

Court discusses appeal of ground squirrel listing

By Doris Brosnan

The Morrow County Court, at their March 15 meeting, discussed final business pertaining to the Washington Ground Squirrel issue.

Commissioner John Wenzholz said that the decision of whether or not to appeal or join the Port of Morrow in an appeal of the listing of the ground squirrel on the endangered species list was the "hardest decision the court has made" since he's been on the court. He added that he remains uncertain about whether the county was adequately consulted, though he understood that Commissioner Dan Brosnan did have conversations with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife personnel and did testify at a public hearing.

Wenzholz said he worries about this listing moving beyond state owned lands; he hears contradictory statements; he is not interested in appealing alone but perhaps along with the port.

Morrow County Judge Terry Tallman said that he does not think ODFW followed their administrative rules; he does not feel that they partnered with the county and that the listing should have been handled formally through the court; that only through Brosnan's personal initiative was the court involved at all. He said he believes that it impacts the county's economic future and could affect the Port of Morrow and other municipalities.

Commissioner Brosnan described the process through which, if the port requests a survey and no ground squirrels are present, the port will not be impacted. He reiterated that if the court requests a survey and no squirrels are present, the incidental-take rules will not apply.

Wenzholz said that he understands that the listing currently only affects state lands, but is concerned about other public-owned lands.

Brosnan said that an appeal will be determined based on the law, not whether the listing will adversely impact the county. He added his belief that if the question is whether or not ODFW did everything they could have, the answer is "no," but if the question is whether or not ODFW did everything they were legally bound to do, the answer is "yes."

Brosnan noted that several discussions of this subject will be found in the court's own minutes, demonstrating that the court knew of ODFW's efforts to list the ground squirrel, and he cited an opinion of the State Legislative Counsel that ODFW had complied with the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act. He added that he feels that the Port of Morrow may have grounds for appeal, that he regretted the consequences to Inland Land, the port, and others, but felt that there are no grounds for appeal by the county.

Bob Krein of the ODFW offered to answer questions and pointed out that the reason for no more consultation than what occurred was that, by law, the listing has to be solely on

biological considerations, not economic, social or other reasons. He explained that he recognizes the frustration of the community and that he shares the concerns of the community over the potential of the federal listing.

Wenzholz said he feels that if the county does not appeal, the federal government's listing of the ground squirrel will be all that much easier.

Tallman said he feels that the issue will go to a federal listing whether the county appeals or not.

Brosnan noted that no one, not even Inland Land, is questioning the biology.

Tallman moved that the county go forward with an appeal. Wenzholz seconded, adding "with the Port of Morrow." The motion passed, with Tallman and Wenzholz voting yes and Brosnan voting no. Brosnan then asked where the court was going to get the \$15,000, to which Tallman and Wenzholz responded that the Court will discuss that.

In other business, the court discussed results of the previous day's election and effect of the new rural addressing on the mail-in voting.

The court heard a request from Pat Reay of the city of Irrigon for a contract with the county to continue the road work on Washington Street into the city and a contract for some gravel. A lengthy discussion focused on county work load and on policy of non-competitiveness with private enterprise, with the court planning to further study the requests.

Public Works Director Guy Van Arsdale reported a request to vacate a portion of Wyoming Street, which is a public access road outside the city limits but inside the urban growth boundary. He presented and the court approved a permit request from US West to install line on Washington Street.

Van Arsdale reported putting gravel at the fairgrounds where the hog and sheep sheds had been; patching a washed out badger hole on Juniper Canyon Road; and reported that spring blading has begun. The court adopted the five-year road plan.

Morrow County Behavioral Health Director Gary Oberg reported that the new extension agent's office is being housed and is receiving some secretarial support in the Boardman office. Judge Tallman informed him of possible interest in exam-room space for the Health Department in the Boardman annex.

Morrow County Commission on Children and Families Director Dar Merrill presented and the court approved the requirements of the Administrative Procedures Act. He added that he feels that the Port of Morrow may have grounds for appeal, that he regretted the consequences to Inland Land, the port, and others, but felt that there are no grounds for appeal by the county.

The court approved a resolution to transfer funds within the Finley Buttes license fee, the Commission of Children and Families and enforcement

project with Umatilla County and the Confederated Tribes. The court heard a report illustrating the work of the historian who would be hired, checked with Currin about funding, and approved an expenditure of \$500 toward the project.

Limousin breeders fling

The 2000 Oregon Limousin Breeders' "Spring Fling," hosted by Joan and Duane Morris of DJ & R Limousin at Sandy and Karen and Gary Wilde of Wilde Limousin Ranches at Olex, is scheduled for May 20.

The event will be a full day of cattle information and activities with an emphasis on the Limousin breed. It will also be a day of junior activities, with four local counties' 4-H and FFA members invited. A show judging contest will be held with several classes of cattle to judge. Also on the agenda will be a "hands-on" fitting demonstration and one-on-one instruction with a showmanship class finale; a nutritional seminar explaining feeding and health; a reproductive seminar with emphasis on AI, semen collection and storage and embryo transplant; as well as product displays and door prizes.

Fred Rolfe of Rolfe Angus Acres at Grass Valley will be the official judge for the showmanship class and the judging contests. Several pens of cattle will be available to judge, with a prize going to class winners.

All youth, and any adults, are invited to bring their project animal to work with and show. Mike Mehren of Cenex Harvest States will be the speaker on nutrition. His main topic will be the feeding and nutritional differences for steers versus heifers retained for breeding. He will also be available for any questions from the audience.

Dr. Don Peter of Frontier Genetics at Hermiston will be the speaker on reproduction. He will be available to answer questions with regards to bovine health and reproduction. He says he hopes that attendees will bring their questions and problems up for discussion.

Mike Counsell of J & M Limousin at Myrtle Point will be the fitting professional. Attendees are encouraged to bring an animal to work with, as "hands on" is often the best method to learn fitting, said an OSU Extension news release. A few animals will be available for those who cannot bring their own animal.

A showmanship class will be held afterwards to show off what has been learned. This will also be a learning experience for green-broke animals. The field day activities will be held at Wilde Limousin Ranch located 17 miles south of Arlington, off I-84. To get to the Wilde ranch, take Hwy. 19 south to Olex and watch for the field day signs.

Hosts will provide "Limi-Chili" and pop for lunch. Plates and utensils will be provided. Attendees are asked to RSVP by May 15.

The days' activities will begin around 10 a.m. and the "fitters" can get started at 9 a.m. The day will end sometime in the afternoon.

Contact the Morrises at 503-668-6254 or the Wildes at 541-454-2995 to RSVP or to receive more information.

Emergency Management Director Casey Beard reported on that morning's bomb threat at the Army depot, and on a ventilation problem of over-pressurization at the Irrigon school for which there is no maintenance agreement. He also reported on the shipping status of the last of the 15,000 tone alert radios and on the responsibility for storage and care.

Beard and the court discussed the increase in growth indicators, the fact that a project officer has not yet been hired by FEMA, the lack of a distribution coordinator to date and FEMA's plan to begin distribution of radios in about three weeks.

Beard also showed on a depot map the location of the J Block igloos, where the Army proposes to store dunnage waste, which would require a major permit modification. An Army spokesperson has said that the Army's plan remains one of finding an alternative to dunnage incineration or storing the dunnage. The question of this proposal to alter the permit was discussed, and Planning Director Tamra Mabbott told the court that DEQ did not see how the county could be involved in dealing with the stranded waste issue.

Mabbott explained to the DEQ representative the idea of involving entities for better understanding of issues. She recommended and the court approved making a formal request to be included in decision making or be invited to attend and observe meetings.

County Counsel Bill Hanlon offered that resolution of the dunnage issue must be reached to prevent further long-term storage of dangerous waste material. Further discussion noted differing estimates of dunnage tons, the question of agent-free waste and waste that cannot be taken off site; whether or not the Arlington landfill will take waste from the depot any longer; the contract with Umatilla County; and the need to store brines, salts and ash.

At Mabbott's request, the court selected two optional dates for a meeting with the State Building Codes Division representative. Hanlon noted that the court has seemed inconsistent in its interest in switching its building permit program from the state to contracting it out.

Mabbott added that making a change will create a list of things that need doing - including budgeting, adoption of an ordinance, staff training, proper public processing and development of a contract, forms and policies - but said that where administrative responsibility will lie has not been made clear to her.

Carol Michael and Patty Burres, co-chairs of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee requested financial support for a joint research

Golf fund raiser to benefit Campus Life

A Campus Life golf scramble will be held Saturday, April 29, at the Willow Creek Country Club.

The fund raiser will benefit the Campus Life of Heppner youth group.

The cost of the two-person

scramble will be \$15 per player. Play and door prizes will be awarded and lunch will be served.

Shotgun start will be at 8 a.m. To register contact: Sandra Van Liew, 68987 Willow Creek Rd., Heppner, OR 97836, (541) 676-5050.

55 Alive course

A 55 Alive Class has been scheduled by the American Association of Retired Persons and Blue Mountain Community College for the Heppner area on Monday and Tuesday, April 3 and 4, at St. Patrick's Senior Center.

This classroom refresher course is designed for drivers 55 years

and older. The class will run from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. each day and costs \$10, payable to AARP.

A minimum enrollment of 10 students is required so pre-registration is necessary.

To reserve a spot in the class or for more information, contact Anne Morter, BMCC coordinator for South Morrow County, 422-7040.

OSU students receive scholarships

More than \$85,000 in scholarships have been awarded during the 1999-2000 academic year to students continuing their studies in Oregon State University's College of Agricultural Sciences. The students are enrolled in programs in the Corvallis campus and on the Eastern Oregon University

campus in La Grande.

Scholarship recipients include: Boardman-Kristi Mason, daughter of Dean and Joyce Mason, who received the \$1,000 Walter J. and Florence J. Jaeger Undergraduate Scholarship. The 1998 graduate of Riverside High School is studying animal sciences.

Tri-County Band Festival set March 29

On Wednesday March 29, the annual Tri-County Band Festival for 3A schools and smaller will converse at Stanfield High School, this year's host.

In the festival, individual schools have the option to play by themselves in the morning for the adjudicator for comments only, then all of the students join together for the mass band.

All schools have been rehearsing and they will practice and then perform that evening at 6:30 for the concert.

Local schools include those from the counties of Morrow, Umatilla, Gilliam, Wheeler, Sherman and Wasco.

The clinician this year is Phil Cansler from the University of Portland. His name may be familiar to area residents as he

has been an adjudicator locally for this festival and solo and ensemble contests; performed with the Round-Up band for the past 20 years; and recently performed and directed with the Oregon East Symphony.

The band director at Stanfield is Deborah Wryn of Ione who has been in the district for nine years. This is her third year in directing the band.

The evening concert will begin at 6:30 p.m. and the admission cost is \$1 per person

to help cover cost of running the festival. Tri-County Association also hosts the High School Choir Festival and the Jr. High Band Festival.

For more information call Stanfield High School at 449-3851.

Karen's Korner

Items of Health - Tobacco Prevention by Karen Masshoff

Post-St. Patrick's weekend salutations. I hope all had a safe and sane good time. I quite enjoyed myself speaking with folks during the tobacco prevention display at St. Patrick's Senior Center and while eating at the stew feed and at breakfast. I was gratified by the interest in the various educational materials regarding tobacco.

There were other interesting activities during this week of March 13. One event was the teleconference held at Pioneer Memorial Hospital on "Adult and Youth Partnering for Tobacco Prevention". Six students from Heppner High School came to learn about the emerging roles of young people as influential advocates for reducing tobacco use.

Speaking of young people, I received a report of research by Dr. Joseph R. DiFranza from the University of Massachusetts Medical school. His findings strongly indicate that teenagers can become addicted to nicotine more quickly than adults. DiFranza took smoking histories from students at seven schools three times a year over a two-year period. Symptoms of addiction were present before many of the young people were smoking every day, thus appearing within weeks, not years, as previously believed.

The Nurses' Health Study found that current smokers were 2.4 times more likely to develop aged-related macular degeneration than were women who had never smoked; even former smokers were at greater risk of developing the disease.

Also this weekend I toured the museum; very nicely arranged. Even here I was struck at how tobacco has been so much a part of our culture. There in the display of some household goods was a cluster of tobacco products. Can anyone forget those Prince Albert in a can of jokes? (Bull) Durham tobacco pouches were great for wiping off greasy windshields before all the fancy washes.

This weekend did anyone stop by the vendors selling the tobacco items? I checked them out; I thought their presence here interesting. I did not see any signs about their not selling to those under 18 years old, although they told me they were checking ID(?). Stay tuned, I will have more to say about tobacco industry tactics in the columns to come.

Wedding Tables

Allison Parks & Ryan Rudolf

wedding: March 18, 2000

Sheryl Carty & Marc Angell

Shower: March 25, 2000

wedding: April 8, 2000

Phyllis Briggs & David Barrett

wedding: April 1, 2000

Angela Currin & Nate Williams

wedding: April 8, 2000

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'Tis sure we are grateful the weekend is done,
Record crowds appeared and had a lot of fun.
It took hundreds of bodies to pull it together,
And thousands came in spite of the weather.
For Coffee Hour, Ceili, Parade and Races,
Dog Trials, Auction, Music & New Faces;
Cooking, Cleaning, Painting, Tours & All,
Leprechauns, Dancers and Singers on call;
For volunteers that made the Celebration complete
'Tis sure County Morrow can't be beat!
SINCERE THANKS TO ONE & ALL!
Claudia Hughes & Cara Osmin
& St. Patrick's Committee

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