

County joins wolf lawsuit

It won't be long before we have a wolf population in this area, says county judge

By Andrea Di Salvo
Morrow County has joined in a lawsuit regarding the right of the Oregon Department of Fish

and Wildlife's (ODFW) authority to manage wolves as part of a state-controlled plan.

The lawsuit began in October, when the plaintiffs, a group of wildlife conservation groups including Cascadia Wildlands, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, Oregon Wild and the Center for Biological Diversity, sued the Department of Fish and Wildlife and its supervisor, Paul Henson, over the taking of two more wolves from Imnaha pack.

The ODFW issued the September 23 kill order for the alpha male and one other pack member in response to "chronic depredation," or the continued killing of livestock attributed to members of the pack. The Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan (Wolf Plan) provides for the lethal take of wolves to deal with chronic depredation when it has been proven that non-lethal preventative measures have failed to stop depredation.

The conservation groups filed for a stay of the take order pending a petition of judicial review, saying the portion of the Wolf Plan that allows lethal take violates the Administrative Procedure Act and National Environmental Policy Act.

The groups also claim "irreparable damage," saying the taking of the two wolves would adversely affect the groups' "aesthetic, recreational, scientific, educational, and religious interests," according to their October 5 brief.

Also according to their brief, "The lethal removal of any wolf in Oregon, given how few wolves there are, can significantly impact the recovery of the entire species." The plaintiffs state the number of grey wolves in Oregon is about 14; the ODFW places the number around 23.

The ODFW wasn't the only party to respond to the petitioners' motion for a stay. Soon after, Morrow County Judge Terry Tallman received a call from Willamette County commissioner Susan Roberts asking if Morrow County would be interested in joining an *amicus curiae* brief with several other counties.



Oregon's first radio-collared wolf just after its release, with ear tags and a radio collar. -ODFW photo

(An *amicus curiae*, literally "friend of the court," brief is filed by a party who is not part of a litigation but who believes the court's decision may affect its interests.)

Tallman took the issue to the Morrow County Court. After consideration, the court decided to not only join the other counties in the case but also to contribute \$500 to the cause.

Morrow County joined Willamette, Grant, Umatilla, Union, Baker, Gilliam, Crook and Harney counties in filing an *amicus* brief asking that the stay be removed and the ODFW allowed to continue with the take of the two wolves. The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA), Oregon chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (OR FNAWS) and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) also filed *amicus* briefs in support of the ODFW. The Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA) filed as an intervenor-respondent in support of the ODFW. The groups filed those briefs on October 26.

Tallman said the Morrow County Court's decision to join the lawsuit was spurred, in part, by the discovery of a pack in Umatilla County. That, he said, put the case close to home, since wolves, he said, don't recognize county lines.

"These single, lone-ranger wolves are being spotted everywhere. They move miles and miles in a day. It won't be long before

we have a wolf population in this area," said Tallman. "I think it's time we step out and do something, say something, stand for something."

When asked about Cascadia Wildlands' statement that removing the wolves would be detrimental to the species, Tallman said he didn't agree.

"We're getting more wolves crossing state lines, more evidence of wolves being here [in Morrow County] and more sightings. These are people who have been around long enough to know the difference between a wolf and a coyote," he said, adding that this was something not seen even 10 years ago. "It happened in a relatively short time. That was part of the reason we decided to act; we can't sit around and wait any more."

Tallman said he is worried about the safety of residents and the economic impact it could have on the county.

"One of our goals is to have more people in Morrow County. I don't want to place people in jeopardy," said Tallman. "We're quite a ways from that, but it's still a thought."

Two of the areas of disagreement center on whether the grey wolf is native to Oregon and the issue of reimbursement for ranchers who have lost livestock to wolves.

Both the petitioners -See WOLF LAWSUIT/PAGE FOUR

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

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Day care presents NBA All-Star Bill Walton

Former Portland Trail Blazer Bill Walton will be helping out the Heppner Day Care Monday, December 12. The 59-year-old NBA All-Star will be a guest speaker at the day care's fundraiser at the Heppner Elk's Lodge. The social hour will begin at 5:30 p.m. and a tri-tip dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m., followed by guest speakers and auction.

Born in San Diego, Walton was introduced to the game of basketball in the fourth grade. During high school, Walton's team won the California Inter-scholastic Federation High School title two years in a row, while winning their final 49 consecutive games. Walton also became the first and only high school player to ever make the USA Senior Men's National Basketball Team and play in the World Championship or Olympics.

After high school, Walton played on the UCLA varsity team from 1972 to 1974. He was a member of two NCAA championship teams, compiling an NCAA record 88-consecutive-game winning streak.

Walton was a "scholar-athlete," winning multiple basketball awards, as well as Academic All-American honors three years in a row. He graduated from UCLA with honors with a B.A. in history. Walton also attended Stanford University Graduate School of Law in the early 1980s, after several years as a professional athlete.

Walton's professional career began when the Portland Trailblazers named him number one over-all pick in the 1974

NBA draft. He was a member of their championship team in 1977. In 1986, he earned another championship title with the Boston Celtics.

While in the NBA, Walton received numerous awards, including NBA's MVP, all-NBA First Team and NBA All-Star Team. Walton is also one of only four players in the history of basketball to have won multiple NCAA and NBA championships. He remains active in basketball through clinics, camps, coaching and TV commentary.

Walton has also worked as a sports broadcaster for ABC, ESPN, NBC, CBS, Fox and MSNBC. He is a regular contributor to ESPN.com, NBA.com, ESPN The Magazine, and ESPN Radio. Walton has also been the lead in his own reality TV show.

He has been nominated for numerous Emmy awards and received two, one for best live sports television broadcast in 2001 and one for his work on an environmental documentary filmed on location in the Philippines in 1979. He has also had roles in feature films such as Little Nicky, He's Got Game, Forget Paris, Celtic Pride and Ghost Busters.

In 1993, Walton was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA. Walton also became a member of the Academic All America Hall of Fame during the spring of 1994. He was selected as one of the NBA's fifty greatest players of all time in 1997. Walton has

also been inducted into the San Diego Breitbard Sports Hall of Fame, The UCLA Hall of Fame and the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame.

In 2007, Walton was named one of the top 10 pundits in America by Forbes. That same year he was also named one of the top 20 Business Athlete representatives by TSE Sports and Entertainment Group. In 2009, Walton was named one of the top 50 sports broadcasters of all time by the American Sports-casters Association. He is currently the Executive Chairman of Connect SD Sport Innovators (SDSI), a non-profit trade organization that offers programs and services.

Walton lives in San Diego with his wife, Lori. They have four grown sons and two granddaughters.

Other guest speakers at the benefit will include John Turner, president of Blue Mountain Community College, and Pat Kilkenny, retired insurance executive and former athletic director at the University of Oregon.

A benefit auction will also be held, including personal memorabilia donated by Walton and courtside tickets to the New Matthew Knight Basketball Arena in Eugene donated by Pat Kilkenny. Only 175 tickets for this event will be available. Tickets for the entire event—dinner, speakers and auction—cost \$25 each. They can be purchased by calling 541-676-9226. Donations are also welcome.



Bill Walton

Health District prepares for electronic records

By April Sykes

Morrow County Health District is currently in the midst of training staff in preparation for the federally mandated change-over to electronic medical records, MCHD CEO Michael Blauer reported at the regular meeting held in Heppner Nov. 28.

Blauer credited Molly Rhea, director of nursing, her crew, John and Ann Murray of Murray's Drug and Dr. Betsy Ander-

son, who is in the process of training providers, for "all their hard work" in the process. "I can't express how appreciative I am of the staff," said Blauer.

Rhea said that the nursing staff began training on Monday. A week of parallel testing, whereby electronic records are backed up by paper records, is scheduled prior to the "go-live" date of Dec. 13. Rhea said that she has scheduled a second nurse

for back-up 24 hours a day during the testing period. "I think you're making great strides," commented board Chairman Larry Mills.

In financial matters, the district showed a healthy profit in October as Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney reported a \$190,186 gain for the month. She noted an increase in the gross patient revenue, a Medicaid settle-

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New doctor for Community Health Services

Columbia River Community Health Services welcomes new team member Steve Maher, MD.

Maher completed his undergraduate studies at Metro State College in Denver, CO, and medical school at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. His internship and residency were completed at Southern Colorado Fam-

ily Medicine in Pueblo, CO; his residency concentrated on rural family practice. Maher currently maintains his certification in family medicine, serving a full range of clinic family-practice patients from newborn to geriatrics.

Maher and his wife, Cheri, come to Boardman

from Buena Vista, CO. They have five adult children and 13 grandchildren. Also joining them in Boardman is Rebecca, their youngest daughter. In his free time, Maher enjoys woodworking, camping, fishing, hiking and spending time with his family.



Steve Maher

Area pastors invited to submit Christmas messages

The Heppner Gazette-Times invites area pastors to submit Christmas messages to be published in the December 21 edition. The deadline is Friday, December 16, at 5 p.m.

Messages can be dropped off at the Gazette office, emailed to editor@rapid-serve.net, or faxed to 541-676-9211.

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