

Deputy kills cougar in La Pine backyard

by Cheryl McDermott

A Deschutes County Sheriff's deputy was forced to shoot and kill a cougar in the backyard of a La Pine home Tuesday morning after it chased the family's dog and remained in a tree only 30-yards from the house.

According to a news release prepared by Sgt. Ronny Dozier, a deputy and Oregon State Police (OSP) troopers were called to the home of Robert Daugherty on Strawn Road about 9:45 a.m., January 22. Daugherty said one of his children let the family pets out in the back yard, and she was about to go outside to play when the cougar began chasing one of the dogs.

Daugherty was able to get the animals safely back inside the home, and called for help when the cougar remained on site, sitting in a tree.

Sheriff's Deputy Tim Leak conferred with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the Wildlife Division of the Federal Department of Agriculture to evaluate the situation and determine the best course of action, Dozier said.

Because the incident occurred in the daytime in a heavily populated area and the cougar was apparently acclimated to human presence, the potential danger was such that Deputy Leak was forced to shoot the animal with a .223 caliber department-issued patrol rifle. Dozier reported the animal didn't suffer, and was shot only once.

Sgt. Dozier said that the homeowner reacted appropriately by avoiding direct contact with the animal, remaining in a safe location, and calling 911.

OSP took the dead animal, estimated to be 7-feet long weighing over 100 pounds, to ODFW in Bend for scientific study and education purposes.

Deputy kills cougar in La Pine backyard by Cheryl McDermott