

Local

Washington D.C.

Continued from Page 1

One of those things included a tour of the Capitol Building led by Oregon Representative Greg Walden's staff.

The group also was able to meet briefly with Walden. During the meeting the main topic of discussion the students spoke about with Walden was the National School Lunch Program and how much waste the students felt that it created.

While visiting the Capitol Building, the students experienced an unexpected memorable surprise. Dr. Phil McGraw was testifying to Congress. He passed the group in a corridor and although was surrounded by security graciously greeted the kids.

"I wish I'd have gotten his autograph. A girl at my dad's work said she'd have paid any price for it" joked Zach Zemmer, a 7th grade student who was able to go on the trip.

Also on the list of at-

tractions visited was the Washington Monument. "Visiting that was really neat because it has just reopened after being closed for several years," said Potter.

On August 23, 2011, the Monument was rocked by a 5.8 magnitude earthquake and was closed for repairs after a number of cracks were discovered and some of the mortar was shaken loose.

The Monument reopened on May 12, 2014.

"It was a good highlight for the kids because it's such a neat view of D.C. from up there and it's just a really interesting building when you're on the inside. The kids really got a lot out of it," Potter said of the Monument.

"I liked the Pentagon," said Zemmer.

"I was expecting it to be all formal but the gal who gave us our tour was actually pretty funny," Potter added. "I think that was a favorite of a lot of the students."

Among some of the other landmarks the group was able to visit were The Smithsonian Museums, The Library of Congress and Arlington Cemetery where the group visited a permanent display for Army Corporal Jessica Ellis, daughter of Linda Ellis, Nurse Practitioner at St. Luke's Clinic in Baker City, who was killed in Iraq.

Potter said one of the greatest moments about the trip was, "We were there for the Memorial Day parade—it's the biggest parade in the nation, which means it lasted over two and a half hours long. We did not last quite as long—it was so hot!"

"But during the opening ceremony they had the co-pilot of the WWII Doolittle raid on Japan. I thought that was so cool for the kids because I was like 'Do you realize who that is and do you realize the significance of the Doolittle raid in WWII?' So we kinda had a history

teaching moment there and everyone was like 'Whoa he's still alive.' And that's kind of the goal of the trip is to connect our history with our present and bring that alive for kids.

"So I think that was a very teachable, eye-opening moment, where you read about something in a textbook but now you're looking at this man who survived this mission that was hugely symbolic. It was just one of those little unexpected moments and that's what the goal was—to make that connection for kids. Bring the things we're reading about in our books to have meaning and context today.

"A lot of my students are really appreciative of WWII history so I think a lot of them were struck by the significance of that."

Potter indicated another trip would probably not be planned for another four or five years to "give the younger students a chance to grow up a little so they can go."

Six sheep killed, one cow attacked by wolves

Cow attacked.

On the morning of 6/11/2014 a livestock owner observed an injured adult cow in a timbered pasture in the area of the Umatilla Wolf Pack. The animal could not be caught at the time, but on 6/14/2014 the cow was gathered and its injuries were examined. Wolf depredation was suspected and ODFW was contacted and examined the injured cow while in a squeeze chute on the same day. The conditions and disposition of the live animal made close detailed examination (esp. measurements) impossible; ODFW was able to observe enough evidence to make an accurate determination on this cow. Prior to discovery of its injuries on 6/11, the cow had been previously observed healthy on the evening of 6/8.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: Multiple large-carnivore bite wounds were observed on this live cow on the right-side flank area, and on both hind legs between the hock and rump. The exposed bite-caused muscle tissue damage on the left hind leg was especially severe. No disturbance or attack scene could be detected, but remaining cows showed clear evidence of having been bunched in the corner area of the pasture (near the road) for some time, a fairly common result of any type of predation event or severe disturbance.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: The large size, high number, and especially location (i.e., flank and hind-end) of the bite wounds were consistent with many other confirmed wolf attacks in Oregon.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: It is unknown exactly when the injuries to this cow were incurred, but it likely occurred between 6/8 and 6/11. The pasture where this cow was injured is a relatively high wolf use area, and GPS collar data shows that at least two wolves (OR14 and OR23) were present within the pasture early on the morning of 6/9.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: The Umatilla Pack has depredated livestock irregularly since 2012. On 6/13/2014 ODFW confirmed wolf depredation of sheep in a pen less than 1 mile from this pasture.

Sheep killed.

General situation and animal information: A livestock producer observed several dead sheep in a pen on the morning of 6/13/2014. The same sheep and pen had experienced confirmed wolf depredation by the Umatilla River Pack in 2012, and the situation initially appeared

similar to the producer. Wolf predation was suspected and ODFW investigated the same day. Upon arrival ODFW observed 6 dead sheep (3 adults, and 3 lambs). In addition, 6 injured sheep and a single missing lamb was reported – and many of the injured sheep were observed as having injuries by ODFW. It was estimated the sheep had been dead less than 24 hrs with one lamb having been partially consumed and 5 sheep showing no consumption. The sheep pen is immediately adjacent to the ranch house and the owner reported last observing the sheep the previous evening.

Physical evidence of attack by a predator: Upon initial investigation, many large-predator bite marks were easily observed on both the dead and wounded sheep within the pen, indicating predation of live animals by one or more large predators. In addition, 3 of the dead adult ewes were necropsied confirming premortem bite wounds.

Evidence that the predator was a wolf: The large number and location of bite wounds on the dead adult ewes was typical of wolf – hind end, medial and lateral surfaces of hind legs, behind front shoulders, brisket area, and throat. On hind-end bite wounds, severe subcutaneous hemorrhage and severe muscle tissue damage which showed a shredding of muscle fibers – commonly observed with other confirmed wolf depredations in this area. Size and spacing of the premortem bite wounds (i.e., canine tooth marks) that could be reliably measured were at least 1.5" spacing, though the extremely high number of bite wounds made accurate measurements difficult.

Evidence of wolf presence near the time of the animal(s) death/injury: Location data from wolf OR14 (adult male from the Umatilla River pack) confirmed at least his presence immediately adjacent (<10 yards, and within fladry enclosure) to the sheep which were depredated at a.m. the same morning of the investigation. Also, on the morning of the depredation, the property owner observed a single un-collared wolf feeding on a carcass in a field near the sheep pen which later was confirmed to be a sheep carcass – the description of the wolf indicates a likely yearling wolf. At the time of observation, the observer did not know what the wolf was feeding on.

Recent wolf depredation in the same or nearby area: ODFW confirmed sheep predation by the Umatilla River wolves in this same sheep pen in 2012.

Intense fire season could be ahead for northeast Oregon

By Tesmond Hurd, CEO and Anthony Marro, Lead Forecaster, La Grande Weather Service, Inc.

Another fire season equally, if not more, devastating than 2013 may be in store for the Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. Northern Oregon and Western Washington are facing abnormally dry and moderate drought conditions for this time of year. Southern Oregon and Idaho are seeing severe drought conditions.

The CFS (Climate Forecast System) models are persistent in showing a large high pressure trend over the Pacific, which provide clear evidence of a warmer summer. While this is good for recreationists enjoying the outdoors, wildland fires will only take advantage of this heat. Precipitation is considered to be slightly above normal which will help with the fire situation, but cannot

be depended upon as the ongoing drought will need a lot of precipitation to keep up.

Not only does Oregon have to contend with an already dry season, but with the more than likely onset of a moderate to strong El Niño there is the ongoing threat of below average precipitation throughout the dry summer months. Looking historically at similar sea surface temperatures (SST's) and their effect on precipitation and temperature in the Northern Pacific region of America, El Niño's usually spell warmer temperatures for most of the summer, which will only dry out the region even more.

As well as the threat of El Niño, the outlook for the next three months by the Climate Prediction Center supports the higher temperature but precipitation looks to be remaining around average. But considering that June is the wettest month on average

and we are a third of the way through the month with only 1.75 inches of rain when the average at this point should be over 2.6 inches the chances of June bringing moisture back to the soils is quickly dissipating. With all these long term factors in mind it must be reiterated that although there will be small sustained periods of rain, the amount that would be needed to overcome the current drought situation is very high. Northeast Oregon is the only part of the state that has near normal snowpack and melt rates. Elsewhere, snowmelt has come 1-4 weeks sooner with only 10-70% of the normal snowpack.

As of June 1, Governor Kitzhaber has declared a state of emergency due to drought conditions in nine counties in Southern and Central Oregon. Within the first two weeks of this month, Central Oregon has seen a wildfire, thus far, burn approximately 7000

acres with forced evacuations at one point. Urgently speaking, as of Wednesday, June 12, the "official fire season" has been entered in Northeast Oregon and all zones have been moved to "moderate" danger, except Zone 1 (includes Grande Ronde Valley and low-lying areas of Baker City, Unity, and John Day), which has been moved to "high" danger.

Fire Season 2014 will be a "good one," in terms of fires and fire intensity. As always, those recreating in Northeast Oregon are encouraged to use fire safely and wisely. La Grande Weather Service will be posting on local fires throughout the summer as well as providing spot forecasts at the request of outside organizations/citizens.

Call Blue Mtn. Dispatch at 963-7171 to report wild fires in the forest, or 911. For fire weather questions specifically, call 406-0876 or email info@lgdws.com.

County Commissioners adopt 2014-15 budget

By Brian Addison

Baker County Commissioners adopted the 2014-2015 county budget during their June 18 meeting in the total sum of \$27,393,295.

The county's general fund, totaling \$9,587,607, covers costs for 19 different county departments.

The county's responsibility in dealing with crime and courts prove to be the most expensive departments paid for through

the county general fund.

Topping the list of general fund expenditures are the Sheriff's Office and County Jail.

The Sheriff's Office costs for the next year are budgeted at \$1,212,174 and the County Jail at \$1,240,782.

The District Attorney's Office is budgeted for \$540,515.

Parole and Probation department funding equals \$382,951, while

the Juvenile department is budgeted for \$378,157.

The county Justice Court is budgeted for \$235,397.

Other high cost general fund departments include the Assessor's office at \$585,490; Technology department at \$320,037; County Commissioners at \$317,146; Facilities at \$340,797; the County Clerk's office at \$288,560; and, Planning Dept. funded at \$278,057.

Other department

budgets under the county include the Road Department at about \$7.1 million; Mental Health fund at \$4,020,000; County Health fund budgeted at \$1,114,859; and, the Consolidated Dispatch fund for \$787,869.

Editor's Note: Please see next week's The Baker County Press for a more detailed report on the 2014-2015 Baker County Budget.

Missing Baker City man found deceased

Oregon State Police (OSP), with the assistance of the Baker County Medical Examiner, is continuing the investigation into the death of an adult male found deceased Monday evening from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound near his vehicle about six miles southeast of Baker City.

On June 16, 2014 at

approximately 8:27 p.m., OSP was contacted by Baker County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) after a citizen's report of a found vehicle associated with a missing 36-year old Baker City man. According to BCSO, the man took the family car and hadn't been seen since 7:00 a.m. that morning.

OSP and Baker City Po-

lice Department responded to the unoccupied vehicle's location along Grey Eagle Mine Road about two miles south of Highway 86. Officers searched the surrounding area and found David Khayat, 36, from Baker City, about fifty yards from the vehicle deceased from an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Help is available in Baker County for community members struggling from a mental health crisis and/or suicidal thoughts. Suicide is preventable.

A crisis help line is available 24 hours a day at (541) 523-3646. Mountain Valley Mental Health Programs, Inc. is located at 2200 Fourth Street in Baker City.

Boy arrested for stabbing father

Monday night at 10:35 p.m. a 13-year-old Baker City boy was taken into custody for allegedly stabbing his father, who was not seriously injured and declined hospital medical treatment.

Officer Wood, Sergeant Regan, Officer Weaver,

and Detective Bass responded to the incident at that family's home on 10th Street.

The boy was charged with 2nd Degree Assault - Knife/Cutting Instrument, and has been transported to a juvenile detention center in The Dalles.