publisher,
EO Media Group



Live stream and video by EO Alive TV



• A forum for the Republican candidates will be held on May 2 •

