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Gazette Times

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Wolf management could cost state government up to $500,000 annually

By David Sykes

Managing Oregon's growing grey wolf population could end up costing state government up to half a million dollars a year, according to a budget report on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) website.

The cost to taxpayers, and hunters to some degree, to fund state efforts reintroducing wolves into Oregon also came up during a program of the Morrow County Livestock Growers annual meeting last week in Heppner.

Rod Childers, Oregon Cattleman's Association (OCA) Wolf Committee Chair, told a group of local cattlemen that, counting local biologists' salaries, the state is actually spending closer to $608,000 during the current biennium on wolf management. Childers said the majority of that money is coming from the federal government, but that $53,000 to $55,000 is actually coming from tag and license fees charged to Oregon hunters.

According to the ODFW website, projecting out into the future, "Oregon expects to have to spend an estimated $400,000 to $500,000 annually to manage this species."

Childers spent most of his time at the local cattlemen's meeting talking about the best way for cattlemen to handle the coming influx of wolves into Morrow County. Having lived and ranched in Wallowa County, Childers knows first-hand about the effect of wolves on the cattle business, and what to do when there is a wolf kill. Wallowa County has recorded 22 livestock kills since May of 2010.

"The first thing to do if you suspect one of your cows (or other animals) was killed by a wolf is to call your local sheriff," Childers said. He said the sheriff will treat the kill just like a crime scene, call the appropriate people from ODFW and the federal Fish & Wildlife, and determine if the kill was by a wolf. Childers said documenting wolf kills will not only get the rancher reparations but also determine if the wolf might be taken out. The state has authorized $100,000 in reparations money to be paid to ranchers who lose cattle.

"Don't be driving around and letting the dogs run all over the place if you come upon a suspected kill," Childers told the ranchers. "Stay out of the area and call the sheriff."

Field biologist Russ Morgan (NRS3) is the state of Oregon Wolf Coordinator; his proposed budget on the ODFW web site is broken down as follows:

This photo of a wolf as compared to a coyote was passed around at the Morrow County Cattleman's Association meeting last Thursday to illustrate the large size of wolves. *–Contributed photo*

Table X-1. Potential Line Item Costs Associated with Implementation of the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan

Line Item	Comments	Estimated Cost
Field biologist (NRS 3)	Annual salary plus benefits.	$99,590
Field biologist assistant(NRS 1)	Annual salary plus benefits. Would assist project manager with radio tracking and collaring.	$56,540
Vehicle/mileage	Annual cost.	$19,000
Radio collar, receivers, and related equipment	Cost per collar is $400. Initial purchase of 10 collars.	$6,000
GPS radio collar and related equipment	Cost per collar is $3,000. Expected purchase of six collars.	$18,000
Sampling equipment and lab fee	Annual cost for blood tests, etc.	$4,000
Training	Annual cost and as needed.	$1,500
Office supplies and equipment	Computer, printer, phone, etc.	$10,000
Wildlife Services assistance	Annual cost.	$125,000
Flight time (for capture and radio tracking)	Annual cost for 150 hours at $250/hr.	$37,500
Public information officer	Annual cost. Likely would be 0.25 – 0.50 FTE plus associated benefits, supplies and travel.	$25,000 - $50,000
Outreach materials	Annual costs for printing and design. Costs could decrease over time.	$15,000
Research	Cost will depend on research topics, cooperators and state role.	$250,000

Experts have said wolves are either already in Morrow County or are very close, and Childers spent quite a bit of time telling local ranchers what he and other cattlemen have learned living with wolves in Wallowa County.

"Call the sheriff department if there is a kill. The key is to get all people (sheriff, ODFW and DFW) on site at the same time," Childers said. "There needs to be cooperation between all three, especially if everyone knows each other." Childers said all three agencies need to agree that the kill was from a wolf before it is official.

Childers said there are some things ranchers can do when confronted with wolves, and some things they cannot do. One thing they cannot do is harm the wolf, even if the animal is harassing their livestock.

"Landowners may scare away a wolf seen chasing or in close proximity to livestock," local ODFW biologist Steve Cherry told the group. He said the US Fish & Wildlife Service does "not have the legal ability to allow harassment of wolves that may cause bodily harm to the animal or allow landowners to use lethal control."

Childers said ranchers should use non-lethal methods, also, such as removing bone piles around calving areas, putting up flagging and using noise and strobe lights that activate when a collared wolf comes into the area. The device picks up the signal from a GPS-powered radio collar but not a VHS collar.

"But you have to remember," he said, "not all wolves are collared."

He said flagging is practical on a small acreage, "but you cannot flag 11,000 acres." He said the pack in Wallowa County has an official roaming range of 640 acres.

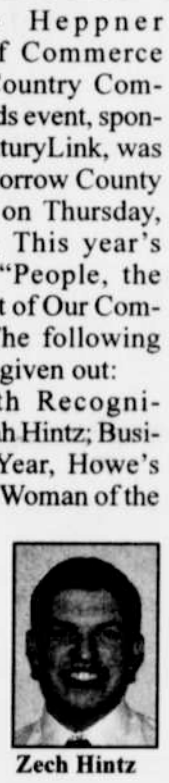
As part of the wolf program, each county with a pack will have a committee set up consisting of one commissioner, two members who own or manage livestock in the county, and two members who support wolf conservation. That group will then pick two business members from the community, and this seven-member committee will

-See WOLVES/PAGE SIX

Town and Country Awards winners announced

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce Town and Country Community Awards event, sponsored by CenturyLink, was held at the Morrow County Fairgrounds on Thursday, January 12. This year's theme was "People, the Shining Light of Our Communities." The following awards were given out:

Youth Recognition, Zechariah Hintz; Business of the Year, Howe's About Pizza; Woman of the Year, Judy Buschke; Man of the Year, Chuck Bailey; Citizen-Educator of Year, Sherry Matteson; and Lifetime Achievement, Randall Peterson.



Zech Hintz

The 2011 Youth Recognition Award recipient is Zech Hintz. Hintz, a senior at Heppner High School, is involved with student council, FFA, 4-H, choir, drama and the RDI Ford Leadership program. He is a student representative on the community's

-See TOWN & COUNTRY/ PAGE THREE

Tim Collins and daughter Maggie provided entertainment for the 2012 Town and Country Awards last Thursday. *-Photo by David Sykes*

New bakery gives sweet touch to Main Street

By Andrea Di Salvo

Heppner shoppers who were out early on Monday may have noticed the smell of baking wafting down Main Street.

That's because Lisa Larsen, known as The Pastry Peddler, has opened a new bakery in conjunction with Sweet Productions and The Victorian Rose in Heppner. The Pastry Peddler, which had its opening on January 16, will provide baked goodies like turnovers, doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, muffins, Danish, cookies and more.

The hours of operation will be the same as the Victorian Rose: Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., with Early Bird morning openings of 6:30 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. During the early morning openings, Lisa will offer biscuits and gravy in addition to her selection of sweets.

Forty-nine-year-old Larsen was born in Albany, OR; their family had a farm near Labanon, OR. She says her family moved quite a bit when she was young, throughout Alaska and the Northwest, but she graduated from West Albany High School. She then continued on to Linn-Benton Community College, where she studied accounting and business management. That took her on the path to becoming a full-charge bookkeeper, an occupation in which she continued for the next 30 years.

Larsen says she also moved around as an adult. She was married in Washington and lived there and in California before returning to Oregon to raise her daughter, Jenipher. Larsen and her daughter are not strangers to Heppner. They lived here for a time and Jenipher, now 23, had the chance to attend Heppner High School, playing junior

-See PASTRY PEDDLER/ PAGE FIVE

Lisa Larsen (center) joins mom, Marti (left), of the Victorian Rose and sister, Jodi (right), of Sweet Productions. The Pastry Peddler, will offer baked goods through Sweet Productions six days a week. *–Photo by Andrea Di Salvo*

Heppner's law enforcement services meeting Jan. 24

A public meeting to discuss law enforcement services provided to the city of Heppner by the Morrow County Sheriff's Office will be held at Heppner City Hall on Tuesday, January 24 from 6-7 p.m.

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