Wandering wolf may have found a mate

By Jeff Barnard, AP

MEDFORD, Ore. -– Oregon's famous wandering gray wolf, dubbed OR-7, may have found the mate he has trekked thousands of miles looking for, wildlife authorities said Monday. It's likely the pair spawned pups, and if confirmed, the rare predators would be the first breeding pair of wolves in the Oregon's Cascade Range since the early 1900s.

Officials said cameras in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest in the southern Cascades captured several images of what appears to be a female wolf in the same area where OR-7's GPS collar shows he has been living.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist John Stephenson said it is not proof, but it is likely the two wolves mated over the winter and are rearing pups that would have been born in April. Biologists won't start looking for a den until June, to avoid endangering the pups.

"It's amazing that he appears to have found a mate," Stephenson said. "I didn't think it would happen. It makes me more impressed with the ability of wolves to survive and find one another."

Young wolves typically leave their pack and strike out for a new territory, hoping to find a mate and start a new pack.

OR-7 has been looking for a mate since leaving the Imnaha pack in northeastern Oregon in September 2011. His travels have taken him thousands of miles as he crossed highways, deserts and ranches in Oregon, moved down the spine of the Cascade Range deep into Northern California and then back to Oregon, all without getting shot, having an accident or starving.

Federal Endangered Species Act protections for wolves have been lifted in eastern Oregon, where the bulk of them reside, but they remain in force in the Cascades. Protections for the animals have also ended in the last several years in the Northern Rockies and western Great Lakes.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed ending the listing across most of the rest of the country as populations have rebounded. A final decision is expected later this year.

If a wolf was going to start a pack in a new part of Oregon, ranchers should be glad it is OR-7, who has no history of preying on livestock, said Bill Hoyt, past president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. The group supports Oregon's wolf recovery plan and is looking forward to the day the predator's numbers and range expand enough for their protections to be removed.

Steve Pedery, conservation director of Oregon Wild, said the news was "spectacular." The conservation group won a court ruling barring the state from killing two members of OR-7's home pack for preying on livestock and later won a settlement strictly limiting when wolves can be killed.

"It goes to show that when we act on America's best impulses for the environment, amazing things can happen. We can bring endangered species back," he said.

Stephenson expected the battery on OR-7's GPS collar to die soon, so the biologist set up trail cameras based on the wolf's most recent whereabouts. The GPS locations also showed OR-7 was staying within a smaller area, common behavior when wolves have pups to feed.

When he checked the cameras last week, Stephenson said one had recorded a black wolf he had not seen before. An hour later, OR-7 was photographed on the same camera. The black wolf was confirmed to be female because she squatted to urinate.

Officials had planned to let OR-7's collar die, but now that he appears to have found a mate, he will be fitted with a new one this summer to monitor the pack.

Stephenson said officials had no idea where the female came from.

Letter: Second Serving celebrates 5 years

To the community,

Second Serving, a South Lake Tahoe food program, celebrates its fifth year May 16.

Every Friday since 2009 guests at the Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church have been served soup generously donated by numerous area restaurants and bread every week from Lake Tahoe Pizza Company.

Second Serving is an extension of the Bread & Broth at St. Theresa Church in South Lake Tahoe, where volunteers who serve a hot cooked meal every Monday also prepare pastas and sandwiches to accompany the Friday fare.

The organizers would like to thank the participating restaurants and acknowledge their generosity while encouraging area residents to patronize these community-minded supporters:

Lake Tahoe Pizza, Levon Touryan

Freshies – Erik & Melodie Ulman

Wildman Café – Rami Merrikh

Blue Angel Café – Rosie Cowen & Glenn Simpson

Café Fiore – Nick & Shandi Ashmore

Fresh Ketch – Bill Blair

Nepheles – Tim Halloran & Mark Vassau

Ridge Tahoe – Steffen Moise

Riva Grill- Scott Craig

Rockwater Grill – Keith Simpson

Teps Villa Roma – Sheldon & Dan Tepper,

Bill Horning, Second Serving

Sierra mountain range on the rise

If it seems like the Sierra are getting taller, it's because they are.

Depletion of groundwater is causing the Sierra Nevada mountains to rise, according to a study published in the journal Nature on May 14.

"We first wrote two years ago about the rapid rise of the Sierra, with its 14,000-foot peaks in the south and 10,000-foot peaks at Lake Tahoe, moving as much as 1 to 3 millimeters per year," UNR Professor Geoff Blewitt said. "The puzzling results of our earlier research cannot be explained easily by geology alone. We've now found that a reason for the rapid uplift may be linked to human activity."

The newest chapter of research shows draining of the aquifer for agricultural irrigation in the Central Valley results in upward flexing of the earth's surface and the surrounding mountains due to the loss of mass within the valley. The groundwater subsidence was found to also correlate with seismic activity on the San Andreas Fault.

In the past 150 years, about 40 trillion gallons of groundwater in the Central Valley have been lost through pumping, irrigation and evapotranspiration. That's roughly equal to all the water in Lake Tahoe, the volume of which can cover the entire state of California in 14 inches of water.

"This massive withdrawal of water has relieved pressure on the Earth's crust, which is now rebounding upward in response," Blewitt said. "This is counter-intuitive to most people, even geologists, who tend to only think that water withdrawal causes subsidence, which is only true in the sediments of the valley from which the water is withdrawn. With the weight of the groundwater missing, the hard-rock crust under the valley is actually rising too."

The rise is quite fast in geologic time, with these mountain ranges rising by a similar amount each year – about the thickness of a dime – with a cumulative rise over the past 150 years of up to 6 inches, according to the team of geophysicists.

Blewitt and colleague Bill Hammond, who run the Nevada Geodetic Laboratory at UNR, partnered with University of Western Washington, UC Berkeley and University of Ottawa in the research.

"The real importance of this research is that we are demonstrating a potential link between human activity and deformation of the solid Earth, which explains current mountain uplift and the yearly variation in seismicity," said Colin Amos, assistant professor of geology from Western

Washington University and lead author of the Nature article. “These are questions that lots of geologists have been puzzling over, and it’s a real eye opener to think that humans are the ultimate cause.”

Blewitt shared the research in a presentation at the European Geophysical Sciences Union conference in Vienna on April 28. The annual EGU General Assembly is the largest and most prominent European geosciences event.

The study is based on detailed GPS measurements from California and Nevada between 2007 and 2010.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Plein air event benefits Sierra Club

Sierra Club’s Paint Tahoe Blue fundraiser is June 15.

It is a live plein air event and auction to raise funds to protect Lake Tahoe. Up to 20 artists will be painting.

The event is from 4-8pm at Sand Harbor in Incline Village. Auction of the artists’ work will be at 7pm.

The event is free, though parking is $10. Park in the group picnic area on right just after entering.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Greg Bergner recently received the Carthage Alumni Beacon Award. Carthage College recognized Bergner for his service as a physician, particularly to Medi-Cal patients, and for providing science education to students at Bijou Community School in an after-school program.

• The Fields Advisory Committee of the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Facilities Joint Powers Authority will meet May 19 from 4-6pm at the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board room, 1021 Al Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

• Katy Simon, former Washoe County manager, is now on the board of the Tahoe Fund.

• Fallen Leaf Lake Campground is on *Sunset* magazine's list of top beginner campgrounds.

• Incline Village Tennis Center offers 11 courts on a first come basis. It does cost to play. Information about tournaments is available online.

Grammy nominee to play, give talk on S. Shore

Linda Chorney, Grammy nominee and author, will give a talk – for adults – on June 17 at 6pm at the South Lake Tahoe Library.

Chorney made history as the first independent artist without a label, publicist, or manager to be nominated for a Grammy in a category of legends, like Robert Plant, Bob Dylan and Willie Nelson. The gatekeepers of the industry were not happy, and did what they could to undermine her nomination and career.

Chorney fights back with a delicious sense of humor.

The evening will include music, reading, and storytelling.

Editorial: Sullivan, Ashworth for EDC judge



Publisher's note: ***Lake Tahoe News convened an editorial panel of six South Shore residents to decide on this endorsement for the June primary.***

Politics in judicial races can be troubling because those wearing the revered black robe are on the bench in what is supposed to be an impartial role. They are there to follow the law, not political biases.

Judges should not be taking out ads to support the Second Amendment. They are there to uphold the entire Constitution. Judges need a moderate perspective to handle the wide range of

issues they hear. It is important that people who come before them are given their due process.

Voters in El Dorado County on June 3 will be asked to replace two retiring judges. Both slots are being contested.

Lake Tahoe News recommends voting for Dylan Sullivan to replace Daniel Proud and Vicki Ashworth to take Doug Phimister's seat.

Sullivan is essentially doing the job today of a judge in her role as a court commissioner for El Dorado County. She has had that job since fall 2011. This experience will allow her to step into the judgeship without having to endure a learning curve.

Those who have been in her court describe Sullivan as fair, open minded, respectful, efficient with time, knowledgeable and versed in the topic before her.

Joe Hoffman is her opponent. We question his ethics, especially in how he represented himself to voters. He also lacks substance.

For all of these reasons Sullivan is unequivocally the best person for El Dorado County Superior Court Office 5.

Ashworth is a veteran in the El Dorado County District Attorney's Office. She has handled every type of criminal case there is. And while she would likely not hear criminal cases at the get-go because of potential conflicts of interest, we have no doubt she will be adept at learning the other types of legal matters that will come before her.

In such a small county the judges must be versed in all aspects of law and don't have the luxury of specializing.

Successfully prosecuting high-profile criminal cases takes research, patience, intelligence, knowledge of the law, a realization of knowing lives will be forever changed from the

trial’s outcome, tenacity and a drive to ferret out the details.

Ashworth embodies those traits each time she steps into the courtroom. We believe she will do the same from the other side of the bench.

She is running against Joe Weinberger and David Combellack. The bulk of Weinberger’s experience is as a personal injury attorney, which we don’t believe qualifies him for the complexities of being a judge. We question the reasons Combellack would wait so long in his career to attempt to be a judge. And with Judge Steve Bailey being an advisor to his campaign and Bailey wanting to be the presiding judge, we cannot support Combellack.

Without reservation we support Ashworth for Office 1 of the El Dorado County Superior Court.

When selecting the two people to endorse *Lake Tahoe News* also took into consideration the overall makeup of the court, which has branches in South Lake Tahoe, Placerville and Cameron Park. There are eight judges and one commissioner. And unfortunately a bit of politics is going on inside those hallowed halls.

We are in favor of Judge Suzanne Kingsbury remaining the presiding judge. With a belief that not only will Sullivan and Ashworth do the job well, we believe they will support Kingsbury.

Letter: Supervisor doesn’t have to be on CTC, TRPA

To the community,

It was recently brought up that the California Tahoe Conservancy seat must be held by the elected supervisor. Well, as I recently corrected the same mistake about the TRPA seat by posting the actual section of the bi-state Compact clearly showing my earlier statements were correct, I will do the same for the CTC.



Kevin Brown

This came directly from the county website and is from the California Legislature. The Board of Supervisors has the final say on who is appointed:

> *CHAPTER 3. Organization [66906- 66906.5] (Chapter 3 added by Slats. 1973, Ch. 1064.) 66906.1. The governing body of the conservancy shall be comprised of seven voting members and one ex officio nonvoting member. The voting members shall be as follows:*
>
> *(a) One member appointed by the City Council of the City of South Lake Tahoe.*
>
> *(b) One member appointed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer.*
>
> *(c) One member appointed by the Board of Supervisors of the*

County of El Dorado.

(d) The Secretary of the Resources Agency or his or her designee.

(e) One member appointed from the general public by the Senate Committee on Rules.

(f) One member appointed from the general public by the Speaker of the Assembly.

(g) The Director of Finance or the director's designee.

The members appointed or designated pursuant to subdivisions (d) to (g), inclusive, shall not be residents of the region.

The members of the governing body of the conservancy shall serve at the pleasure of the respective appointing authority.

A representative of the United States Secretary of Agriculture shall be an ex officio, nonvoting member of the conservancy.

It is at the discretion of the board to appoint. The Placer County Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery does not hold her seat either.

Kevin Brown, El Dorado County District 5 supervisor candidate

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AAA rolling out plan to help cyclists

By Bill Chappell, NPR

It’s not going to change its name any time soon – but auto membership club AAA is increasingly in the business of fixing bikes and giving rides to cyclists who run into trouble. AAA clubs in Colorado and Southern New England announced the new service in time for this week’s Bike to Work Day, following the lead of other regional auto clubs.

The organization, whose territory includes Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island, will send mechanics in trucks that are outfitted with bike racks to cyclists who call for help, in a new benefit the company says comes with existing memberships.

Mary Wyatt, senior vice president of marketing and publications for AAA Southern New England, explained the thinking:

“Whether for sport, transportation or family fun, the number of people riding bicycles is on the rise. So in line with our goal to help keep our members moving, it made sense to extend our roadside assistance to include bicycles. It’s a natural.”

Read the whole story

Letter: Parking money needed for maintenance

To the community,

I’m reading and hearing quite a lot of questions about how Measure P would affect the maintenance funding of the Lakeview Commons. In February, the city made some changes to the paid parking program. These include a local’s annual pass (M-F) for

$40, the removal of paid parking on Venice Drive (which is mostly used by locals), shortening the hours to 8am-8pm.



Pete Fink

In the current budget, all money collected from kiosks at Lakeview Commons and the boat ramp goes to maintenance and improvements of the commons (boat launch fees are already dedicated to boat launch expenses). What the result of attaching the paid parking revenue directly to the commons means is that maintenance funding will not come from the general fund and thus, it will not be in constant threat of being cut to fund other programs as the budget fluctuates. Maintenance of the commons is critical to keeping it a stellar spot for visitors and locals alike.

When the various groups are all asking for the city to spend money on more police, recreation, bike trails, roadway maintenance, and many other things that all come from the General Fund, things like park maintenance don’t look so glamorous and can too easily be cut.

Please vote no on Measure P to ensure maintenance funding for the commons.

Pete Fink, South Lake Tahoe