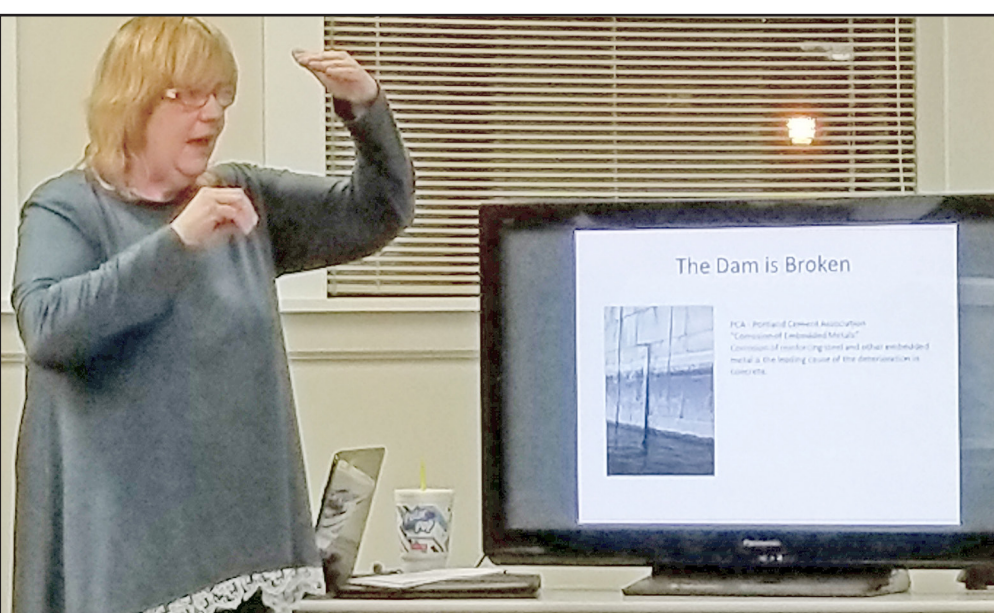


# Gazette Times

## Group seeks improvement to lake water

### Repeated algae bloom warnings and lake closures cited



Theresa Jones holds first meeting of The Dam Right! advocacy group. She hopes to improve water quality at Willow Creek Lake.

By David Sykes

A local group has formed to try and force improvement to Willow Creek Lake water, which has seen yearly dangerous algae bloom warnings since 2007. Theresa Jones of Heppner formed the group which had its first organizational meeting last Thursday night. About 27 people showed up to view a power point presentation and talk about water quality problems at the lake. Jones is in the middle of a recruitment effort seeking people to join the group. "The Dam Right!! committee of dedicated citizens is working together to ensure that the health and safety of our dam, and the quality of our water, are improved," Jones writes on the group's Facebook page, which so far has 96 members.

Jones main message is that pollution, mainly from upstream farming and ranching practices along the creek above the dam, is causing blue-green algae to form in the lake, which is dangerous to people's health using the lake. She also hinted that the algae may be causing structural damage to the dam's concrete but offered little evidence to back up that charge.

Jones says she has done extensive research however, on water quality, and says the two organizations responsible for that quality are the Department of Environmental Quality whose

job it is to investigate the causes, identify pollution sources and write a pollution reduction plan; and Oregon Health Authority the agency responsible for posting warnings and educating the public about harmful algae blooms.

Records show the lake has a history of algae bloom warnings going back to 2007. Every year except 2016 have had warnings, mostly in the summer and fall, warning people not to use the lake or go in the water. The Corps of Engineers, which handles operation of the dam, says they have a contract with a professor from the University of Idaho to monitor the water quality both above and below the dam, and test for temperature, oxygen levels, algae characteristics and, when the lake is "visually very green," to collect samples for a rapid analysis of known toxin producing substances. If those rapid tests exceed certain levels then the lake is posted with warnings not to swim, fish or otherwise use the lake.

The Corps revealed that a water quality outlet device at the lake isn't operating properly. Because of a broken cable, they say a testing outlet is no longer moving up and down through the water to collect samples at different levels. It still functions fine they say, but only drawing water from the lowest depth where it is stuck, for sampling.

On the subject of what

causes the toxic blue-green algae, Jones blames agriculture and ranching up steam on Willow Creek. The Corps doesn't explicitly agree, only saying that "increased nutrient inputs" is the reason. To fix the problem the Corps says would take "watershed-wide management and cannot be resolved by dam operations alone." Jones says farmers and ranchers should be more responsible with fertilizer and animal waste and says planting certain types of vegetation such as barley hay would help filter out harmful agricultural runoff.

Jones says she has worked extensively gathering information about the dam water and how it is tested and monitored, including filing several Freedom of Information requests. "I love farmers but shouldn't they be responsible for what they do upstream," she says. Although Jones admits that although there could be multiple health problems from swimming in the algae polluted water, she herself has never been sick. Her saying is "when in doubt stay out" of the lake. She told the crowd of a homemade method to check the lake water. Jones said to fill up a jar with lake water, place it in the refrigerator and wait 72 hours. "See what happens she says. She says the algae will settle in

-See DAM WATER/PAGE SEVEN



Aerial view of Willow Creek Dam and Reservoir. -Contributed photo.

## Giselle Moses joins G-T staff



Giselle Moses

Giselle Moses has joined the staff of Sykes Publishing/Heppner Gazette-Times as graphic designer. Born and raised in Heppner she will be responsible for graphic design work such as advertising and printing jobs.

Moses will also be working in advertising sales for local businesses, helping with their advertising needs. She is the wife of local businessman Seth Moses, owner of Seth Moses Roofing. Her email address is graphics@rapidsolve.net.

## Two candidates vie for POM Commissioner position

Two people are running for one position as Port of Morrow Commissioner, John Murray and Debbie Radie.

### Debbie Radie



Debbie Radie, 55, Irrigon, graduated from Falls City High School, Falls City, OR. She and her husband, Dave, have lived in Morrow County for 27 years, the past eight years in Irrigon. Her mother, Jane Esterbloom, currently lives with them. Their son, Michael lives in Portland with his wife and two children. Her sister, Deanna Camp, lives in Boardman, while her other two sisters, Dana Fetter and Darla Irwin, live in Hermiston. She has completed coursework at Meritt Davis College of Business, University of Idaho, food science, Blue Mountain Community College, business, and Portland State University, leadership. She is a Ford Leadership and Hermiston leadership graduate. She has completed specific coursework in human resources, "lean manufacturing", food safety and science, business and sales, OSHA regulations, leadership and management and "extensive" continuing education through industry associations.

She is currently on the Oregon State Workforce and Talent Board and has been appointed to and served on the Eastern Oregon Workforce Investment Board.

"My family moved to the area in 1992 when Boardman Foods began construction on a new food processing plant in the Port of Morrow, and have helped advance the community ever since," says Radie. "This will be an opportunity to serve the Port of Morrow, which has done so much for the communities in this area and be directly involved in the growth and development of this region. I believe that my experience helping build a business

### John Murray



John Murray, 55, Heppner, the son of Rod and Meg Murray, Heppner area, attended Ione and Heppner schools and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Pharmacy at Oregon State University. He and his wife, Ann, own Murray's Drug stores in Heppner, Condon and Boardman. A life-long Morrow County resident, he and his wife have five children, three in Morrow County, Ian, a nurse, Sean and Laurie (Wood), both Doctors of Pharmacy. Son Kevin is a student at Linn Benton Community College/OSU, and son Luke, has a PhD in theology, University of Kansas. Ann is the daughter of Larry and Corrine Lindsay, Lexington.

He is currently serving as chair of the Morrow County Health District Board.

"I care about Morrow County and the Port's future," said Murray, "not just its significant economic impact, but also its ability to improve the quality of life for all its residents, my kids and grandkids included. The Port of Morrow has improved life in the county in many ways; I believe my experience and outlook will be beneficial in guiding it toward continued success.

in the Port and as chair of Food Northwest can ensure continuation of the success story of the "Morrow Miracle."

Radie says that the biggest challenge facing the Port of Morrow concerns "legislative changes to our state laws and regulations. Changes can have a negative impact on how business entities see the value in locating to Oregon as well as concern for those doing business here now."

"As the chair of the board for the Food North-

My county-wide health district service and ownership of a private service-based company in north and south county (Murray's Drug) and having customers from all communities, gives me a perspective and interest in the whole county and its needs."

"I believe the biggest challenge to the Port is the ability to have buildable land ready for tenants interested in locating at the port. Port leadership has done very well to attract tenants and have land "shovel ready" (utilities, roads, etc.). Continuing to be ready for additional companies wanting to locate at the port is imperative. Doing all in the port's power to help keep the existing businesses profitable is also a priority. An example would be finding the most cost-effective supply of fresh water and effluent disposal or help them adapt to Cap and Trade."

"Finding answers to critically important issues is something I think independent business owners excel at. When success or failure depends on the owner's ability to adapt, invent, re-invent or think outside of the box in order to survive, I firmly believe we rise to the occasion, especially a private company that is 60 years old. I would bring that same determination and commitment to this commissioner job. New land acquisition and development, creative use of existing land and balancing use of critical factors to a business' success (steam, fresh water, effluent water, etc.) to maximize occupancy would be my focus."

west Association I am aware of the regulations that affect the Port on the business in Oregon. I have spoken on the impact of new regulations to our elected officials and committees. I regularly attend regional and local meetings in which I interact with our elected officials. My hope is that I can bring a collaborative spirit along with the facts to help influence the regulations that will impact the Port of Morrow at the state level when the need arises.

**POLARIS**  
**SPRING SALES EVENT**

REBATES UP TO **\$1,500\***

**+**

FINANCING AS LOW AS **3.99%**  
APR FOR 36 MONTHS\*\*

VISIT [POLARIS.COM](http://POLARIS.COM) FOR MORE OFFERS

**M.C.G.G.**  
**Morrow County Grain Growers**

950 MAIN STREET  
LEXINGTON, OR

**POLARIS**

\*Offer valid only on select models and subject to availability. Rebate and financing offers valid on select 2019-2020 new and unregistered Polaris® "RANGER" "GRANDPRIX" "GRAND" and "RZR" models purchased between 5/1/19-4/30/20. Not available in CA, HI, IL, IN, MD, MI, MN, NY, OH, PA, RI, VA, WI, and WA. See your local authorized dealer for complete details. \*\*Rate as low as 3.99% APR for 36 months. Example of monthly payments required over a 36-month term at a 3.99% APR rate: \$25.52 per \$1,000 financed, and with a 60-month term at a 3.99% APR rate: \$11.88 per \$1,000 financed. An example of a monthly payment with 50 cents, or rebate, at an APR of 3.99% APR rate: \$11.88 per \$1,000 financed. \$1.00 rebate. \$11.88 per \$1,000 financed. \$1.00 rebate. \$11.88 per \$1,000 financed. Other qualifications and restrictions may apply. Financing promotions void where prohibited. Tax, title, license, and registration are separate and may be required. Payment may be made by debit or credit card. All vehicles are sold as-is. No warranty. Dealer's discretion. POLARIS® off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. These must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if provided, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and practice caution. Always use seat belts and roll-over protection when required. Please respect local laws, rules, regulations, and speed restrictions. Always use proper riding and alcohol/drug don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-342-3764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2019 Polaris Industries Inc.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.