

EDITORIAL | Oregon doesn't need coyote-killing contests

It would be easy to call the Young Farmers & Ranchers Coyote Hunt, which begins today (Dec. 30) in Burns, a blood sport.

The Young Farmers & Ranchers program is part of the Oregon Farm Bureau. Its contest offers cash prizes to the top three finishers in the hunt, which requires killing coyotes.

The hunt is called a fundraiser, and registration monies will be used to pay the winners. Remaining funds will be donated to the YF&R program and the Harney County Farm Bureau. There also are prizes such as a 300 Blackout rifle.

But we have to ask, isn't there another way to raise money that doesn't require arbitrary wildlife killing?

With all of the controversy surrounding canned hunts and safaris, shouldn't the message to the next generation of farmers and ranchers be one of avoiding indiscriminate killing?

We know coyotes are predatory and can threaten a rancher or farmer's economic well being when they attack grazing animals. It is not against the law to kill them, foxes, bobcats, and other wildlife when they menace livestock.

But this contest isn't about protecting one's livelihood. This is about killing for cash and prizes.

When asked, Kelly Peterson, Oregon's senior state director for the Humane Society of the United States, came up with a list of different ways to raise money in a matter of minutes.

Peterson grew up in Lebanon, and her family hunts ethically, she said. She also works with farmers and hunters on a daily basis as part of her job, and knows most of them are united in the humane treatment of animals when they hunt.

"But this contest for prizes devalues life. It shocks me," Peterson said.

She suggests the YF&R group could raise as much or more money by hosting equipment driving contests (backing a four-wheel wagon, tractor obstacle courses, etc.), or offering a plowing competition with draft horses or mules.

She said young Oregon farmers and ranchers also could show off the state's unparalleled trail-riding areas by sponsoring trail rides or wagon trains. Weekend residents looking for fun and freedom, as well as tourists, would seize the opportunity and pay to participate in an authentic Oregon experience.

The YF&R group also could sponsor chainsaw or clay-target shooting competitions.

These activities would raise money while being more closely aligned with the goals, values and interests of young farmers and ranchers today.

Coyote hunting and killing contests have been held in Oregon in the past.

In 2014, the national nonprofit Animal Legal Defense Fund along with co-plaintiff Project Coyote, which was successful in banning wildlife-killing contests for prizes in California, reached a settlement with an organizer of annual coyote-killing contests in Harney County.

The ALDF and Project Coyote lawsuit and a countersuit filed by the organizer resulted in a settlement, in which the organizer agreed to drop his claim and consented to never host another hunting contest in Oregon.

The Oregon Farm Bureau's youth program is now the organizer, but the outcome is still the same. It's a killing contest.

Isn't it time to ban this in Oregon?

Carol McAlice Currie is the opinions editor for the Statesman Journal. Reach her at ccurrie@statesmanjournal.com or 503-399-6746.



It's time for Oregon to ban coyote-killing contests

Salem Statesman Journal Published 2:30 p.m. PT Nov. 16, 2018

The Young Farmers & Ranchers program, which is part of the Oregon Farm Bureau, is hosting its first coyote-killing contest (Coyote Hunting Tournament) from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 in Burns.

It is a fundraiser for the YF&R program, and grants cash prizes (for first, second and third-place teams) to contestants.

Most people these days are aware of the value of coyotes and other predators in ecosystems. Some may not realize that when many coyotes are killed, the population often rebounds and even increases, so the alleged value of killing contests, (to help) keep coyote numbers down, is invalid.

These unethical contests, while unfortunately currently legal in Oregon, only glorify bloodthirsty killing and violence. The Oregon Farm Bureau should cancel the scheduled event and put an end to this method of fundraising for their programs.

California and Vermont have passed laws banning coyote killing contests. It is time for Oregon to do the same.

Margaret Stephens
Salem



Coyote-killing contest does not reflect Oregon

Salem Statesman Journal Published 2:29 p.m. PT Nov. 13, 2018

I was devastated to hear that a coyote-killing contest is going to take place in Oregon at the end of November.

Prizes will be given for the heaviest coyote that is slaughtered. I had assumed that this level of barbarism didn't exist in Oregon. The science behind wildlife management shows that this indiscriminate killing does nothing to mitigate livestock attacks or boost deer and elk populations.

Randomly killing coyotes destabilizes the animals' family structure, resulting in increased population. Paying attention to the lifestyles of wildlife informs humans on how to work within these animals' needs and to cohabitate with little or no harm to other species.

Our best approach to helping all wildlife is to manage and maintain habitat. This event is supposed to benefit 16 to 35-year-old farmers and ranchers, but promoting this blood sport sends the wrong message to the younger generation by glorifying killing and violence.

This coyote-killing contest and others like it train participants to enjoy killing for no other reason than the thrill. Please, not in Oregon. Oregon Farm Bureau, please stop this killing contest. There is no scientific justification for this, and this is not how Oregonians should treat wildlife in this state.

Betty Patton
Portland

The Register-Guard

Farm Bureau, nix irresponsible coyote-hunting tournament

Posted Nov 28, 2018 at 12:01 AM

The Oregon Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers Division is planning to put on its first annual coyote hunting tournament this coming weekend in Burns. Teams of three will go out and kill as many coyotes as they can, and the teams that bring in the greatest weight of dead coyotes at the end of the three days win a prize (cash or gun).

"These gruesome wildlife killing contests teach Oregon's youth nothing about sportsmanship, and instead send them the dangerous message that hunting is about nothing more than winning cash and prizes," said Kelly Peterson, Oregon senior state director for the Humane Society of the United States.

There is no scientific evidence to support claims that indiscriminate killing of coyotes prevents livestock loss, boosts populations of game animals like deer, or effectively reduces coyote populations. Killing contests more than likely lead to a greater abundance of coyotes and more conflicts because they create instability in coyote family structures.

If you agree that this contest is not the right way to manage wildlife and does not teach young people responsible hunting practices, please contact the Oregon Farm Bureau and ask them to cancel it.

Lisa Mirhej
Eugene

The Register-Guard

Coyote slaughter is an abhorrent way to raise funds

Posted Nov 11, 2018 at 12:01 AM

The Oregon Farm Bureau is supporting its Young Farmers and Ranchers program by hosting an abhorrent event, a coyote killing contest, in Burns from Nov. 30 through Dec. 2. Up to 150 participants will compete to kill as many coyotes as they can for the chance to win up to \$10,000 in cash prizes.

This contest encourages the slaughter of coyotes, an important native carnivore, and places value on only the pounds of flesh that are piled up on scales at the end of the contest. The Oregon Farm Bureau has misplaced its values. Killing coyotes is counterproductive to the needs of farming and ranching because it disrupts the social order that keeps problem coyotes at bay. What's more, a recent issue of "Oregon Small Farm News" highlighted USDA research showing that killing coyotes actually increased livestock losses. Coyotes also provide important ecosystem services, such as controlling rodent populations.

The Oregon Farm Bureau should support its young members with events that demonstrate how farming and ranching can sustainably innovate, rather than appealing to misguided fears about essential native carnivores.

Debra Merskin, Eugene



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2018

Cancel coyote hunting tournament

I am writing to encourage the Oregon Farm Bureau and its young farmers and ranchers division to cancel the first annual Coyote Hunting Tournament scheduled Nov. 30-Dec. 2 in Burns, Oregon. This contest rewards the team that kills the heaviest coyotes over the three-day competition.

Killing contests do not teach responsible hunting ethics, use science-based wildlife management principles, reduce coyote conflicts with livestock or reduce coyote populations. There are strong reasons for eliminating random killing of wildlife populations. The larger males are the alpha animals in each pack. Killing those leaders results in an increased number of younger males reproducing and having larger litters. The basic need to feed their offspring is motivation for these animals to pursue larger prey to feed their larger families.

An ideal focus for wildlife management is preserving the habitat of these animals. Providing a healthy habitat allows coyotes to prey on rabbits and rodents and other small animals as well as fish and a variety of plants. Killing contests train and encourage unethical hunters by presenting killing as an enjoyable sport with no benefit — such as food — for the hunter.

For these reasons and many more, I urge the Oregon Farm Bureau to cancel this and all future killing contests.

Kristin Leppert, Portland

Hood River News

Tuesday, November 27, 2018

No killing contests

Did you know that there are killing contests in Oregon?

Burns, Ore., is conducting one Nov. 30 through Dec. 2, and it is branded as the “Young Farmers and Ranchers First Annual Coyote Hunting Tournament.” The name of the game is for the winning team to accumulate the most dead biomass. This is a complete absurdity and should offend the most ethical of hunters and non-hunters alike across our state.

California and Vermont are the only states in the union that have so far banned such atrocities at the statewide level and it is time for Oregon to become the third. These events are done for entertainment, prizes and fun.

Teaching young and developing farmers and ranchers that gratuitous violence is acceptable is ethically and morally indefensible in addition to promoting the idea that our state’s wildlife is disposable. In addition to coyotes, non-target animals such as mountain lions, bobcats, foxes and wolves are casualties as well in addition to other non-target wildlife and companion animals.

As an Oregon resident, you can copy and paste the following link into your browser and send messages to the appropriate recipients that this is a shameful practice and should be banned immediately: bit.ly/2zcvfAy.

Nathan Smith, Hood River

EAST OREGONIAN

Friday, November 30, 2018

Killing contests should be banned

This weekend in Harney County the Oregon Farm Bureau is sponsoring a coyote killing contest. This is promoted as killing “dogs” for fun and prizes.

To kill for the “fun” of killing goes against all logic. While coyotes are predators, they have an important role in keeping rodents and other small animals in check. Their role in keeping the ecosystem in balance is an important one. While one of the excuses for getting rid of coyotes is they attack livestock, they are generally more guilty for attacking small family pets, mostly in urban areas.

Wholesale killing disrupt family units and scientists say that forces the animals to breed more to make up for the disruption. It also creates the idea, particularly in children, that lives are not valued and animals are disposable. These contests also put non-targeted wildlife, livestock, pets, and even people at risk.

Oregon should follow California and Vermont in passing legislation banning killing contests.

Kaye Killgore, Pendleton

Baker City Herald

Nov. 30, 2018

Animal-killing contests shouldn't be allowed

The first Young Farmers and Ranchers coyote killing contest begins in Burns today and goes through Dec. 2. This contest is put on by the Oregon Farm Bureau. Participants will compete for cash and prizes for killing the most coyotes. The team with the greatest total weight of dead coyotes wins. Piles of dead animals and a blood-soaked ground. Does this "contest" reflect the stewardship ethics of our young farmers and ranchers and Oregonians in general? No.

So why allowed? Turns out that in the past state legislatures chose to define some animals as "predatory animals" (ORS 610.002) with subsequent legislation created to prevent ODFW from limiting the times, places, or amounts for taking predatory animals (ORS 496.162 (3)). Currently included in the predatory animal category are "coyotes, rabbits, rodents and birds that are or may be destructive to agricultural crops, products and activities." Note the words "may be." Even if you are just passing through on rodent patrol, because you might possibly, sometime in the future, or maybe never, but then again. . . you can be killed. Seriously? In addition, taxpayer dollars are to be used to fund their control and destruction (ORS 610.015, 610.020).

Unfortunately, despite ODFW's mission statement "to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations," their protection is limited to only some animals. Other wildlife can be killed anytime. Pretty sweet if you like to kill things. A real bummer if you value all wildlife, including coyotes and their contributions to natural rodent control.

True stewards of the land do not support or participate in killing contests. Instead, they respect and work with nature, partner with wildlife, hunt responsibly, and address wildlife issues only when they arise and do so with respect and care. These true stewards need to let the Oregon Farm Bureau know that killing contests do not represent their ethics and only create future wildlife conflicts. All life deserves respect. Time to update these laws and end killing contests.

Suzanne Fouty
Baker City

TASHLAND TIDINGS

January 23, 2019

Ban killing contests

Oregon has been host to wildlife killing contests in recent years, including the Young Farmers & Ranchers Coyote Hunting Tournament in Burns, the Annual Lake County Coyote Calling Derby in Lakeview, the Harney County Coyote Classic, and the JMK Coyote Hunt.

In wildlife killing contests, participants vie for cash and prizes for killing the heaviest or largest coyotes, foxes, bobcats and many other species. They flout hunting ethics by slaughtering wildlife simply for bragging rights, and send the dangerous message to Oregon's youth that hunting is just about killing for "fun" and prizes. Hardly a glowing representation of our state's outdoors tradition of sportsmanship and respect for nature.

The random killing of vital native carnivores like coyotes is also an affront to the principles of modern, science-based wildlife management. It doesn't reduce coyote populations (and can even lead to more coyote numbers by creating instability and chaos in family structures leading to an increase in reproduction), it does not protect farm animals or pets, and it doesn't increase numbers of game species like deer.

It's time for Oregon to end these gruesome, unsporting contests. Call your state lawmakers and urge them to support legislation to ban wildlife killing contests.

Lin Bernhardt

Talent



Support ban of frivolous, cruel and wasteful coyote killing contests in Oregon

John W. Laundré, Guest Opinion Published 4:07 p.m. PT March 29, 2019



John W. Laundré (Photo: Courtesy of Jeff Snyder)

I'm a professional wildlife ecologist who has studied predators, including coyotes, for more than 35 years. I know the important role that coyotes play in a healthy ecosystem, as well as their ability to self-regulate their numbers with a strict territorial breeding structure.

When that structure is disrupted by the random killing of territorial males, such as in coyote killing contests, that structure breaks down. Young coyotes will start having offspring sooner, and litter sizes will grow - creating the need to seek out more prey to feed more hungry mouths.

I also know of all of the research studies showing that the random killing of coyotes will not mitigate conflicts with livestock, people, or pets.

So, it goes without saying that I support a bill, [SB 723-2](#), currently being considered by our legislature to ban coyote killing contests in Oregon.

But I've also been a hunter, and have often heard fellow sportsmen cite the "North American Model of Wildlife Conservation," or NAM for short, as a shining set of guiding principles for managing the wildlife that is held in the public trust.

The NAM'S seven tenets are 1: wildlife is held in the public trust; 2: a prohibition on the commerce of dead wildlife; 3: wildlife is managed under democratic rule of law; 4: hunting opportunity for all; 5: only non-frivolous use of wildlife; 6: wildlife is an international resource; and 7: sound science to manage wildlife. Among these, tenet 5, non-frivolous use of wildlife, provides strong support for a ban on coyote killing contests in Oregon.

As the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation describes tenet 5, "In North America, individuals may legally kill certain wild animals under strict guidelines for food and fur, self defense and property protection. Laws restrict against the casual killing of wildlife merely for antlers, horns or feathers."

Yet coyotes, a native species of Oregon, are killed in these gruesome contests not for food, and not for self-defense or the protection of property; they are randomly lured into the open with calling devices and shot indiscriminately, far from potential conflicts. They're killed just for fun, a trophy, or bragging rights.

Surely that falls squarely under the definition of casual and frivolous killing. These contests harken back to the good ole days when hunters killed just to kill. Killings the NAM was established by hunters to stop.

Clearly, coyote killing contests violate the very model of ethics and behavior, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, that hunters have established for themselves.

Should not hunters themselves be against such frivolous killing?

It appears not and if Oregon hunters can't live up to that model and police their own ranks, then the other 95 percent of us who do not hunt - but who are also owners of our state's wildlife - are obligated to make use of tenet 3, wildlife is managed under the democratic rule of law, and end cruel, pointless, and wasteful coyote killing contests.

SB 723-2 would do just that, and it has my full support.

John W. Laundré is an assistant professor at Western Oregon University, specializing in mammalian ecology and behavior and predator-prey dynamics. He can be reached at launjohn@hotmail.com

Coyote killing contests are wasteful, wanton behavior counter to Oregon's values

Bruce Starr, Guest Opinion Published 5:52 p.m. PT May 17, 2019

Oregonians of all stripes, including Republicans and Democrats, hunters and non-hunters alike, hold our wildlife in high regard.

Our state's proud hunting tradition is influenced by humane values that are uniquely Oregonian, and are reflected in our public policy choices.

In 1994, Oregon voters overwhelmingly passed Measure 18 to ban unethical practices for hunting bears and cougars, and in the last general election, they passed [Measure 100](#) to stop the trafficking in the parts and products of the world's most imperiled wild animals.



Bruce Starr (Photo: DANIELLE PETERSON / Statesman Journal file)

That's why it's easy to see why [SB 723](#), the bill to ban coyote killing contests in Oregon, has received bipartisan support in the Oregon legislature.

Lawmakers and citizens alike are repulsed by the idea of targeting Oregon's wildlife with mass slaughter for the sake of winning a prize.

An undercover investigation by the Humane Society of the United States showed participants in a contest in Harney County last December slinging the dead bodies of dozens of coyotes onto the ground to be weighed, and joking about how they were killed. The contestant who killed the most coyotes – judged by their total weight – won a prize.

This kind of wasteful, wanton behavior is counter to Oregon's values and a slap in the face to the public trust doctrine, which holds that wildlife is to be managed for the benefit of all of us, not just a select few.



File photo of a coyote at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge. (Photo: Jim Leonard / Special to the Statesman)

After passing Senate Judiciary Committee on a bipartisan, 5-2 vote with a “do pass” recommendation Senate Bill 723 was referred to Senate Rules committee where it appeared stalled for nearly a month.

Finally late last week the bill was scheduled for a hearing and possible work session for Monday afternoon.

Since it was introduced early in the legislative session, citizens from throughout Oregon have contacted their state senators to voice support for SB 723, which has been amended to alleviate concerns by some in the hunting community.

Citizens have pointed out that these killing contests are not supported by the best available science and are not used by wildlife managers as a means of managing coyotes.

Contest organizers like to claim they are helping to suppress the coyote population to benefit farmers and ranchers, but in fact, coyotes tend to respond to large, sudden losses in their population by boosting their rate of reproduction. By indiscriminately killing every coyote they can find, contest participants are removing coyotes that avoid livestock and instead prey on rodents and pests that damage crops.

[Note that SB 723 does not ban coyote hunting](#) – coyotes can still be killed year-round, with no bag limit, using almost any means available. The bill merely bans killing them as part of a contest, which leads to the kind of wanton waste that the vast majority of Oregonians find completely unacceptable.

I encourage the Senate leadership and members of the Rules Committee to stand solidly with Oregonians and move this important legislation to the full Senate for a vote.

Bruce Starr represented Washington County from 2003-2014 as a state senator. He can be reached at bruce@brucestarr.org