

**LETTERS**

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To the Editor:

Dumb and Dumber. That could be the title for the story about the “watchdog group’s” plan to handle the dead ponderosa pine snafu along the Highway 20 corridor west of Sisters. (“*Watchdog group seeks answers on tree-killing*,” *The Nugget*, June 13, page 1.)

DUMB. ODOT’s use of the herbicide Perspective to kill brush around trees between 2013 and 2015. This is after the manufacture’s label warned users from 2012 onwards that the chemical would damage ponderosa pine trees. Totally inexcusable and just plain DUMB.

DUMBER. The Central Oregon Land Watch suggestion that the trees be topped and left standing. Over a thousand dead poles, losing their bark and turning gray.

Many would exceed one hundred feet, and they will eventually fall either onto the highway — or pile up on the forest floor as fuel for a fire, most likely human-caused, along that heavily traveled road.

This is an economic waste of perfectly good lumber, and a loss of revenue in addition the cost of \$500,000 that COLW estimates topping would run.

Their suggestion for wildlife habitat is absurd. Several years ago the USFS blasted the tops out of a few ponderosas along Highway 20, near the entrance of Black Butte Ranch, as a test to see if eagles and osprey would nest. It didn’t work. The generally accepted reason was that there was too much noise and commotion caused by the highway.

What an unsightly mess. Welcome to Sisters, everyone! The scenery gets better when you get to the roundabout!

Pete Kershaw



To the Editor:

In the June 13 *Nugget*, Steve Nugent, guest columnist, leads off his column stating Jeff Mackey in June 6 Letter to Editor “supported Greg Walden for trying to repeal Obamacare.” I read the letter and it didn’t say anything about repeal. Steve then goes on to use the platform he’s given for worn-out Trump-hating rhetoric drummed into those that watch FAKE news like CNN. When will people get over the fact that Hillary lost the election?

I had to chuckle when Steve said, “Rhetoric from Trump has made some of the population untrusting of legitimate news sources and trusting of political propaganda from dubious sources.” Would that dubious source be FOX News; most watched cable news network for 16 years straight? Give it a try, Steve.

In one other gem Steve stated: “Trump himself uses unsecured phones for official communication. If Hillary did this, she would be in jail.” This would be hilarious if not a serious matter. She should already be in jail for her storage of top-secret information on an unsecured server. It’s inconceivable to imagine a single person that has dealt with classified material avoiding prison time for what she did. People are free to read U.S. Code 1924, 18 U.S. Code 2071(b), 18 U.S. Code 641, 18 U.S. Code 1505, and 18 U.S. Code 1519 among others to form their own conclusion whether or not Hillary was treated just like “regular people.”

I would have to say however that the best part of the column was at the ending where it states: “Opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the writer and are not necessarily shared by the Editor or *The Nugget Newspaper*.”

Pat Bowe



To the Editor:

The issue of short-term rentals is a divisive one in this community. Some are concerned about the prevalence of rentals, the potential for noisy tenants

and the possible impact on neighborhood character.

Short-term rentals also represent a critical income stream for some Sisters property owners, and provide a valuable service in a tourism-dependent economy that is currently stretched to accommodate visitors during major events and in peak season. Restricting the use of property as a short-term rental also infringes on the private property rights of homeowners, and could negatively impact prices for homes that derive some value from a short-term rental permit.

These two perspectives on the same issue may be divergent, but surely there is a compromise?

Fortunately, policy changes have been introduced that take into account the concerns on both sides of the issue.

At a May 23 workshop, Sisters City Councilors reviewed draft changes to the City’s municipal code that would place an eight-percent cap on short-term rentals in the city. This solution would also implement a “use-it-or-lose-it” system in regards to the transferability of operators’ licenses. Homeowners with a short-term rental operator’s license could transfer the license to a buyer if he or she applies within 60 days of closing, given the eight percent cap has not been reached.

A system of checks and balances to regulate short-term rentals — combined with a provision to help protect homeowners’ investments — seems pretty fair.

After months of hashing out the issue, the Sisters City Council will vote June 27 on whether or not to approve the proposed changes to the City’s short-term rental regulations. Councilors should approve this most recent solution. A “yes” vote is a vote for a more balanced set of rules that takes into consideration the concerns on both sides.

Sandy Goodsell

Board Member, Central Oregon Association of Realtors

Brent Landels

Chair, Government Affairs Committee, Central Oregon Association of Realtors

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