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# Opinion

## Editorial Board

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## OUR VIEW

# Teen seeks to bridge rural-urban divide

One of the wedges that serves to create the rural-urban divide is the general lack of knowledge about agriculture common in the city.

Even in rural areas, most Americans are two or more generations removed from the farm. Our collective memory on the subject is both woefully outdated and uninformed.

Ag interest groups have been asking for years how they can bridge that information gap. It's a conundrum.

Not to Anna Peterson, 17, an FFA member at Skyview High School in Nampa, Idaho. If it's a question of education, she reasons, why not teach it in school?

Peterson will propose a bill during the 2018 Idaho legislative session that would mandate high school students to complete at least two agriculture education classes as a requirement to graduate. As part of her effort she's already emailed every member of the Idaho Legislature to brief them on the plan.

Now, the naysayers will quickly point out all the predictable obstacles for such a plan ever being instituted, even in a state where so many legislators are farmers or ranchers. It would be expensive and school budgets are already stretched thin. The school day is too short to cover all the material already required.

Who would set the curriculum? That could mean the difference between education and indoctrination.

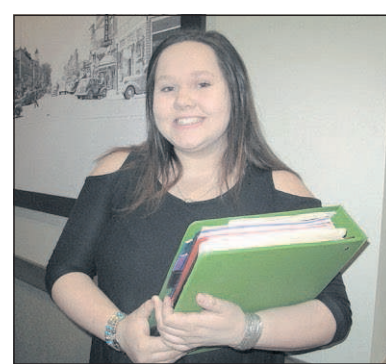
But just because it wouldn't be

easy doesn't mean it's not a good idea. It's a great idea.

And whether or not Peterson's proposal ever gets a hearing she still deserves a huge tip of the hat.

As we said, farm groups across the country have been asking how to bridge the rural-urban divide for years. Peterson considered the question, proposed an answer and has taken it upon herself to petition the Idaho Legislature to make that proposal a reality.

We could all use that kind of passion.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Anna Peterson, a high school senior in Nampa, Idaho, has proposed that high school students be required to complete at least two agriculture education classes to graduate.

## OUR VIEW

# A different look at ranchers' attitude toward wolves

Steve Pedery, conservation director for the Portland-based group Oregon Wild, told Capital Press last week that a "shoot, shovel and shut up" attitude toward wolves has taken hold in rural Oregon.

We understand why wolf advocates may feel a shifting of the tide. We see the same facts but have a different interpretation.

This year Oregon wildlife officials sanctioned the killing of five wolves because of depredation. This would have been unthinkable in earlier years of wolf management. Another was accidentally poisoned and a hunter shot a female wolf he said was threatening him. A couple have been found shot dead in apparent poaching incidents.

We don't think attitudes in

ranching country toward wolves have changed all that much since the predators migrated into the Northwest and their numbers multiplied.

Ranchers were wary from the get-go. Their frustration has understandably grown as they've sustained increased losses from depredation and increased costs trying to prevent it.

"Shoot, shovel and shut up" has long been a common refrain wherever ranchers gather to talk about wolves. But at best it's a wishful boast, not an operational wolf control strategy for even the most radical opponents.

"Smoke a pack a day" is a catchy slogan on a bumper sticker, but nothing more.

The gallows humor comes from being on the front line where wolf conservation meets wolf depredation.

Ranchers have an economic interest in protecting their herd from wolves and other predators. They have skin in the game where wolf activists do not.

A local shop owner robbed of \$1,200 worth of merchandise is seen in town as a victim while a rancher robbed by wolves of a \$1,200 animal is seen as a complainer.

Wolves are here to stay. A couple of poachings and some ODFW-sanctioned killings don't endanger them. Neither will giving ranchers realistic options to control wolves that are actively attacking their herds.



Steve Tool/EO Media Group

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist Pat Matthews, left, uses shears on the carcass of a Sept. 29 wolf depredation on private land southeast of Joseph, Ore. Cowboys Wyatt Warnock, center, and Clancy Warnock look on.

# Feds turn flood insurance into a tool for land grabs

By DAMIEN SCHIFF  
For the Capital Press

Guest  
comment  
Damien Schiff



When zoning and planning decisions are made for your community, which level of government should make the call?

Traditionally, land use is a local and regional responsibility — for good reason. We want a meaningful say in policies that will shape our communities, and that means vesting them with officials closest to the people — city, county and state governments.

Not insignificantly, this tradition is consistent with the Constitution, which grants the federal government only limited powers and excludes it from intruding on concerns that are primarily local.

However, local control is under attack right now in Oregon — by a federal environmental bureaucracy engaged in aggressive empire building. The National Marine Fisheries Service — known as NMFS — is tasked with regulating for federally protected migrating fish. But it is moving beyond that mission and turning itself into a super zoning board for much of the state.

NMFS has assumed power over a program far outside its proper area of oversight — the federal flood insurance program — and is manipulating this program as a tool for a federal takeover of land use.

By law, federal flood insurance is available to communities that are located in floodplains if they develop their own land use policies to limit harms from flooding. Scores of Oregon communities depend on the insurance to help foster responsible economic development.

But access to the program in Oregon now comes with a big asterisk. NMFS is insisting that communities adopt federally dictated land use restrictions in order to be eligible for coverage.

NMFS says the restrictions are meant to help endangered species like salmon and steelhead — and, indeed, it issued them after environmental groups won a lawsuit calling for a review of how flood insurance affects those species.

Here's the problem with that rationale: As a matter of law, neither the flood insurance program nor FEMA, which administers it, has any impact on species whatsoever, because neither has power over land use.

As Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio put it in a letter protesting the new federal land use regime: "FEMA is not a land use regulatory agency and has no authority over privately funded development on private lands by private developers."

What NMFS has done is unilaterally transform the very essence of the flood insurance program — from an insurance provider for one

type of natural disaster into an instrument for federal zoning in the name of species protection. As an unelected bureaucracy, NMFS has no authority to change the program's congressionally enacted mission, or use it as a means of issuing land use commands to local governments.

The restrictions that NMFS is imposing can be severe — creating a potential chilling effect on new economic activity in targeted areas. Some of these areas are precisely where new economic activity is needed most.

Nearly all of downtown Coos Bay, for example, is covered. This has imperiled one of the most promising redevelopment projects in years — the refurbishing of an old mill facility that was intended to provide a site for 16 businesses.

In an editorial last year, the Eugene Register-Guard noted that the restrictions had the potential to "place floodplains in 271 communities off-limits to development, agriculture and forestry." Affected regions, the paper wrote, would include not just significant municipal areas, but "swaths of farm and forest land."

Oregon communities have already enacted some of the most demanding land use regulations in the country, designed to protect the environment while allowing responsible economic development. The heavy-handed intrusion by NMFS puts those carefully considered policies at risk.

The federal bureaucrats' aim is "to prohibit redevelopment in large areas of Oregon, overriding our own land use laws," as Rep. DeFazio complained last year in a meeting with planners from Coos Bay and Springfield. "They can't do that."

So they can't. Because NMFS' usurpation is not just destructive but clearly unlawful, the City of Coos Bay recently challenged it with a federal lawsuit. Represented free of charge by Pacific Legal Foundation, the city is fighting to reclaim its own decision-making and to protect communities throughout the state from this unjustified federal assault.

Success in this lawsuit will also reverberate nationwide, by deterring NMFS from trying the same scheme elsewhere, in other areas where the flood insurance program operates.

The courts must make it clear to all federal bureaucracies that they may not coerce local communities into surrendering their rightful powers of self-government.

Damien Schiff is a senior attorney with Pacific Legal Foundation.

## Readers' views

### Wolf shooting should be further investigated

The wolf shot and killed near Starkey Experimental Station Nov. 2 deserved a thorough investigation before Union County's district attorney gave the story any credence.

The hunter's claim of self defense goes against all science regarding wolf behavior in

North America.

These facts should have triggered serious skepticism and a thorough investigation before conclusions were drawn.

Giving this hunter what appears to be a "pass" sends the wrong message to everyone.

Little Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs are wrong.

Now that wolves are being given a second chance around the West there is a need to educate the pub-

lic, not perpetuate false fears.

The greatest danger to human safety during hunting season is hunters themselves. There are numerous incidents annually of hunters killing or injuring themselves or innocent bystanders.

The Starkey wolf was as innocent as the woman in Maine shot and killed Nov. 3 by a hunter while walking on her own property.

The hunter's story about

being attacked by a wolf has got to be rescinded and replaced with factual, scientific information about wolf and human interactions.

In nature, wolves do not attack humans.

The wolf situation is rough enough with rancher issues about predation. This shooting must be re-addressed to bring some truth and justice to this tragic killing.

Mary McCracken  
La Grande, Ore.