

Truth, shrouded in shadows and half truths

Damon Fouts
News Co-Editor

You'd think it would be a no-brainer deciding whether Opal Creek -- a hotbed of political contention between environmental groups, timber interests, local communities and political entities for the last two decades -- should be a protected wilderness area. It should.

But nothing quite adds up when it comes to this politically beleaguered slice of wilderness 25 miles east of Salem, home of some of the oldest Douglas Fir in Oregon.

Consider this statement in a Jan. 25, 1995 issue of the Oregonian:

Oddly, most everyone wants the place protected. The timber industry has no desire to log within its

confines. But it does want the land to be exempted from federal forest policy... No one can agree on what to do. Egos, intractable positions and politics have held the area in flux for years.

Indeed. Contending players can't even agree on what is and isn't Opal Creek. Estimates of the area's acreage vary from 21,000 to 35,000.

"I question why you should have a special bill for that special group of people," said Tom Hiron, the former head of the timber industry's Oregon Lands Coalition, early last year of legislation protecting Opal Creek.

I think this comes under the category of "intractable position." Tom never met a wilderness protection bill he liked and he's not

It starts with an assault-weapons ban, and ends with the confiscation of your dead grandfather's old Winchester -- like the one Jimmy Stewart chased down in the movie of the same name.

In Hiron's view, the foot's been in the door for years when it comes to wilderness protection. And he probably doesn't want Opal Creek slipping

an ankle in. That's why it must sting that Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore. -- usually a friend of the timber folks -- has been a staunch supporter for years of protecting Opal Creek. Hatfield's support is another

oddy that doesn't add up, although George Atiyeh, former chairman of the pro-wilderness protection group Friends of Opal Creek, may have the senator's number. He said prophetically last year that Hatfield's support of Opal Creek was camouflaged to hide his true support of timber interests. And that's what the senator's legislative behavior indicated the last two weeks of March.

Before getting into that though, don't be too impressed by Atiyeh's prophetic abilities. If he was that good, he would have anticipated that his "inadvertent" logging of timber from Opal Creek would get him booted as head of the Friends of Opal Creek, which it did late last year.

Back to Hatfield's late-March
See CREEK, Page 4

"I question why you should have a special bill for that special group of people."

**-Tom Hiron
former head of the Oregon Land Coalition**

going to start with Opal Creek. It's a page out of the NRA book of foot-in-the-door legislation. Once you let one of the critters in the house (or the Senate), they'll have the run of the place.

Social Security Insurance needs to be privatized

Brendon Neal
Opinion Editor

Social Security Insurance (SSI) is like a black hole.

People work all their lives giving much of it up to SSI for their retirements. When they come to the time in their lives when they are done working they look for this money. It won't be there for retirees in the near future.

During the '80s the government found a great supply of funds to help the sagging Federal budget: there were billions of dollars lying around in America's retirement system. The answer became obvious. Why not spend them?

Millions of Americans will be retiring in the next decade expecting all the money they gave to the Federal government to come back plus some (The money is put into Federal Bonds which yield interest). Studies show that this money will not be there shortly after the

year 2000.

Currently a plan is being considered to revive SSI so that we won't have to work until the day we die. The plan is based on analysis by the Cato Institute which is a nonpartisan research foundation seeking to broaden public policy. They receive no government funding in order to give credibility to their proposals.

The plan consists of two parts. The first is to individualize SSI so that money can't be removed except to pay retirement for the person who put it in.

Current workers getting to retire might see a drop in their retirement if any changes were retroactive. This is because instead of getting money from a pool which is currently larger than the total number of people retiring, they would basically be restricted to the smaller pool of money from fellow retirees. However, I like the

basic idea. I would like to see this go into effect, but only affect current and future retirees.

The second part of the plan would be to actually privatize the system. This would involve putting the money into public stocks.

The money is currently going into government bonds. Studies of the markets show that government bonds tend to stay steady. They don't rise or fall very fast. This increases the retirement problem by not increasing the money that is still in there.

"History shows that the financial return on [private financial] instruments exceeds retirement needs at a fraction of Social Security's cost," according to William Shipman, one of the nation's leading financial analysts.

An example given was if someone born in 1970 were allowed to invest in stocks of the amount they currently pay in SSI they would receive nearly six times the benefits. According to the same study this amount could be as much as \$11,182 per month.

I like this idea both as a worker and a stockholder. It would give workers a chance to retire with a decent income from their retirement rather than depending on Government bonds which increase their earnings. I do think the government needs to be involved by guaranting a percentage of the retirement fund. Otherwise, a stock market crash could cause a lot of damage.

I think with these two ideas and some further thought the government can save SSI. I realize that to many college students this may seem a worry for the future. However, some of us are now working or will be working in the near future. Our money is disappearing into a hole and going into other people's pockets. Who will pay for our retirement?

I will leave the reader with one last fact to consider: the government's own calculations show that SSI will be bankrupt by the year 2030, but it could also face a financial crisis by as early as 2014.

Non-smoker's rights abused

Karin Redston
Assistant Opinion Editor

As a non-smoker I try to be tolerant of those who do. Smokers do have rights and I do try to respect those rights. Unfortunately, I feel smokers do not respect my rights.

As far as CCC goes I feel my rights as a non-smoker are a bit compromised. There are almost no building entrances I can enter without going through a smoke screen. Smokers stand just outside the entrances of these buildings to smoke.

There are two reasons for this. The first is where the cigarette receptacles are placed: around the entrances to the campus buildings. This leads to the second reason. These receptacles are placed there so smokers can smoke and not get rained on as they are under cover by the entrances.

While walking into a building I end up breathing smoke and my clothes end up smelling like smoke. As a non-smoker I find this offensive. I should not have to breathe other people's smoke to attend classes here. I should not have to arrive home smelling like an ash tray.

One particularly bad building to enter is Streeter Hall. During class breaks smokers are out there. I counted ten one day. What was rather funny was the majority of those folks I observed failed to use the cigarette receptacle. They just

threw their cigarettes to the ground and squashed them out. Now there were some litter-conscious people.

My final pet peeve is people who smoke and throw their cigarettes on the ground. I figure people who are that rude probably are the ones throwing trash out their car windows or taking deer out of season and a doe at that. I challenge people on campus to count the number of cigarette butts on the ground. I figure the number is in the thousands but I could be slightly over exaggerating.

To instill any kind of sensitivity and consciousness into most smokers is impossible. To ask smokers not to smoke in front of the building doors has only brought about an attitude. Don't dare to ask these people to pick up their cigarette butts.

CCC should consider building smoker enclaves around campus where smokers can smoke near their classes but non-smokers can get into the buildings smoke-free. I think smoking should be relegated to designated areas only. That way non-smokers can easily avoid the areas and cigarette butt clean-up would be contained. The idea has been instilled in airports for awhile now and there is no reason for it not to happen at schools or everywhere. Smokers do have their right to smoke but I also have a right not to breathe their air.

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