

## BLM publishes final grazing regs study

The Bureau of Land Management recently announced the availability of a final environmental impact study that concludes upcoming grazing regulation changes will produce long-term benefits for public rangelands. An official notice of the study's availability was published in the Federal Register on June 17.

"This environmental-impact analysis underscores grazing's role as a vital use of public lands in the rural West," Rebecca Watson, assistant secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals, said. "The revisions will improve BLM's management of public-lands ranching, an activity that not only supports rural economies but also preserves open space and wildlife habitat in the rapidly growing West."

The final environmental-impact study, posted on BLM's national Web site ([www.blm.gov/grazing](http://www.blm.gov/grazing)), analyzes the impact of the upcoming grazing-regulation revisions, including their ecological, cultural, social, and economic effects. More specifically, the study examines the impact of a grazing-management option that tracks with the provisions of the upcoming grazing-regulation changes, as well as the effects of two other management alternatives.

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke said, "This environmental-impact study shows that grazing management under the new regulations will produce

long-term rangeland-health benefits. These benefits include increased vegetation along stream banks, which will reduce soil erosion and provide more habitats for wildlife." Under the new regulations, she noted, the BLM's grazing-management decisions will be based on better information about rangeland conditions.

Clarke added, "Our agency feels strongly that the public lands should be managed in partnership with those closest to the land, and that's why we sought extensive public input on this regulatory initiative." The BLM received more than 18,000 comments on a draft impact study and a proposed set of regulations, which preceded the agency's work on the final version of those documents.

The new grazing regulations, to be published next month in the Federal Register, are aimed at improving BLM's working relationships with public-lands ranchers. The revisions also reflect the agency's commitment to managing the public lands for multiple uses, including grazing, while ensuring the health and productivity of these lands.

The revisions will retain key elements of the "Rangeland Reform" initiative that revised grazing regulations nearly a decade ago. Specifically, the regulations will continue the role of BLM's Resource Advisory Councils, composed of citizens across the West who advise and make recommendations to the agency on public-land issues. The revised regulations will also leave

intact the rangeland-health standards and guidelines developed by the RACs.

In general, the forthcoming regulations seek to:

- improve the agency's working relationships with those holding BLM grazing permits and leases;

- advance the bureau's efforts in assessing and protecting rangelands; and

- address certain legal issues while enhancing administrative efficiency.

In addition, the new regulations will continue to require the bureau to consult with the interested public on key matters, such as developing or changing grazing-activity plans; planning rangeland-improvement programs; and developing reports that are used as the basis for BLM decisions affecting grazing permits or leases.

The BLM manages more land, 261 million surface acres, than any other federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 western states, including Alaska. The bureau, with a budget of about \$1.5 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

### Marriage Licenses

The following marriage licenses were issued at the Morrow County Clerk's Office during the past week: June 14: Robert Dean Krogh, 30, Hermiston, and Teri Lynn Stanger, 24, Irrigon; June 17: Chad Erin Robie, 32, Heppner, and Kari Anne Morgan, 31, Heppner; June 17: Bobby Gene Harris, Jr., 38, Irrigon, and Senie Larie Walls, 31, Irrigon; June 17: Steven Daniel Hoffert, 42, Hermiston, and Amy Lyn Jewett, 30, Hermiston.

**CUSTOM BANNERS**  
Heppner Gazette-Times

## Caledonian Games planned July 9-10

For a fun-filled weekend, everyone is invited to Athena for the Caledonian Games July 9 and 10. The opening event will be the ceilidh dinner in the park on Friday night. The ceilidh (kay-lee) is a catered/benefit dinner for Caledonian Games. A Scottish menu will include Guinness beef, mashed potatoes and all the trimmings and short bread for dessert prepared by Murphy's Corner Restaurant/vendor from Spokane for \$10 each.

The dinner will be followed by a concert in the park by Red McWilliams, a Scottish Entertainer. Red is well-known throughout the Pacific Northwest as he has performed at numerous Games and festivals. The concert is \$10 per. Red is a baritone singer and a MacMillan. Those planning to attend should "bring a chair and settle in for some fun," said a spokesperson. The concert is outdoors in the park and starts at about 7:30 PM Friday, July 8.

A proclamation has been signed by Oregon Governor Kulongowski proclaiming the weekend to be Caledonian Weekend in Oregon. (The proclamation may be read on website [www.athenacaledoniangames.org](http://www.athenacaledoniangames.org))

Caledonian Games is focusing on trees for its 2005 celebration. T-shirts are available for purchase that have a Tree of Life design created by Milton Freewater artist, Jean Mitchell. Her tree also appears on the commemorative lapel pin and on the Caledonian program cover. (Caledonian items may be purchased at the souvenir booth.) Trees were revered in ancient Scottish societies as a link between heaven and earth. Trees also marked the seasons. To honor trees, the city park, Caledonian Games and the founders, an aspen tree is planted and dedicated by the Caledonian Games Association beside the cairn. The cairn was dedicated in 2002. Anyone coming to Athena Caledonian Games may place a stone at the cairn in memory of whoever they wish. It is dedicated to the founders of Athena and those who created the Caledonian Games in 1899.

Saturday, July 9 the festival continues featuring piping, dancing, clan tents, sheep dog trials, a parade, 5K and 10K run, vendors, Scottish athletic games that feature feats of strength, a horseshoe tournament, food, Celtic harp, fiddling and a story or two under the shade of a great tree. Many events

are open with no pre-registration required. Those attending may run in the 5K or 10 K run, or join into the Scottish caber toss, sheaf toss or rolling pin toss. "Come early and stay late", says Sue Friese, Athena, chairman of the games.

The Saturday outdoor concert called a Tattoo (a military review, in the Scottish sense) will feature five pipe bands, which may be a record for Athena! Athena's own Tiger Scots pipe band will perform. The Boise (Idaho) Highlanders and Desert Thistle Pipe and Drum from the Tri-Cities will return. Newcomers to Caledonian Tattoo are River City Pipe Band and Oregon Trail Pipe Band, both from Portland.

### I-84 overpass repairs begin

Interstate 84 will be limited to one lane in each direction for bridge construction at the Encina interchange (milepost 313) and Alder Creek Road overpass (milepost 315) southeast of Baker City starting Monday, June 20. The lane closures will continue through mid-August.

Single lanes will be in operation in the work zones 24 hours a day, seven days a week while repairs are being completed this summer, except for legal holidays and holiday weekends. Speeds in the work zone will be reduced to 55 miles per hour. Traffic delays are expected to be minimal.

Remember that traffic fines double in work zones. Please slow down and pay attention to the orange construction traffic signs. Watch for roadside workers and construction equipment.

Hamilton Construction Company is repairing three overpasses along Interstate 84 southeast of Baker City. Work on the Pritchard Creek bridge (milepost 325) begins in late July. All work is expected to be completed by October.

The work is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's 10-year, \$3 billion Oregon Transportation Investment Act (OTIA) program. During the next decade, OTIA funds will repair or replace hundreds of bridges, pave and maintain city and county roads, improve and expand interchanges, add new capacity to Oregon's highway system, and remove freight bottlenecks statewide. About 18 family-wage jobs are sustained for every \$1 million spent on transportation construction in Oregon. Each year during the OTIA program, construction projects will sustain about 5,000 family-wage jobs.

"They're Irish but we don't care," said Friese. The Tattoo, the only event that has an admission asked, at \$5 per person, will be at 6:30 p.m. in the high school grandstands.

Sunday after community church service in the park, coffee hour will be held in the park shelter house. The Weston McEwen Pipe band performs at 1 p.m. Red McWilliams will perform as well as a new group to Caledonian Games coming from Spokane, The Crooked Kilt. The Caledonian Games was started in 1899 by Scots who lived here and created the Umatilla County Caledonian Society. The Games discontinued during war years. The Games were restored in 1976 as part of the American Bi-Centennial Celebration.

### Eliminate Puncturevine

Another cool spring has delayed the emergence of Puncturevine, Tribulus terrestris L. or Goathead. Puncturevine is not a noxious weed, according to Morrow County Weed Ordinance, but it is obnoxious. Seedlings are up and spreading "like a bad weed". Some already have flowers that will become seedheads in one to two weeks. Now is the time to get out your shovel or back pack sprayer and eliminate these invaders just waiting to unleash their wrath of pain and misery on you or your pet. If you've ever stepped on a goathead that was tracked in on your carpet, you know what I mean.

Diligence and persistence are the name of this game. When digging goathead plants, take care not to shake any seeds loose and dispose of the plant in the trash or burn barrel. You should go back to the area in a couple of weeks to check for new sprouts and especially after a rain. Each goathead burr separates into five separate segments, each segment has two to four seeds inside and can typically remain viable for 3-7 years, patiently waiting for just the right conditions to sprout.

### Ione Library reading program kick-off set

The Ione Library summer reading program kick-off dress-up party has been planned for Monday, June 27, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Kids are invited to come dressed as their favorite book characters.

The party will also feature snacks, games and a story time.

For more information, contact librarian Kristy Crowell, 422-7564.

**Real Estate**

By DAVID SYKES

REALTOR

**BE A DECISION MAKER**

In neighborhoods where "For Sale" signs outnumber buyers, it's tempting to mull over a purchase of a home before you commit. Yet, even in a buyers' market, hesitancy could be a serious error. It doesn't take long to learn that if you drag your feet, you can miss out on the right house at the right price. Even in a sluggish market, experienced buyers can spot a bargain in a heartbeat. While the "I want to sleep on it" prospects are still evaluating the situation, these shrewd individuals are signing contracts for the best

homes. There may be dozens of homes for sale in any neighborhood. However, you can be sure that there are a few exceptionally well-kept or well-priced homes that will be taken quickly. Fear of making the wrong decision is one of the factors that often stops people from making the right decision. They are afraid that a better buy is just around the corner. The best buys go to the decision makers - not the tire kickers.

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