

MY VOICE

Collaboration is necessary for forest management

The decision by two groups to withdraw from the Northern Blues Forest Collaborative is extremely unfortunate. It is imperative that stakeholders with all perspectives work together to address the challenging issues facing our national forests and communities.

The Northern Blues Forest Collaborative was originally developed to foster tough conversations and relationships between groups representing diverse per-



LINDSAY WARNESS
NBFC FOUNDER

spectives and values relevant to public land management. The goal was to develop projects

that would help restore and steward the forest ecosystem and sustain social and economic benefits to local communities. Regrettably, they objected to a simple briefing from the U.S. Forest Service exploring the continued use of the 21-inch screen under current forest conditions, and anticipated future climate effects. That's not collaboration — that's a "my way or the highway" type of attitude.

To be clear, the collaborative agreed only to discuss science behind the "21-inch rule," also known as the "Eastside Screens." There has been no proposed action from the Forest Service, nor has the collaborative agreed to anything other than a discussion. Apparently, this potential discussion prompted these two groups to "pick up the ball and go home" rather than to listen, talk and work with others who have different views.

Today the 21-inch rule restricts opportunities for science-based forest restoration across at-risk forested landscapes. Fast-growing grand fir have proliferated in the absence of fire, and are driving a shift from historically open forests in the northern blues dominated by fire-resilient species like ponderosa pine, western larch and Douglas fir, to densely stocked, closed forests.

It's worth discussing solutions that give land managers more flexibility and give collaboratives more space to work together to reduce the risks of wildfires, insects and disease on national forests. These natural disturbances are occurring at unprecedented size, severity and frequency — and this trend is projected to accelerate under most climate models.

The 21-inch rule imposed decades ago was originally only an 18-month amendment to the forest plan. The one-size-fits-all solution does not reflect the conditions on the forests in 2020, which are at a high risk for uncharacteristic wildfires that drastically affect the ecosystems and local communities.

Rather than allowing our forests to burn and fill our air with unhealthy smoke, thinning overstocked stands reduces competition for sunlight and water and enables trees to grow older and larger. This type of forest management also improves and enhances wildlife habitat for species that depend on diverse forest types.

Collaboratives do not succeed if they do not work toward the three legs of collaboration: ecological, economic and social. In having the nuanced discussions about these goals, the collaborative must be able to use all the tools available to meet the restoration needs of the forests and communities. Active forest management is one tool to address these issues, even if there are disagreements on where, when and how broadly these tools should be used.

In today's world, working and talking together to achieve common goals is as important as it has ever been. Collaboratives are where solutions are found, and while they may be uncomfortable for multiple parties, it is imperative that we continue the spirit of working together rather than against each other.

About the Author

Lindsay Warness works in the wood products industry and is a former member and founder of the Northern Blues Forest Collaborative.



Your views

Civility key to society; we must all work together

Western Europeans flocked to the country we now call the United States of America for several reasons: two of which were to escape persecution (i.e., someone telling them what they should or shouldn't do and believe), and to exploit the vast natural resources. In order to protect and support themselves they developed civil societies with rules and guidelines of acceptable behavior. (It should be mentioned that there were already indigenous civil societies here existing for the same reason.) Our rules and guidelines became the Constitution of the United States of America.

As the population grew, people who felt persecuted in their new environment, or who simply didn't like being held to the rules of the current civil society, simply moved over the next hill and created their own rules and guidelines and exploited untapped natural resources. Eventually, however, more seekers of personal and financial freedom showed up and someone had to adapt or find a new hill to cross over.

Well, friends, we've run out of hills. Unless you live totally off the grid in some secret canyon in the wilds of Idaho or Alaska, or Manhattan, you eventually must have contact with a civil society that has certain expectations of your behavior for the protection and support of the greater population. The Constitution

wasn't written by hill-crossers — it was written by those who stayed and fought and died to make the country work for the society in which they chose to live.

We Americans have historically romanticized hill-crossers, but now they just seem desperate and sad. We are all on the beach now, and we have to work together to survive as a civil society.

H. J. Whitmore
Summerville

Don't believe it just because an authority figure says it is so

It is doubtful that another Eastern Oregon University faculty member will be lured into a mud-wrestling debate with professor Tom Herrmann's unethical comment published on the opinion page of the July 9 Observer.

Apparently Dr. Herrmann has used his academic credentials to attest to the veracity of his political or religious views, which is a no-no in academic circles.

I graduated from EOU twice, two different degrees, although not with a prestigious PhD. However, I took physics courses in the early 1960s from Ralph Badgley, who would never have published such a comment. I also knew physicists professors Paul Stephas and David Gilbert, who went on to become president of EOU.

Tom Herrmann has used a tauto-

logical argument with specious data in attempting to justify his comments. I found an article where he may have found the 43% he quotes. The article I found had a range of 60-43%; perhaps Herrmann chose the lowest figure to bolster his opinion. Currently, President Donald Trump's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention rates the COVID-19 death rate at .26% while pandemic experts report the death rate being 50 times higher than that of the flu.

Herrmann is a relative youngster to me. I'm 77. I voted for Republican Govs. Mark Hatfield and Tom McCall, who would find it hard to accept the current beliefs of the Republican Party. I also voted for Independent Sen. Wayne Morris, who began as a Republican and is arguably the most famous Oregon senator.

I would encourage all of your readers to check out YouTube for Trump's death clock in Times Square, which shows approximately half of the COVID-19 deaths could have been avoided if his administration had responded appropriately to the pandemic.

I, for one, am not willing to die for Herrmann's opinion.

One thing is obvious, Trump is not taking hydroxychloroquine; if he had, he'd be dead by now.

I urge everyone to develop some street smarts to avoid falling for egregious propaganda.

Stuart Croghan
La Grande

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