

BLM: Drop suit against Hammonds

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Capital Press



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Allotments traditionally used for grazing by Hammond Ranches are undergoing an extensive environmental review. The federal government has urged a judge to dismiss a lawsuit against grazing on those allotments.

The federal government is seeking the dismissal of a grazing lawsuit involving Oregon's Hammond Ranches because cattle won't graze the affected allotments until an environmental review is done.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has begun an "environmental impact statement" of livestock management and ecological health on four allotments traditionally grazed by the Hammond family near Diamond.

Cattle won't be permitted onto the 26,000 acres of public land before the EIS is finished, so there's no longer any basis for an environmental lawsuit that opposes cattle grazing by the Hammond family, according to BLM.

"The case is moot because there is no live controversy between the parties," said Shannon Boylan, the gov-

ernment's attorney, during oral arguments on Wednesday, June 29.

The Western Watersheds Project and three other environmental groups urged a federal judge not to dismiss the lawsuit, arguing there's no guarantee BLM will actually follow through on the study.

"Right now there is no EIS, so it's premature to declare the case moot," said Talasi Brooks, attorney for the environmental plaintiffs. "We don't know what the agency will do this time, and we won't know until they do it."

The Oregon ranch family was

thrown into the public spotlight more than a decade ago, when Dwight Hammond and his son, Steven, were charged with arson for setting fires to rangelands.

Criminal and civil litigation involving the Hammonds has taken many twists and turns since then.

After being convicted in a jury trial, the Hammonds spent time behind bars and were released — only to be re-imprisoned after a federal appeals court decided they had to serve longer five-year mandatory minimum sentences.

Their return to federal prison was met with protests that culminated in the standoff at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in 2016, which gained national attention. The Hammonds were released from prison early after former President Donald Trump pardoned them in 2018.

The following year, BLM restored the grazing permit that the Ham-

mond family had lost after the arson convictions.

A federal judge overturned that decision and remanded it to the BLM, but the agency again renewed their grazing permit in the final days of the Trump administration in early 2021.

Environmental groups filed another lawsuit over the decision but the BLM soon decided to rescind the permit decision after the Biden administration came into office.

The BLM now says the lawsuit should be thrown out because the environmental plaintiffs no longer have a problem for the federal court to sort out.

"There is no continuing harm because grazing never occurred," said Boylan, the agency's attorney. "I don't know what the court would be reviewing if this case is not dismissed."

COPS AND COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Circuit Court June 29

Jeremiah James Alsop, 40, of John Day was sentenced on three counts of criminal driving while suspended or revoked based on a guilty plea entered on Nov. 29. The charges were based on three separate incidents dating from April 27, July 11 and Sept. 28, 2021. Alsop was sentenced to two years of supervised probation and was ordered to complete the Grant County Treatment Court Program, with the possibility of early termination of probation if he complies with all the court's directives. If he fails to complete the program, however, Alsop's probation will be revoked and he will be sentenced to 40 days in jail with no credit for time served, consecutive to all other cases, and will be fined \$2,000.

June 30

Anthony Scott Steele, 57, of Canyon City was convicted of one count of unlawful possession of methamphetamine in relation to an incident that occurred on May 31, 2021, based on a guilty plea entered on June 28 of this year. He was sentenced to three years of supervised probation, 80 hours of community service or work crew time and 30 days in jail with credit for time served. He was also ordered to obtain a substance abuse evaluation, complete all recommended treatment and not use or possess intoxicants, among other conditions of probation. If all conditions are met, the supervised probation will convert to bench probation after one year.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week ending June 29:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 13
- Average inmates: 11
- Bookings: 3
- Releases: 5
- Arrests: 2
- Citations: 3
- Fingerprints: 4
- Civil papers: 13
- Warrants processed: 7
- Assist/welfare check: 1
- Search and rescue: 0

Justice Court

The Grant County Justice Court reported the following activity for the week ending June 29:

- Traffic citations filed: 18
- Misdemeanors filed: 1
- Small claims filed: 1
- Cases on probation: 37
- Hearings held: 4
- Warrants issued: 2
- Driver's license suspensions: 9
- Cases to collections: 69
- Cases to Dept. of Revenue: 40

Dispatch

Grant County dispatch worked 160 calls during the week ending June 29, including:

• Oregon State Police June 24

8:39 a.m.: Advised of cattle creating a hazard on Highway 26 near milepost 143.

June 26

Noon: Advised of a disabled vehicle on Highway 26 near Austin Junction.

5:18 p.m.: Advised of cattle

creating a hazard on Highway 26 near milepost 137.

6:05: Advised of a cow creating a hazard on Highway 395 North near milepost 79B.

June 27

4:38 p.m.: Advised of a disabled vehicle on Highway 26 near milepost 85.

• Grant County Sheriff June 22

2:08 a.m.: Responded to Dollar General, John Day, for a burglar alarm.

9:27 a.m.: Responded to Triangle Mini Mart, Mt. Vernon, for a report of theft of services.

10:24 a.m.: Traffic stop, Highway 26 near Carpenter Pond Road. Driver warned for unsafe passing.

3:28 p.m.: Responded to Clyde Holliday State Park, Mt. Vernon, for a juvenile problem.

June 23

4:01 p.m.: Responded to West Main Street, John Day, for a harassment complaint.

6:34 p.m.: Advised of a driving complaint on Highway 395 South in Canyon City.

8:14 p.m.: Responded to Northwest Third Avenue, John Day for a harassment complaint.

June 24

5:36 a.m.: Responded to John Day Polaris for a burglar alarm.

12:30 p.m.: Responded to Timbers Bistro, John Day, for a suspicious person.

12:53 p.m.: Responded to John Day Trailer Park for a suspicious person.

11:25 p.m.: Responded to Sinclair station, John Day, for a burglar alarm. All secure.

June 25

8:43 a.m.: Responded to Dark Horse, John Day, for a welfare check. All OK.

12:27 p.m.: Responded to Highway 26 near milepost 161 to remove a road hazard.

3:39 p.m.: Responded to 1188 Brewing, John Day, to assist Pendleton Police Department with an interview.

4:59 p.m.: Responded to

Dairy Queen, John Day, for an unwanted subject.

5:46 p.m.: Responded to Advantage Dental, John Day, for a panic alarm at a closed business.

5:44 p.m.: Responded to South Humbolt Street, Canyon City, for a driving complaint.

6:44 p.m.: Advised of shots fired in the vicinity of East Main Street, John Day.

7:09 p.m.: Responded to Chester's Market, John Day, for a theft of cans.

7:28 p.m.: Responded to an address in Seneca to assist a subject in getting house keys.

June 26

2:57 a.m.: Responded to Highway 402 in Monument for an intoxicated male causing a disturbance. Derrick Brown, 49, of Kimberly was arrested.

8:34 a.m.: Responded to Highway 395 South near milepost 3C to remove a hazard from the road.

12:24 p.m.: Responded to Northeast Dayton Street, John Day, for a parking complaint.

June 27

1:50 a.m. Responded to Bare Bones, John Day, for a disturbance. The kids were told to go home.

10:27 p.m.: Responded to Northwest First Avenue for a juvenile problem.

11:40 a.m.: Responded to Cottonwood Street, Mt. Vernon, to stand by on a civil issue.

3:25 p.m.: Responded to Bare Bones, John Day. Raymond McDonald, 57, of John Day arrested for violation of a release agreement.

6:18 p.m.: Responded to Best Western Motel, John Day, for a dispute.

10:44 p.m.: Responded to Mascall Overlook for a report of shots fired.

June 28

6:10 a.m.: Responded with John Day Ambulance to Middle Fork Lane near milepost 30 for a single-vehicle crash. A 24-year-old male was trans-

ported to Blue Mountain Hospital in John Day with possible head trauma.

11:58 a.m.: Responded to Riverside Mobile Home Park for an assault complaint.

2:45 p.m.: Responded to Southwest Canton Street for a report of a hit-and-run with property damage.

3:09 p.m.: Responded to Dog Patch Road, John Day, to deliver a message. Unable to locate the recipient.

4:49 p.m.: Responded to Fish House Inn, Dayville, for an accidental 911 call.

8:29 p.m.: Responded to South Humbolt Street, Canyon City, for a driving complaint.

9:43: Responded to the Ugly Truth, John Day, for a theft report.

June 29

9:35 a.m.: Responded to Chester's Market, John Day, for a shoplifting complaint.

2:25: Responded to County Road 63 near milepost 7 for an abandoned vehicle.

• John Day Ambulance June 23

7:23 p.m.: Responded to the Elks Lodge for a 73-year-old male with an unknown medical issue.

June 24

10:40 a.m.: Dispatched to South Canyon Boulevard for a 45-year-old female with diabetic issues and weakness.

12:46 p.m.: Responded to Thompson Avenue for an 86-year-old male with breathing difficulties, abdominal pain and a fall injury.

3:06 p.m.: Patient transport to St. Charles Medical Center, Bend.

June 25

9 a.m.: Dispatched to Ingle Street, Mt. Vernon, for a 72-year-old female who fell and broke her ankle.

10:14 p.m.: Dispatched to Blue Heron Road for a 70-year-old male who was shaking and cold. Patient transported to Blue Mountain Hospital.

10:17 p.m.: Dispatched to Valley View Assisted Living for a 90-year-old female who fell out of bed and hit her head.

June 27

7:56 p.m.: Dispatched to Sunset Motel for a male with an unknown medical issue.

June 28

2:08 a.m.: Dispatched to Valley View Assisted Living for a 73-year-old male with a medical issue.

8:26 a.m.: Dispatched to Fields Creek Road for a 60-year-old female with possible stroke symptoms.

11:56 a.m.: Dispatched to Valley View Assisted Living for a patient transport to Blue Mountain Hospital.

8:34 p.m.: Dispatched to Metschan Avenue for an 80-year-old female with high heart rate and shortness of breath.

• Prairie City Ambulance June 22

6:10 p.m.: Dispatched to South Hall Street for a 71-year-old male with a fall injury. John Day Ambulance also responded.

• Seneca Ambulance June 23

9:21 a.m.: Dispatched to A Avenue for 66-year-old female having seizures. John Day Ambulance also responded.

5:55 p.m.: Dispatched to A Avenue for a 66-year-old female with possible alcohol withdrawal. John Day Ambulance also responded.

June 24

2:28 p.m.: Dispatched to Highway 26 and Bridge Street for an 85-year-old female who fell and hit her head. John Day Ambulance also responded.

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