

Ban on redwoods must be permanent

It doesn't happen very often, but sometimes public opinion can sway elected officials' opinions and even make them change their minds.

Almost three weeks ago, many Oregonians were horrified to learn the last remaining redwood trees in the state were to be cut down. The Grapevine, a 147-acre parcel of old growth redwood in the Chetco Ranger District, was due to be sold to loggers.

Redwoods once ranged from central California all the way up to Oregon. Most of the California trees remain, primarily through the work of private organizations, but of all the redwoods that were once in Oregon, only four percent remain today.

The Oregon redwoods would have been harvested under a "compromise" bill approved by last year's U.S. Congress. The legislation set a timber sale level of 310 million board feet for this year. That level couldn't have been reached without cutting down the Oregon redwoods.

But happily, that isn't going to happen — at least not in the near future. After the decision was announced, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore), Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore) and large numbers of private citizens pressured Siskiyou National Forest Supervisor Ron McCormick to reverse his decision.

None of the people who convinced McCormick to change his mind sees this as a permanent solution. The moratorium is not permanent, even though the immediate danger to the redwoods is over.

DeFazio is the real hero of this victory. He is, arguably, the most environmentally conscious representative in Congress today. He worked hard to protect old growth stands throughout the state, and his lobbying for the redwoods was unsurpassed.

Even Hatfield tried to protect the redwoods, though his support of the redwoods wasn't as vigorous as DeFazio's. But it was support nonetheless. Hatfield has been accused in recent months of being insensitive to environmental issues, and was heavily criticized by his constituents. Hopefully, this means a change in his attitude.

Although this is a win for environmentalists, it is not a total victory. To quote an old cliché, they won a battle but the war is still up for grabs.

Lawmakers and forestry officials should listen to the public and strive to make the ban on old growth redwood logging permanent. The moratorium can be lifted at any time, and if that happens, opponents will face another fight just like the one last week.

Until a permanent solution to the old growth question is found, Oregonians will face battles on every scrap of timberland the loggers want to cut down. It's high time for it to stop.



BPA should listen to residents' concerns

It happens every so often. Instead of a major company doing what it wants to do, public outcry is so great the company has to sit and listen.

The BPA says it needs to build a 500,000-volt power line from its substation in Goshen to the Lane substation outside west Eugene. If built straight through, the line and its 130-foot towers would cut across the city's south hills and the property of the area's residents.

The Portland-based utility has four routes in mind for the towers. The favored A route follows the existing 230,000-volt line; it is preferred by the company because land already has been cleared, and it is the shortest route to the Lane substation. Other routes, B, C and D, give the city a wider berth, skirting farther and farther south behind Spencer Butte. Route D, the line that would cut farthest south, would cost \$3.8 million more than the A route, and would require land clearing.

Area residents are concerned about a number of possible side effects from the proposed power lines. Studies have linked the electromagnetic fields generated by power lines of this size to leukemia and memory loss. Data from the studies are inconclusive so far. Nonetheless, having a potential carcinogen in your backyard would be unsettling.

Which brings us to the next concern of

South Hills residents: the economic impact of the lines. They say the specter of the towers weaving through their land will drive down the property value to prospective buyers. Residents also are concerned about the towers and lines detracting from Eugene's distinctive southern skyline.

The residents, many of whom belong to Citizens for Responsible Power Routing, say none of the four routes is acceptable, and that the BPA needs to step back and listen to their health and economic concerns before drawing up another plan. As it is, many do not believe the new towers would be necessary for the Eugene area. As it is, they are intended to provide a more reliable link in the chain between a large station in Salem and Southern Oregon.

The BPA will hear public testimony on the routes during meetings Feb. 21 and 28. This is commendable; one might expect the stance of a powerful utility to be, "This is where we intend to put the lines, tough luck." But the BPA has kept an open mind, and said it will consider an alternative route if one is suggested.

The concerns of South Hills residents are valid enough to be the subject of scientific study. Hopefully, at the upcoming forum sessions the BPA will agree and keep its promise to listen to the concerns of South Hills residents and find an alternative plan for its potentially dangerous electricity.

Letters

Cheap shots

I knew that Tim Hughes would receive a lot of flak for his letter "On sucking" (ODE, Jan. 15), but I didn't realize the responses I would hear and read in the paper would be so extreme.

Kent Jackson wrote that Hughes has put his opinion "where it does and does not belong" (ODE, Jan. 17). That's funny, because I always thought the University newspaper was a place where anyone's opinion would be appropriate, but I guess Jackson knows a lot more about journalism than I do.

I guess Hughes needs to speak his opinion against discrimination a little louder if the only conclusion Jackson can come to is that "Hughes won't rest until everyone ... turns gay or lesbian."

I really don't need to comment on the last paragraph of Phil Zuckerman's letter (ODE,

Jan. 18) as cheap shots like these usually say more about the person stating them than the person they are directed at.

I do agree that very few people, if any, use the term "suck" as a derogatory statement against gays. But why is it so farfetched that the term "you suck" could have originally been a put-down against homosexuals? The next question is why is it so farfetched for a homosexual to possibly be offended?

What if "you suck" had originally been a racist term, would there have been so much complaining about the minority individual who pointed it out? I doubt it.

Stephen Thomas
Fine and Applied Arts

Real solutions

I read with interest the Jan. 17 article about the BPA high-

voltage power line routing proposal. The South Hills residents are justified in their concerns about the health and aesthetic effects of high-voltage power lines.

The stage seems to be set for routing the new power lines in the rural areas. After all, as Lane County Commissioner Jerry Rust indicated, the urban demand for power in the Eugene area requires BPA to route the lines somewhere.

Most people are not, perhaps, aware that toxic herbicides are regularly sprayed all along power line routes, migrating into groundwater and watersheds, and poisoning native vegetation and wildlife; that a power line route amounts to a 20-or-so-foot wide clearcut swath that marches across the landscape for miles. Is this what we want for our countryside and wildlands?

Instead of limiting the question to "Where do we put the new, bigger power lines," why

not ask the BPA how many private or community-sized alternative power generators (solar, wind, water, geothermal, methane, etc.) could be constructed with the millions of dollars they now plan to spend on new power lines?

As our planet's ecological crisis becomes clearer, we must look for real solutions to our problems. More and wider roads, more deforestation and bigger, more ecologically-harmful power lines are not the answer to a healthy, sustainable future for our species. It is time we take a serious look at real, workable alternatives and ask ourselves (and our elected officials) "why not?"

Karen Wood
Eugene

Frivolous

Is everyone tired of stone-washed jeans yet? Seen enough fake wear-and-tear? I think so, for some very serious reasons. I urge you to vow never to buy a

pair of stone-washed anything ever again, and to urge everyone you know to boycott stone-washed fashion as well.

Why? The reason is far away, but is real nonetheless. In northern New Mexico, in a remote and beautiful mountain range sacred to the Pueblo Indians, federal forest lands are being sold, clearcut and strip-mined to get the stone used in the stone-washing of jeans. The area being gouged is as beautiful as any land you have ever seen, and its importance to the Pueblo Indians cannot be underestimated.

Oregonians can help foster New Mexico Native American religious freedom and environmental protection by boycotting stone-washed clothing starting today. Tell your friends far and wide to join you, and together we can stop the frivolous destruction of the Jemez Mountains.

Tom Rife
Graduate Student