

MY OPINION FROM BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

Honoring community voices

BY CHRIS BRATT

Some people scornfully call us “Greenies,” activists intent on “Wilderness Creep” (more wilderness) and more protection for the “fishies.” Others refer to us as extremist, rabid, radical zealots and of course overly litigious preservationists wanting to “lock up our public lands.” Actually we will take vigorous action when agencies or opponents try to remove environmental protections from our public lands. But, calling us names meant as a put-down because we are exercising our rights to be active public participants in federal agency actions will only strengthen our resolve and attract more organized support.

Who are these environmental activists and do they deserve to be demonized for their work helping to protect our public lands and planet? Although some people deprecate what we do, we are your neighbors supporting community well-being (local jobs in the woods and on the farms) and sustainable land management practices that don’t degrade the environment. We are people of goodwill and volunteers who won’t give up without a fight to protect public lands when they are being seriously damaged. We are diligent people trying to change agency manager’s and politician’s minds when they propose projects that fail to safeguard our natural resources or forest health.

Some of us are trained scientists, lawyers and professionals who believe these public lands belong to everybody and must be protected from exploitation by individuals or corporations (with agency assistance in many cases) for strictly economic reasons. We are citizens that take seriously our rights and responsibility to help federal agencies look for solutions to

environmental problems.

We take the opportunity for citizens to directly participate in federal decision making and direct an agency’s attention to community concerns. I believe our actions are key to guaranteeing better environmental decision-making in our community by federal officials.

This environmental work we try to do in and for our collective Southern Oregon backyard (mostly for free or little money) is difficult and time consuming. You have to learn to read, study and understand complex government processes and documents. You have to write, speak and attend endless meetings. You spend long hours at your desk, computer or in

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the field, totally focused on a particular issue or proposed project that has potential negative impacts. At those times, you will need an infinite supply of energy.

But the real frustration comes after you have submitted comments on a questionable federal agency project. Although you believe your comments are substantive, well written and supported by relevant data or law, they are routinely dismissed by the agency as having no merit. A recent example of this kind of agency behavior can be seen in the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM’s) Western Oregon Plan Revision (WOPR) decision in Dec. 2008.

BLM’s Western Oregon Plan

Revision received approximately 30,000 comments statewide. Most of the comments BLM received were from individuals and groups who cited many flaws or problems throughout the document. Yet, the BLM quickly proceeded to make a decision and approved the Plan Revision with only a few insignificant changes. Subsequently seventeen environmental groups and the timber industry have filed lawsuits in Federal court challenging the validity of Plan Revision. Now there is a strong possibility that BLM’s Plan Revision is so defective that it will soon be considered inadequate by the courts. It’s disheartening for all parties concerned that the only thing that seems to stop the BLM from damaging

the landscapes they manage is legal action.

Some of you may believe this kind of federal agency dismissive behavior toward community concerns is a rare occurrence. Let me assure you that it is part of agency culture and happens frequently. Presently, in BLM’s Timber Mountain Off-Road Vehicle Plan, BLM has refused to consider a plan alternative that would close the area to off-road vehicles. A petition submitted by 1600 residents and BLM’s acknowledged extensive environmental damage throughout the area still could not move BLM to analyze a closure option in their plan.

This self-righteous behavior by BLM has historical roots. In 1984, Little

Applegate residents, Richard and Leslie Bach (Richard was the famous author of the book, Jonathan Livingston Seagull), and the local environmental group called TELAV appealed BLM’s Grouse Creek Timber Sale. The following transcript recorded on tape between the then BLM District Manager and Richard Bach is a true and classic example of agency disregard for the concerned public regarding this timber sale:

RICHARD: Is what you’re telling us that you need to have a lot of people make an outcry about this, against the logging, or that it would make no difference what people say?

DIRECTOR: If you are asking me a personal question, very likely it would not.

RICHARD: Whether you get four hundred signatures or four thousand.....

DIRECTOR: We get petitions like that. No, it wouldn’t make a difference.

RICHARD: If there were forty thousand signatures, if the entire population of Medford, Oregon, protested the sale, would that make a difference?

DIRECTOR: Not to me.

RICHARD: If there were professional foresters who were objecting, would you listen to that?

DIRECTOR: No, I am not concerned about public outcry.

RICHARD: We would like to see what has made you so certain that this is worth going ahead in spite of so much public outcry.

DIRECTOR: Well, we are doing it.

RICHARD: Have you ever changed a timber sale because of a protest by the people?

DIRECTOR: No. Never.

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Renewed interest in Dutch-oven cooking

BY WILL MCLAUGHLIN

Through the years, many hunters, fishermen, ranchers, trappers, scouts and campers of all styles have found the Dutch oven a most useful utensil. It is probably your most versatile cooking tool--it can be used for frying, browning, steaming, stewing and baking. Most anything that can be cooked in or on your kitchen stove can be cooked in the Dutch oven.

For centuries, heavy cast-iron cookware has survived from generation to generation, from the open hearth to the open trail. We are seeing renewed interest in the tradition, pleasure, flavor and mystique of “the old black pot magic.”

Dutch-oven cooking is a part of history that we can all preserve and enjoy some great meals while doing so. The Dutch oven was essential to the explorers and settlers who traveled across the trails leading to the Great Northwest. When needing to lighten their load they discarded many supplies, with the exception of guns and Dutch ovens. These were vital to their survival.

Today, the Dutch oven is used as the main cooking pot by those who enjoy hiking, camping and rafting. It also is a valuable pot to have if living in rural areas of Oregon when the power goes out from time to time (as I have experienced).

Cooking meals over an open fire always gives an added flavor to the meal. When an open fire is not be practical in some locations, using charcoal to cook with is a safe alternative that will still create some great dishes. Here are a couple of recipes for you to enjoy:

APPLE-MUSTARD PORK CHOPS

- 4 Bone-in pork loin chops ¾-inch thick
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 1 Cup apple juice
- 1 Tablespoons dried minced onion
- 1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard

Season pork chops with salt and pepper. In a hot skillet/Dutch oven, brown chops on each side over medium-high heat in butter. Stir in apple juice; reduce heat to medium. Cover and cook 5-6 minutes on each side or until juices run clear.

Remove and keep warm. Add onion and mustard to skillet. Cook uncovered on low for 4-5 minutes or until heated through. Spoon mixture over chops. Serve with rice and garnish with sliced apples.

HONEY GARLIC CHICKEN

- 4 Boneless/skinless chicken breasts
- 2 Tablespoons honey
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 Tablespoons oil
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 4 Garlic cloves, minced

Arrange chicken in Dutch oven. Combine the remaining ingredients; pour over chicken. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-45 minutes until juices run clear. Brush chicken occasionally with sauce.



BAKING TEMPERATURE CHART

The figures below are the number of briquettes top/bottom

Dutch Oven Size	Temperature					
	325	350	375	400	425	450
8”	10/5	11/5	16/6	12/6	13/6	14/6
10”	13/6	14/7	16/7	17/8	18/9	19/10
12”	16/7	17/8	18/9	19/10	21/10	22/11
14”	20/10	21/11	22/12	24/12	25/13	26/14

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