

Crop weather report unavailable

Notice:

The weekly crop weather report that regularly appears on this page was unavailable this week.

The following notice was found on the website where Farm & Ranch usually obtains the report:

Due to the lapse in federal government funding, this website is not available.

After funding has been restored, please allow some time for this website to become available again.

For information about available government services, visit usa.gov.



Although some early harvest has begun, the main sugar beet harvest in eastern Idaho is yet to get underway. This sugar beet crop along Rose Road near Blackfoot gets one of its last drinks of the season Tuesday. An Amalgamated Sugar Co. official said harvest will get going in earnest next week.

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Leadore rancher honored for stewardship work

Merrill Beyeler receives awards from agencies

By CINDY SALO
For Farm & Ranch

LEADORE — Rancher Merrill Beyeler was honored in September for his work to improve habitat for salmon and steelhead in the Lemhi Valley.

Beyeler received the Bureau of Land Management Rangeland Stewardship Award and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission annual award for his work.

Beyeler and his wife, Sharal, raised their three sons in the area. When sons Bryant, Curtis and Doug wanted to bring up their own children on the home ranch, the family needed more land. In a 2010 agreement facilitated by the Nature Conservancy, the Beyelers purchased the Cottom Ranch north of Leadore and placed conservation easements on both ranches.

Conservation easements are legal agreements that maintain private land as working ranches and restrict future development. The Beyelers' easements cover more than 2,000 acres on the Lemhi River and its tributaries. Their agreement with the Nature Conservancy outlined projects to improve fish habitat on their private lands.

"It just made sense," Beyeler said last week. "If you look at the land, it's the rivers and streams that make it valuable. When you maintain those things, your ranch is more valuable. And it's more fun to work in a setting like that."

Habitat projects reconnected tributaries to the Lemhi and opened the streams for spawning, removed structures that block fish, and returned the river to its historic, winding channel in some areas where it had been straightened. Riparian areas have been fenced and Beyeler manages cattle to minimize contact with fish.

The new systems even can be more efficient than the old



From left, rancher Merrill Beyeler and Jeff DiLuccia, a fisheries biologist with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, discuss the final excavation work on an irrigated pasture along the Lemhi River north of Leadore on Sept. 27. The river was restored to its historic, winding channel through the pasture.

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From left, Jeff DiLuccia, of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and rancher Merrill Beyeler discuss work on an irrigated pasture along the Lemhi River north of Leadore.

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ones, which means less work for ranchers.

For example, the Beyelers used to maintain a 7-mile-long ditch to flood-irrigate alfalfa south of the town of Lemhi. Now, instead of taking water from the nearby creek, they pump from the river to a center pivot. This leaves cold, clear water in the creek, which creates ideal fish habitat. The project pays the pumping costs for 20 years and the family paid for the center pivot.

Moving irrigation diversion points to reconnect tributaries has affected many private landowners and their water rights. The process has involved years of planning, stacks of permits and a long list of agencies.

"What we've lost in some aspects of our government now is the art of negotiation. In the

Lemhi Valley we still have that," Beyeler said. "People don't walk away. We stay at it until we achieve what we want. There's a commitment on both sides to make these things work."

The work has involved many ranchers, but Ron Troy of the Nature Conservancy calls Beyeler's leadership a key ingredient.

"He pulls people from both sides of the table together," said Troy.

Projects in the Lemhi Valley brought work for local excavators and cost millions. Most of the work was funded by the Columbia Basin Water Trans-

actions Program, created by the Bonneville Power Administration. The BPA operates dams on the Columbia that make it more difficult for fish to migrate from the Lemhi to the ocean and back.

"Without the program, I can think of only one creek that's been reconnected," Beyeler said. The program has allowed us to reconnect a significant number."

The habitat projects, plus a water bank that pays irrigators willing to leave water in the river, provide more water for fish while maintaining supplies for irrigation.

Jeff DiLuccia, a fisheries biologist with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, reflected on the past decade.

"We're on the cusp of having permanent flows of 25 cubic feet per second at the mouth of the Lemhi. We've got three tributaries fully connected and we're pretty close on others," DiLuccia said. "Eleven years ago, we were scratching our heads, wondering how we were going to do this. Now we have secure water and I'd argue we haven't hurt anybody."

Beyeler has another reason to care for the Lemhi River: his grandson loves fish.

"He almost knows (the resident rainbow trout) individually," Beyeler said. "He is ensuring that his grandson will know salmon and steelhead, too."

'Bee' aware of the law on bees

There are an estimated 115,000 to 125,000 beekeepers in the United States.

Most beekeepers are hobbyists with fewer than 25 hives. Commercial beekeepers are typically those with more than 300 hives. Commercial beekeeping operations are often family businesses that are handed down from generation to generation.

In 2012 more than 147 million pounds of honey were produced in the United States. It is an important agricultural product in the state of Idaho, and elsewhere.

The Idaho Department of Agriculture is authorized by statute to protect Idaho's bee industry. The department provides a qualified inspection service for certifying bees for transport into other states for pollination, and works to minimize disease and bee pests within the state.

Every beekeeper maintaining colonies within Idaho — except for hobbyists — is required by statute to pay an annual registration fee of \$10, and 10 cents per colony for every colony over 50 colonies. (Idaho Code § 2510.) Beekeepers who wish to move colonies into Idaho temporarily for pollination purposes must pay a fee and apply for a permit and have their bees inspected for infectious diseases. Fees collected by the department are used to fund the inspection services provided by the state.

The director of the department is further authorized by state law to destroy disease-infected bees, or exotic strains of bees. (Idaho



LANCE J. SCHUSTER

LAW OF THE LAND

Code § 22-2504.) All owners or keepers of bees are required by law to follow the directions of the department in regard to removing or destroying diseased bees. (Idaho Code § 22-2505.) The director may enter the premises of any beekeeper so as to inspect bees or equipment. (Idaho Code § 22-2506.)

Idaho law additionally requires all beekeepers to post their names, addresses and telephone numbers on apiaries (i.e. a collection of beehives).

Any person who violates Idaho's beekeeping laws may be in a sticky mess. They may be charged with a misdemeanor and could have to pay fines or serve time in jail. So, "bee" aware of the law.

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