

Merry Christmas

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Wolves in Murderers Creek



Contributed photo/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
A gray wolf designated OR-7 trots past a trail camera carrying what a wildlife biologist said is an elk leg in the Southern Oregon Cascades.

ODFW believes there are eight wolves around Grant County

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife identified a new area of known wolf activity in the Murderers Creek Wildlife Unit.

Ryan Torland, an ODFW district wildlife biologist, said the area in southern Grant County east of Seneca has seen at least two different wolves over the past three years.

One was black, he said, and it

appears to have moved on about a year or two ago.

He told the Eagle a gray wolf started to show up roughly a year ago. Torland said this was throughout the winter and then disappeared in the spring.

He said the gray wolf started to show up more consistently from late July to early August this year. In late November, he said ODFW issued an "area of known wolf activity" for the gray wolf.

Torland said ODFW identified a pack of wolves in the Desolation Unit

this year in March.

He said there are a pair of wolves in the Northside Unit. He said ODFW is not aware of the pair successfully raising a pup.

Torland said, if a pup survives through December, they consider it as part of the population of wolves in the area. He said ODFW assumes if the pup survived that long it will make it.

The agency counts the population from January through March, he said.

"So any wolves we count would

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A WINTER RETREAT



Contributed photo

The Retreat at Silvies Valley Ranch now has winter offerings, including horseback riding, sleigh rides, spa packages and more.

Silvies Valley Ranch resort offers sleigh rides, spa packages and more during the snowy season

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

People looking to relieve the stressful weight of 2020 and take a breather might find what they're looking for at The Retreat at Silvies Valley Ranch this winter.

The resort near Seneca is providing new winter offerings for locals and visitors to enjoy such as their 2020-2021 winter packages, Silvies' Rocking Heart Spa, Clydesdale sleigh rides, pistol shooting and more.

Scott Campbell, owner of Silvies Valley Ranch, said The Retreat and Links was open all summer and provided an award winning golf course along with other recreational activities for people to enjoy.

This year they wanted to expand on activities for the winter season so guests can visit Silvies year round.

"The problem with golf and wildlife is that together it's about a six- to seven-month season," Campbell said. "It's really hard to keep people year-round if you only have a six- to seven-month season."

Initial shutdowns and restrictions from COVID-19 prevented the resort from being open all year in 2020, but Silvies is open for the winter to provide the retreat visitors need.

About a year ago, Silvies opened up the Rocking Heart Spa and a conference

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Contributed photo

Clydesdales at Silvies Valley Ranch provide sleigh rides for guests who want to enjoy the winter snow.



Contributed photo

Guests can enjoy Clydesdale sleigh rides available at The Retreat at Silvies Valley Ranch.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

This hallway houses multiple rooms for massages at The Rocking Heart Spa.



Eagle photos/Steven Mitchell

Sarah Ake, a server at 1188 Brewing, gives two thumbs up Friday as the restaurant opened up for indoor dining.

Open for dining

Restaurants relieved to welcome back customers

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Indoor dining resumed in Grant County Friday as the county began its first day in the "lower risk" level.

In the low-risk COVID-19 category, restaurants can open up their dining rooms to 50% capacity.

Compared to other counties, Grant County saw the most significant dip in the state's risk level, dropping from the highest ranked to the lowest during the Oregon Health Authority's two-week evaluation period.

Meanwhile, small business owners and their employees breathed a collective sigh of relief as they welcomed back their regular customers.

George Cross, a John Day resident and cook at the Squeeze-In Restaurant and Deck, said he was grateful for the reopening timing.

"It could not have come at a better time," he said, "right before Christmas."

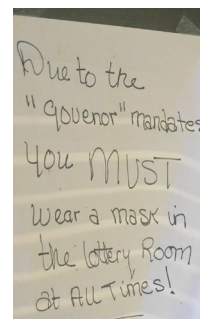
He said that he could pick up hours during the shutdown, but they were limited.

"We'll see how it goes and play it by ear," he said.

A sentiment Squeeze-In owner Shawn Duncan shares as well. She said she is concerned about how long she will be open this time around.

Duncan said restaurants faced the brunt of the restrictions, compared to other businesses, which lacked consistency.

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A sign hangs on the swinging doors to the Lottery machine room at the Squeeze-In Restaurant and Deck Friday as the county's restaurants opened back up for indoor dining.