

Cougar: Sightings have not yet been confirmed

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According to police, the first sighting was 12 days ago. Lum said he heard that a homeless woman who camps at Gaddis Park reported seeing the cougar near her tent that evening.

On Tuesday, someone else reported seeing a cougar at the south end of Cedar Street just before midnight. Cedar Street

County Fire Danger



KATHY KORENGEL/The News-Review
Seth Allen, left, and Michael Benson swim in the North Umpqua River Thursday near Gaddis Park in Roseburg. Three people have reported seeing a cougar near the park in the last two weeks.

he said.

Lum speculated that a cougar could be visiting the South Umpqua River near the park because of the feral cat colonies. He said he recognizes that people feed feral cats because they want to help them. But "that contributes to the problem" of attracting cougars to the city, Lum said. He speculated the big cat may be coming to the river in search of a staple of its diet — deer — as well as other

animals, such as raccoons. Lum said it's plausible the hot weather draws cougars to the river. "You've got animals coming and going to the water. (Cougars) have got prey nearby. They've got cover and brush," he added. "It's a buffet (for cougars)."

If officials verify the cougar sightings and capture the cougar, it would be euthanized, Lum said. If officials were to relocate the cougar, they might place it in another cougar's territory, causing the existing cougar to attack the new cougar. Lum also stressed that whether or not a cougar is caught near Gaddis Park, there's no guarantee another one won't wander into the city in the future.

It's important for people to know what to do if they encounter a cougar.

"Don't get me wrong," Lum said. "I think (cougars) are cool critters, and they definitely have a part, and a place" in the ecology.

But if a cougar has frequented Gaddis Park, it's "crossed a line," he said. "And we take that very seriously."

is just east of Gaddis Park.

In response to the first two sightings, Roseburg police cautioned residents to avoid the park and nearby sections of the bike park after dark.

On Wednesday, a different man reported seeing a cougar just east of the park down by the river at about 9 a.m.

But law enforcement and wildlife officials have not yet been able to confirm the sightings. Lum said that is partly because his agency hasn't learned about the incidents until hours or days after they took place.

Although wildlife officials use scent-sniffing dogs, it's difficult to track animals in the summer. Lum said an animal's scent evaporates quickly in the summer. Trackers sometimes find tracks in the mud, but there's little mud this time of year. Lum encourages anyone who sees a

cougar to immediately call 911. Lum said it is not uncommon for his agency to hear about cougar sightings in or near the city but most often the sightings are on the outskirts of town.

So you know ...

If you encounter a cougar, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife recommends taking the following precautions.

- Cougars often will retreat if given the opportunity. Leave the animal a way to escape.
- Stay calm and stand your ground.
- Maintain direct eye contact.
- Pick up children, but do so without bending down or turning your back on the cougar.
- Back away slowly.
- Do not run. Running triggers a chase response in cougars, which could lead to an attack.
- Raise your voice and speak firmly.
- If the cougar seems aggressive, raise your arms to make yourself look larger and clap your hands.
- If in the very unusual event that a cougar attacks you, fight back with rocks, sticks, tools or any items available.

"This is the first one I've ever heard of in Gaddis Park,"

Some park users ready to take on any cougars

Investigation continues into reported sightings in Roseburg's Gaddis Park, and some are expressing little fear

KATHY KORENGEL
The News-Review

Two young men who come to Gaddis Park almost every day seemed unfazed Thursday to hear a cougar has been spotted near the park, which is in the middle of Roseburg.

"I personally haven't seen it," said Seth Allen, 22, "but I'm hoping to. I'm an adrenaline junkie."

"He'd catch and ride it," joked his friend, 25-year-old Michael Benson.

"I think I might have fun trying to wrestle with the cougar," Allen responded.

Although the two young men made light of the cougar sightings, Tod Lum, a wildlife biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, said his agency is taking the three sightings very seriously.

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Oregon's COUGARS & Lottery

CONSTITUTIONAL 192 RECORDS JAN 1997

Wednesday Powerball

4-32-33-47-55

Powerball: 39 Multiplier: 3

Next Jackpot: \$80 million

Wednesday Megabucks

6-16-25-39-40-45

Next Jackpot: \$14 million

Tuesday Megamillions

11-19-40-43-44 (33)

Multiplier: 4

Next Jackpot: \$100 million

Wednesday Pick Four

1 p.m.: 1-5-1-4

4 p.m.: 9-8-0-0

7 p.m.: 2-7-5-4

10 p.m.: 7-9-0-7

Thursday Pick Four

1 p.m.: 3-3-6-2

4 p.m.: 3-8-8-9

7 p.m.: 3-7-6-0

10 p.m.: 2-2-7-9

Wednesday Lucky Lines

4-7-9-15-20-23-26-31

Thursday Lucky Lines

1-7-9-15-19-23-25-32

Wednesday Win for Life

25-54-63-69