

Albert LePage, Eugene, Oregon . . . Chair Wahl, Commissioners . . .

Imagine today is your last day on earth . . . but . . . you don't know it.

Such was the case for an individual, someone I did not even know, but felt great sadness upon hearing of their death. So I begin today with a simple prayer for her . . . and a moment of silence.

Thank you . . . for the wind, and rain, and sun, and . . . pleasant weather.
Thank you for this moment, and . . . that we are . . . one.

Her name, I call her "Eugenia," a name meaning "well-born."

Imagine you are this young . . . and healthy . . . and apparently happy Eugenia. You've learned how to behave to be good, and you are doing nothing wrong, at least in your experience, in the short-time you've been alive. So, you do what you've always done, simply walk into a building to be with a human companion, because maybe she was raised as a pet.

So, doing what Eugenia has always done – being close to humans – becomes the "new normal," completely right, completely safe to her.

Responding to each unique individual and situation when animals encounter humans, in ways that get beyond typically "wild" or "abnormal" would therefore become appropriate.

That's what apparently happened the next day, when her brother, I call him "Eugene," showed up, was captured, assessed, and finally released back into the wild again. This appears to be responding, not reacting, and in a way that not only valued her brother's life, but all wildlife, and made a life-affirming decision and acted accordingly.

So, how can ODFW and the Oregon State Police respond in the future, not only for bobcat kittens, but for all wildlife, not only in how to live with them, but also act to protect them?

In a word, policy.

Developing a policy that's not just clear and simple, but intelligent and adaptive to any encounter between humans and wildlife, whether urban or rural. A policy needed now, and that cultivates an attitude of seeing and treating animals as unique individuals and living beings, not just another bobcat, a wild animal or "living thing."

And, in any situation where the decision is euthanasia, let policies be developed in the true meaning of that word, a "good death," in ways that are humane, that prevent pain and suffering, and that offer a peaceful end.

I'm here today not only to pray, but also to encourage ODFW to become visionary in all their wildlife policies . . . to think, speak and act with reverence for all life.

To listen is to love, and to listen also means responding to what one has heard. I am thankful for your listening ears today . . . but more importantly individuals, many human and all wildlife, will be grateful for your serious and immediate consideration – and action – in this regard.

And finally, when you develop these policies my heart will be filled with gratitude – with the deepest thankfulness I can feel, to the very core of my being.

Presented verbally on January 17, 2020 as an addition to the ODFW meeting agenda . . .

RE: Revising ODFW Policy from Human Encounters with Wildlife