

O P I N I O N

Editorial...

Everybody wins on Whychus Creek

Something remarkable has happened on Whychus Creek over the past two decades.

A stream that once ran dry in the summer now flows through Sisters even in the midst of drought. And this was done without harming farmers who depend on its waters for irrigation. In fact, they are getting more water than they might have expected under current conditions. And habitat for fish and wildlife is better than it has been since perhaps the early 1960s.

Diversion dams have been removed and those who diverted the water have benefitted from improved, more efficient irrigation systems. And now water from the creek is generating electrical power that goes into the local system.

This kind of win-win-win outcome doesn't just happen. It required bringing together a host of government agencies, non-profits, and private citizens. The agencies, organizations and individuals who all came to the table to restore Whychus Creek might ordinarily be expected to be at odds. But through many years of hammering out agreements that met a variety of needs, everyone could step away from the table with something they wanted — more water in the creek; more water on farms; habitat restoration and power generation.

The piping of miles of Three Sisters Irrigation District canals was not without controversy. Many people were reluctant to see open canals that had become defacto streams — with the attendant wildlife and aesthetic benefits — decommissioned. And some felt that the piping project was being imposed in a heavy-handed manner. There were some clashes that bore out the truth of the old saw that “whiskey’s for drinking; water is for fighting over.”

But piping was the right thing to do. For everybody. As the Central Oregon region faces continued drought, farmers are getting water who wouldn't be if the old open ditches had not been piped. And Whychus Creek is healthier than it has been in decades. Other irrigation districts across the state are looking to TSID to see how it's done. A revolution in irrigation started right her in Sisters Country.

TSID Manager Marc Thalacker and the board can be justly proud of their vision and efforts to make that happen.

And the rest of us can take heart from the example. Sometimes, with patience, persistence and vision, everybody gets a win.

Jim Cornelius, News Editor

Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

As an attorney I found Roger Detweiler's more narrow interpretation of the Second Amendment limiting the right to bear arms to that of being within a militia both a familiar and reasonable one.

However, Oregonians should not forget such an argument is merely academic for them. Article I, Section 27, of the Oregon Constitution states: “The people shall have

the right to bear arms for the defense OF THEMSELVES...” (emphasis added).

In Oregon, the Constitutional right to own firearms is much broader than it is in the U.S. Constitution. That being said, it in no way restricts reasonable regulation such as background checks or magazine capacity limits.

See **LETTERS** on page 16

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Sunny 66/33	Sunny 59/27	Sunny 62/31	Mostly sunny 65/32	Partly sunny 61/35	Mostly cloudy 61/na

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Rachel Marsden

American Voices

PARIS — One of the most common questions that I'm asked these days is whether U.S. President Barack Obama is a brilliant bamboozler or just a bumbler. Some people are utterly convinced that the chaos in the Middle East was actually a brilliant ploy by Obama to encourage mayhem in pursuit of victorious ends.

How can one tell if this is really the case? Well, let's hear from Obama himself.

“When I came into office, Ukraine was governed by a corrupt ruler who was a stooge of Mr. Putin,” Obama said in an interview that aired recently on the CBS show “60 Minutes.” “Syria was Russia's only ally in the region. And today, rather than being able to count on their support and maintain the base they had in Syria, which they've had for a long time, Mr. Putin now is devoting his own troops, his own military, just to barely hold together by a thread his sole ally.”

All right, so we're supposed to believe that Obama is a strategic genius and that everything is unfolding according to plan. Except that it's possible to confuse the heck out of your adversary and still not beat him.

It would be easier to swallow Obama's advocacy of his own brilliance if Europe and the West weren't going to be supporting Ukraine for the foreseeable future, with many of the anticipated business gains for the West yet to materialize. Worse, Ukraine has now lost its resource-rich region of Crimea to Russia as a result of the shake-up.

In the Middle East, Russia has positioned itself as the can-do nation capable of cleaning up America's mess, which all started with U.S. support for the so-called “Syrian rebels” — which Obama admits in the same interview to being an experiment gone wrong.

Legendary military strategist Carl von Clausewitz analyzed the Napoleonic Wars in the early 19th century and developed theories on the use of deliberate tactical confusion in warfare. Such strategy can also be practiced inadvertently by incompetents, with

unfortunate results. One can only tell the difference in retrospect.

Members of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's administration were expert practitioners of controlled chaos. The U.S. government discreetly facilitated the sale of weapons to Iran to secure the release of American hostages held in Iran, and used money from the weapons sales to fund the anti-communist Contras in Nicaragua. The Reagan administration also quietly backed the local Islamic fighters against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

Following the bouncing ball wasn't easy with Reagan. His objective was the defeat of communism worldwide, and it was fundamentally achieved.

Several French presidents have also been quintessential practitioners of tactical fog of war. Socialist President Francois Mitterrand had everyone believing that he was a communist sympathizer — until he did a volte-face toward a Reaganesque economic plan while also dropping a list of communist spies into Reagan's lap. Also under Mitterrand, while overtly supporting Britain during the Falklands War, a French team working for Dassault — “a company 51 percent owned by the French government” — was also working for Argentina, according to the BBC. Intelligence collection and influence behind enemy lines, or hedging bets on the outcome of a conflict? Either way, it worked out for France.

Next came French President Jacques Chirac, who was so successful at practicing tactical confusion that some people probably believed this center-right leader was a leftist. While reducing nuclear weapons, he ramped up nuclear testing in French Polynesia.

History has ultimately judged all of these leaders' strategies. So regardless of how the White House may try to spin recent events, it's still too early to tell whether Obama is a Machiavellian fog machine or just suffering from brain fog.

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