

Guest Opinion

Super Bowl: The Stakes Are High

Submitted by Melissa Grammon, Prevention Specialist for New Directions Northwest, Inc.

Super Bowl XLIX is upon us, and millions of Americans will be cheering on the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots. Fans have been waiting all season to see their teams reach the big game and the stakes are high in more ways than one.

USA Today estimates \$12 billion was bet on the Super Bowl last year. Super Bowl wagering reaches such a fever pitch that folks bet not only on the game, but on things like who will sing the National Anthem, what color clothing they will wear, how long they will hold the note on the word "free" etc. For most people it's really just a way to have some fun, but for the thousands of Oregonians who are problem gamblers, the Super Bowl stakes are much higher.

Many people aren't aware that gambling can become just as addictive as substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; and events like the Super Bowl can serve as "triggers" for those with gambling problems.

This concerns not only problem gamblers, who may see betting on the Super Bowl as a last hope to recoup their losses from wagering on the season, but youth as well.

Thirty percent of youth in Baker County have self-reported as gambling in the past 30 days and those who have gambled are more likely to engage in other risky behaviors as well, such as binge drinking and using tobacco. It's something we need to pay attention to and address. Parents can use this event as a teachable moment to talk to their kids about the fact that gambling can become addictive. There are great resources for kids and parents at www.problemgamblingprevention.org.

In Baker County, it's estimated that there are over 400 adult problem gamblers. Since each problem gambler affects six to ten people around them, the impact in our small community can ripple out quickly.

How to know if someone has a gambling problem:

- They are often preoccupied with gambling.
- They bet more money and more frequently.
- They lie about the money and time they spend gambling.
- They often chase their losses by betting more in a futile attempt to regain the money they've lost.

If you or someone you care about is putting too much at stake with their gambling, free and confidential help is available by calling 1-877-mylimit or by going to 1877mylimit.org. Help is also available from problem gambling counselors at New Directions Behavioral Health and Wellness at 541-523-3646.

Are you a family member of a problem gambler? You too can get help with or without the direct involvement of the gambler.

A Tricky Plan For Deceiving?

To the Editor:

Countless people in Eastern Oregon are consumed by the forest plan or the travel plan, that is being force fed us by the USFS. We spend part of every single day living the possible impact of losing our access and open forest system. Impact, negative impact on economy, health and welfare, carry over to every aspect of our personal lives.

We don't need a graph to know we are tied historically and presently to our public lands. At the moment we are being fed, "strategy." As always, I associate a change in terminology and new words with an individual's possible advancement in the agency. The dictionary tells me "strategy" is the science of planning and directing military operations. Esp, using stratagems. Okay what is "stratagems?" Back to my dog eared ancient dictionary, "stratagem:" 1. A trick plan for deceiving an enemy in war 2. Any tricky ruse.

I'm not saying the choice of words was intentional, maybe a poor choice at best. I can point to a few, but not all the stratagems, "this plan doesn't close roads," "this project doesn't close roads," all the while closures are hidden and buried behind vocabulary such as "desired conditions, habitat, reclamation, restoration, collaborative, or partnerships." Looking at the invitations to the "strategy meeting" would leave most reasonable people wondering.

To my knowledge every representative except FAPA, is willing to let our roads and open forest be negotiated away without a thought, or consideration of our previous losses. The Travel Management Plan, was strongly opposed, resulting in the Record of Decision, being withdrawn. Now we have the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision, that has met with overwhelming negative reviews. Presently 11 counties have voiced opposition to the forest plan, accompanied by over 1000 submitted comments that are 95 percent against the plan.

The message is very clear, but I guess the volume is set too low for the forest service to hear. These plans generate employment for an agency that has lost all credibility with the public. Who is in charge? The condition of our vast forest resources are in deplorable condition and will continue to decline if the present mentality of managing people takes priority over healthy forests.

I'm offering a strategy, "cut funding to this top heavy agency."

Wanda Ballard
Baker City

Access and Use of Resources Biggest Problem

To the Editor:

Access and use of the land is perhaps the most important problem facing America today. The problem is that so few people recognize the problem and how it relates to them, particularly those who live in metropolitan areas. I say it's most important because no industry, no business and no jobs can continue without the produce and resources that are recovered from the earth.

Another fact that few are aware of is all new wealth comes from the ground, there is no other source. It is created when farmers, ranchers and fishermen harvest the food and fibers in their crops, and timber men, miners and oil men recover the other vital resources. This wealth is expanded when we process and manufacture more useful products from these resources.

All others share this wealth by distributing the products or by providing a service for one another. Thus, the basic industries are the foundation of our entire economy. Our country has serious economic problems and needs more jobs and money.

The problem is that the agencies that have been

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charged with administering our lands, the BLM, forest service, EPA, etc., have been so carried away with issuing a never ending series of regulations restricting access and use of the land, often disregarding congressional law and the decisions of the highest courts of our land, that they are destroying the very industries that supply the wealth and resources that support our country.

They have been so carried away by environmental policies and their slogan "save the earth" that they have forgotten the basic fact of life, that no life on earth can survive unless we harvest the food and resources of the earth.

It is a noble thing to save a few special places for the future but you can't have them all. The same forces that uplifted our beautiful mountains brought the minerals to the surface and change the climates to make timber growth productive.

Unless we reassess our access and use of the land policies our country is facing economical breakdown and do your job and all environmental concerns will go out the window.

Kenneth Anderson
Baker City, Mining Geologist Engineer

We Do Not Want Them Anywhere

Dear Idaho Power, please find in the enclosed parcel:

1 (one) GPS (Global Positioning System) navigator.

I am sending you this because you are obviously lost or your route planners are complete morons. You are definitely in the wrong place. Permission to run your power lines is, to the west of here, an Energy Corridor generously mapped out by our government to help you, a private company, shuffle your power around with minimum hassle to generate dividends for your shareholders, obviously none of whom live in this area. To find the correct lat/longs on this GPS you will have to read the instructions. This is a deluxe model sporting numerous women's voices to help guide you. I took the liberty to program Lucrezia Borgia's voice for you. She will tell you where you can go.

1 (one) Unabridged Merriam-Webster Dictionary dog-eared on page 969 where you will find the word, "no" highlighted with a yellow marking pen. It is a fascinating word, an adverb, usually used to answer a question. But you never asked any questions. You just barged your way in with wrong assumptions, such as:

i.e. #1 That we rural Oregonians wouldn't care if your unnecessary, ghoulish transmission lines scar and desecrate our rural landscape.

i.e. #2 That you could turn a quick buck compromising our lifestyle and values.

1 (one) hearing aid generously donated by the Dr. Seuss Audio Corporation. This hearing aid is top-of-the-line and you should have no problem hearing what we here in Baker County are saying and have been saying all along:

We do not want your transmission lines

We do not want to hear them whine

We do not want them here or there

We do not want them anywhere

We do not want them near our house

We do not want to disturb sage grouse

We do not like them high and spanned

We do not like them on our land

We do not want them through the trees

Why can't you just let us be?

We do not like your company

We like our vistas pylon free

We do not want lines near or far

Why can't you leave things as they are?

We do not want your power grid

We will not feed your greedy id

We do not want your lines here or there

We do not want them anywhere!

Sincerely yours,
Whit Deschner
Sparta/Baker City

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A consensus was reached for approval by the board to move forward with the preparations. Next Meeting Feb. 26

The Board made a change in next month's meeting, moving it from Feb. 17 to Feb. 26. The change is due to the new superintendent hiring and evaluation process. Feb. 20 is the day scheduled for the final interview process and open house for the final three candidates.

The district's budget is on track and growth in revenue remains strong and stable. There is a potential for maintenance needs at the high school for heating and cooling which fall within the budget, but will need to be addressed soon.

Assurances and Compliances Met

Wegener reported the current school year's assurances have been completed and all compliances have all been met. The district's teachers have begun making the changes in a long-term turnover to change the overall instructional environment within the district.

"It's a massive change in instructional protocol. So teachers who have taught content as the primary instruction and allowed kids to kind of absorb content as best as possible have to change to teachers who are engaging kids with content," Wegener explained. He mentioned it is a turnover that could take several decades to fully implement and there are

currently no textbooks to cover this new content.

Extra-Duty New Hires

There was no public comment and the Board moved on agenda action items approving extra-duty new hires: Barry Neme as Baker Middle School (BMS) seventh grade girl's traveling coach, Candace Hoskins as BMS seventh grade intramural girls basketball coach, and the extra-duty resignation of Suzy Cole from BHS assistant volleyball coach. They approved the liquidation of surplus kitchen equipment and items, and the first reading of policies: EBB - Integrated Pest Management, EEA - Student Transportation Services, EFAA - District Nutrition and Food Services, and IIBGA - Electronic Communications System. Finally, they approved the second and final readings of policies: EFA - Local Wellness Program, JHCD - Nonprescription Medication, JHCDA - Prescription Medication, and KL - Public Complaints. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Outdoor Program Leads Snowshoe Tour of Hoffer Lakes Basin

Join Eastern Oregon University's Outdoor Program on a scenic snowshoe tour of Hoffer Lakes Basin from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 31.

Hoffer Lakes is just a short distance - approximately two miles round trip - from Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort.

No prior snowshoe experience necessary and equipment rentals are free for EOU students through the Outdoor Program.

Find out more during the pre-trip meeting at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 in the Outdoor Program Office in the Hoke Union Building, Room 118.

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Hi there! My name is **Haylee** and I am a purebred female Chesapeake Bay Retriever. I am 5 years old and very healthy. I have been living with my best friend who is unable to care for me any longer. I am house trained, and good with my commands, but will need work to learn new commands. I do not know how to walk on a leash. I have

been a dependable indoor/outdoor dog and sleep inside at night. I enjoy being outside chasing and playing fetch. I am afraid of thunder and lightning and that is probably why I ended up in a shelter in the first place. I am not a hunting dog, but love to go for rides inside the car. I am micro-chipped, vaccinated and spayed and ready to go to a new home. I need a fenced yard to keep me safe and away from cats and squirrels. Please call Carmen at 541-519-4530 or Best Friends of Baker at 541-519-7397.

Call Best Friends of Baker, Inc.
541-519-7387

