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# Opinion

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## OUR VIEW

# Election results widen urban-rural divide

We have spoken often in this space about the “urban-rural divide,” the differences, real and imagined, that separate people who live in cities and people who don’t.

Nothing illustrates this divide better, perhaps, than the recent election. Throughout the country, the Northwest included, rural areas generally voted for Donald Trump while urban areas generally voted for Hillary Clinton.

Trump has won, and urban voters are distraught. They have taken to the streets in Portland, Seattle and San Francisco. Why would rural voters in their own states reject their candidate?

They lack the perspective to understand.

The federal government holds more than half the land in the West. The economic and civic fabric of rural communities depends on trees cut from the



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

A Trump sign on the edge of a hay field at roads 5 and G Northwest near Ephrata, Wash. While rural voters may understand the disappointment of urban voters with the election results, they don’t understand the continuing protests.

forest, livestock grazed on the range and minerals gleaned from the mining claims.

The government once encouraged these activities in the service of the country’s growing population and in fulfillment of its manifest destiny. Now, policies have changed and that same government seems to be draining the lifeblood of the rural West.

Many in the rural West don’t think their government listens to them and that their concerns are given short shrift. They believe that their livelihoods, their very way of life, are in the hands of bureaucrats controlled by interests outside their communities.

Displaced workers in the Rust Belt and in the coal fields

have similar grievances. Life as they knew it changed for the worse, and they hold the federal government unresponsive, if not responsible.

Trump supporters, both rural and urban, voted their self interest, as they saw it. They do not fit the archetypes ascribed by pundits. They are in the main no more racist, misogynist, xenophobic or homophobic than the average Clinton voter. They want their families and communities to thrive, just as Clinton voters do.

For their part, rural voters understand urban disappointment with the election’s outcome, but not the continuing demonstrations against Trump’s election. They have accepted without protest the results of elections that broke against them.

The division is stark and deep.

As is often the case, we find

the words of Abraham Lincoln speak as powerfully to our present circumstances as they did 150 years ago.

Lincoln was the winner of the contentious 1860 election. He wasn’t even on the ballot in 10 states, and failed to win the majority of the popular vote. The country was on a path to a civil war that killed 500,000 Americans, certainly a greater division than created by our most recent contest.

He closed his first inaugural address with a plea for reconciliation that stands today.

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

We are more alike than we are different.

## OUR VIEW

# The rivers of Northwestern life

A federal judge in Portland has asked residents of the Pacific Northwest to comment on the impact of the Columbia and Snake rivers.

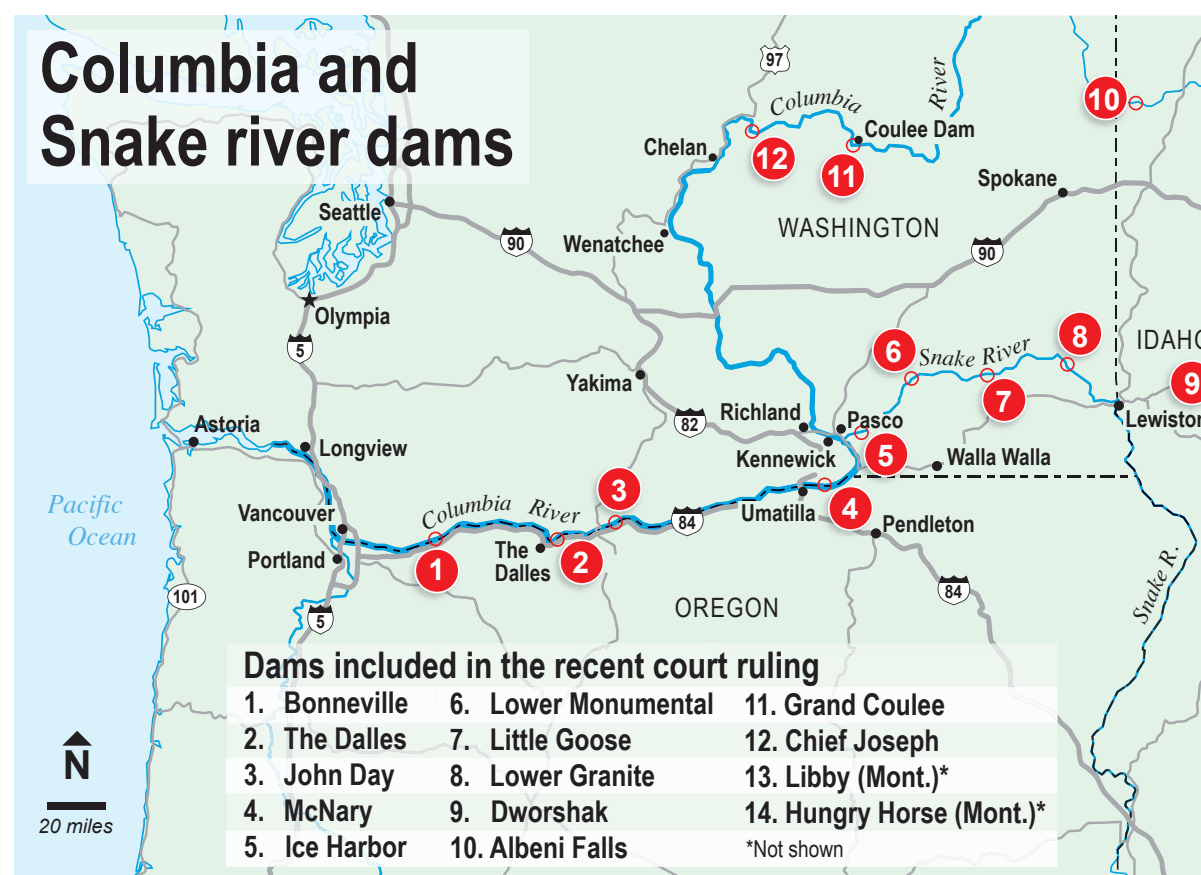
We’re glad he asked.

All he has to do is turn on a light in his office, have lunch and take a walk around Portland to understand the rivers’ direct contributions to him and millions of other residents of the Pacific Northwest.

Most of the electrical power he uses is generated by the dams on the rivers. About two-thirds of the region’s electricity comes from hydropower, according to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

Much of the food he eats was irrigated with water from the Columbia and Snake rivers and their tributaries. And those barges the judge sees plying the the Columbia and Snake rivers bring bulk grains such as wheat to downriver export terminals. From there much of the grain and other commodities are loaded onto oceangoing vessels for the trip to Japan, South Korea or elsewhere. About \$1 billion of grain is shipped overseas each year.

Flood control on one of the world’s mightiest river systems



Sources: U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

is a factor that is too often lost on critics. Just ask the people of Vanport — oh, wait, that city in North Portland no longer exists. Its 40,000 people were left homeless — 15 were killed — during a flood of the Columbia River in 1948.

A large portion of Portland and

most other riverside cities and towns wouldn’t exist if it were not for the dams that control the surging waters of the rivers.

Beyond the judge’s backyard, the economic impacts of the Columbia and Snake rivers are almost beyond numbers. Where once were only dryland farms

or swaths of prairie grass are now thriving farms, orchards and vineyards that grow billions of dollars of crops — crops that wouldn’t exist without irrigation water from the Columbia and Snake and their tributaries.

Beyond the economic impact, though, are the many social

impacts. A steady agricultural economy provides jobs and allows families to put down roots. Whether it’s a larger city such as Portland or smaller cities such as The Dalles, Hood River, Umatilla, the Tri-Cities, Twin Falls, Lewiston or Burley the rivers are a large part of the reason they even exist.

Some people want to measure the value of the Columbia and Snake rivers in fish. They believe there needs to be more fish and fewer dams. At least that’s what their fund-raising materials say.

Ironically, there are plenty of fish that spawn in the Columbia Basin, and there always will be. The dams on the rivers have been modified and managed in a way that allows for fish passage.

But the impact of the Columbia and Snake rivers on the Pacific Northwest — and the rest of the nation — isn’t about numbers, or about fish. It’s about the people who live and work in the region, all of whom rely on the rivers for their livelihoods. Without the dams the region would be a faint shadow of what it is today.

The Columbia and Snake rivers and their tributaries are in every sense the rivers of Northwestern life.

## Readers’ views

### County should have defended Hammonds

Sometimes I think we need to remind ourselves of some of the history of the Hammond issue and how it came about.

Around 50 years ago, the Hammonds sold out in California and bought a ranch in Diamond, Ore., which had extensive real estate on Steens Mountain.

They now also own a ranch right over the fence from the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. History proves that anyone who has property next door to the federal government is in danger of having it taken away.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the feds took 3,000 acres north of Sod House by condemnation. During the flood a few of the ranchers let some of their land go to the refuge.

Not too long back, a place on the south end became refuge property.

In the Hammonds’ case they don’t have a willing seller, so the strategy was to paint as black a picture of the family as they could to get the public on their side. When Dwight and Steven Hammond set a backfire to protect their property, it was perfect to call them arsonists and terrorists. The fire wound up burning around

130 acres of federal sagebrush.

In Harney County, 130 acres is like a pinhead in the ocean. Any property owner in the county would have done the same thing. In the Hammond case, it was 5 years in federal prison and a civil damage case for \$1.3 million. Somewhere the government told them that if they went broke they would have to sell to the refuge.

Remember, Harney County is 75 percent federal land and 25 percent private, so if they somehow are allowed to acquire the Hammonds’ property, that is a huge amount of land taken off the tax rolls because the federal government doesn’t pay taxes.

Our neighbors in Malheur County stand to lose 2.5 million acres taken off the tax rolls. We can only imagine what that would do to the county budget.

To me, this travesty will not pass the smell test because four years ago the Miller Homestead fire burned through the Frenchglen country and the BLM backfires burned 10 times the 130 acres of private ground plus many cattle. The silence is deafening on that issue.

I’ve known the Hammonds for over 50 years and they are great

neighbors, good friends, generous, hard-working, humble people and certainly not criminals of any kind.

If we had county leaders who understood the Constitution, they could have defended the Hammonds against the overreach of the federal government. The 11th Article of the Bill of Rights in the Oregon Constitution says: “In all criminal prosecution, the accused shall have the right to public trial by an impartial jury in the county in which the offense shall have been committed.”

Article 12 says: “No person shall be put in jeopardy twice for the same offense, nor be compelled to in any criminal prosecution to testify against himself.”

I believe if you were a member of the county court or the sheriff, you could have defended the Hammonds on these issues alone and asked the feds where in the Constitution does it give you the right to take a citizen out of our county to a biased court and a biased judge who you know will give a biased verdict.

Had they done this and truly defended the Hammond family, the Bundy issue and the occupation would have been a non-issue.

All the Bundys wanted to do was support the Hammonds and educate

us on our constitutional rights as citizens, and they did that very well.

I truly believe if we had stuck to these issues instead of barricading the courthouse, frightening the townspeople, calling in the FBI and forbidding open meetings, LaVoy Finicum’s blood would not have been shed. All of our county fathers have to accept some responsibility for this shedding of innocent blood.

Jerry Miller  
Crane, Ore.

### County opposes national monument

We are writing this letter in opposition to the proposed expansion of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM).

Taking more private land away from Klamath County and off our tax rolls will be detrimental to the livelihood of our county and its citizens. We are also very concerned that the additional “non-management protections” placed on monument land would greatly increase the risk of catastrophic damage from wildfire.

Klamath County continues to struggle to fund basic services, due in part to the large amounts of feder-

al lands that are currently within our county. These lands are exempt from important taxation that funds vital services for our local government.

Of the 53,100 acres in the proposal, 50,900 of those acres are O&C Lands with approximately 19,000 of those O&C acres being in Klamath County. Including O&C Lands in the proposed monument expansion goes against the very purpose of the O&C Act, “...to sustained timber yield production to generate revenue for the O&C Counties...”

The proposed expansion would also remove private lands that are currently used for grazing cattle and ranching. Both are large industries in Klamath County that are critical to our economic success.

Again, we oppose the expansion of the CSNM that would take more private lands off the tax rolls putting them under additional “protections” that will reduce Klamath County’s economic success and complicate adequate fire prevention.

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