

Local teen competes at state fair, brings home top honors



Above: Ivy Sandford with Reno, her rodeo and 4-H gelding. Below: Morrow County 4-H State Champions Ivy Sandford, Ione, winning grand champion in Ready to Wear and Modeling, Intermediate and Isabella Ganvoa, Boardman, winning grand champion in Construction and Modeling, Intermediate. —Contributed photos



IONE—Ivy Sandford of Ione has had a busy few weeks.

Sandford, who is a member of the Paint'd Hills Horse 4-H Club and Cooks and Notions club, was one of the 4-H members who represented Morrow County at the Oregon State Fair in Salem recently.

She competed in Horse Gaming, Figure 8 Race, Gaming Showmanship and Clothing—Ready to Wear and Modeling.

She received a white in showmanship, a blue and third overall in Intermediate Gaming, and grand champion in Ready to Wear.

Aside from her 4-H involvement, Sandford also toured the fair as the Oregon High School Rodeo Queen, signing autographs and taking pictures with many young children who were in the livestock barns.

She said her favorite part of state fair were all the people who wanted to pet her horse, Reno, while she was in the barn and talking to them about her events.

This was Sandford's first time to state fair, and she says she is looking forward to hopefully attending next year.

WEST NILE

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-Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants in mosquito-infested areas.

-Make sure screen doors and windows are in good repair and fit tightly.

Because of the number of mosquito pools testing positive in any area could lead to infection, Shelley Wight, Morrow County Health Department Health Educator/Communicable Disease Coordinator, recommends people and animals be protected against mosquito bites.

Eighty percent of people infected with West Nile virus exhibit no symptoms. Of the remaining 20 percent, most have very mild symptoms, such as fever, headaches and nausea lasting from three to six days.

In a few cases, more severe symptoms may occur including convulsions or disorientation. The central nervous system also may be affected, resulting in a

headache associated with fever, aseptic meningitis or encephalitis.

West Nile is spread to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Most infected people will show little or no signs of disease.

About one in five infected people may show signs of West Nile fever. People at risk include those individuals over 50 years of age, people with immune compromising conditions, or those people with diabetes and high blood pressure.

Symptoms may include fever above 100° F and severe headache, stiff neck, mental confusion, muscle weakness, shaking, paralysis or rash. It is important that you contact a health care provider if you experience any of these symptoms.

The fever syndrome may last from a few days to several weeks. The incubation period is usually 2-14 days.

Consult your health care provider if you have these symptoms. Health care providers may contact the Morrow County Health Department for information on West Nile virus testing services that the Oregon Public Health Lab offers.

Additional information about West Nile virus is available at: Oregon Health Authority website, <http://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/Dis-easesAZ/WestNileVirus/Pages/survey.aspx>; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dv-bid/westnile/index.htm>; Oregon Department of Human Services, <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/diseases/w Nile/survey.shtml>; Morrow County Health Department, http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/lhd/county_directories/Morrow.pdf; and North Morrow Vector Control District, <http://nmvcdmosquito.org>.

New sage grouse strategy offers more conservation options for Oregon ranchers

PORTLAND, Ore.—Over the next four years, Oregon ranchers will have even more opportunities to restore and protect sage grouse habitat on private lands, thanks to a renewed commitment by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to invest in the newest round of the Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI), termed "SGI 2.0."

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack recently announced the new strategy, following a roundtable discussion with state and national sage grouse partners in Portland. The strategy will invest \$211 million through 2018 in habitat conservation projects in Oregon and 10 other Western states.

"The Sage Grouse Initiative has proven itself as a model for how wildlife and agriculture can coexist and thrive in harmony, and that is why we are announcing steps today that will expand this important initiative throughout the life of the 2014 Farm Bill," said Vilsack. "I applaud America's ranchers for their initiative in improving habitats and outcomes for sage grouse and other wildlife, and for their recognition that these efforts are also good for cattle, good for ranching operations, and good for America's rural economy."

As in past years, the strategy will continue to address removing encroaching conifers such as juniper; but SGI 2.0 also adds additional focus areas geared toward a holistic, whole-ranch planning concept. Those additional focus areas include reducing the

threat of wildfire, protecting rangeland from development, protecting mesic habitats like wet meadows, and reducing fence collisions.

Under the SGI 2.0 strategy, NRCS will also provide technical and financial assistance to help ranchers reduce the threat of wildfire—and the spread of invasive grasses following fires—to restore wildlife habitat and quality livestock forage.

SGI 2.0 also plans to leverage the full suite of NRCS Farm Bill programs—from its more commonly-used cost-share programs (such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program), to its easement programs, which offer long-term or permanent protection of private lands.

Oregon successes

Since SGI launched in 2010, NRCS Oregon has invested \$18.4 million to help 117 ranchers remove invasive juniper trees—the primary threat to sage grouse habitat. This juniper removal covered 322 square miles of Oregon sage grouse habitat—an area larger than Crater Lake National Park. These proactive efforts on private, agricultural lands have addressed more than two-thirds of the early phase conifer threat on core sage grouse strongholds in Oregon.

"SGI 2.0 builds on the tremendous public and private conservation efforts made since 2010 to further improve sage grouse habitat in Oregon," said Ron Alvarado, NRCS Oregon

state conservationist. "This strategy represents a new paradigm of strategic and proactive at-risk species conservation that succeeds through partnerships, voluntary incentives, and community support. We are fortunate to have an active, robust sage grouse partnership here in Oregon."

Oregon ranchers such as John O'Keeffe have seen tremendous progress on their land through voluntary conservation with NRCS. The O'Keeffe family grazes beef cattle in prime sage grouse habitat near the small town of Adel in southeast Oregon.

O'Keeffe was an early adopter of SGI and sees the value of restoring habitat for both sage grouse and livestock on his 18,000-acre property. He has worked to enhance sage grouse habitat by removing invasive juniper trees on 4,500 acres of his ranch.

"We have truly changed the landscape here in a few short years," O'Keeffe said. "It's helped make our ranching operation more sustainable. It has allowed us to positively affect our watershed function and showcased the value of engaging working ranches in landscape-scale conservation."

Nationally, by the end of 2018, NRCS and partners estimate a total investment of \$760 million for SGI, conserving eight million acres—an area more than seven times the size of the Great Salt Lake.

To learn more, visit www.or.nrcs.usda.gov or contact the local USDA Service Center.

Early learning HUB announces grant availability

The Blue Mountain Early Learning HUB (BMELH) invites organizations to apply for funds through Great Start and Family Support grants for Union, Umatilla and Morrow counties.

The Family Support and Great Start grants focus on projects that serve at risk children ages zero to six and their families. Any agency or program that serves children ages zero to six can apply for these grants.

Grant funds may be used for community-based services intended to:

- increase the strength and stability of families (including adoptive, foster and extended families);
- increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities;
- afford children a safe, stable and supportive family environment;
- strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages;

-enhance child development, including through mentoring;

-services must be provided in a culturally competent and gender-specific manner that reflects the population, needs and resources of the community.

The grant process begins by visiting the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub website at www.blue-mountainearlylearninghub.org. Under the Grants section, there is information about eligibility and a Request for Assistance (RFA) form to be completed. Information is available about how the grant funding may be used in your county. There is also a self-assessment quiz to ensure a project aligns well with the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub focus and goals.

All RFAs are due September 25, 2015. RFAs will be screened and then sent to the appropriate county Early Childhood Partnership Team (ECPT). During their October meetings, the ECPTs will make funding recommendations to the BMELH Governance Board. Final approval will be made during the November Governance Board meeting.

For questions or more information, contact Ali VanHouten at alexandria.vanhouten@imesd.k12.or.us or 541-966-3157.



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