

THE DUNAL AQUIFER

BY JIM WILKINS

Clatsop Plains can be loosely described as the area extending from the north end of Seaside northward to the northern boundary of Camp Rilea. It extends from the ocean beach eastward varying distances, generally several miles. It is formed almost entirely of sand, deposited from the Columbia River over many thousands of years. Until the impact of western civilization it was a windblown wild place with dunes forming and reforming, marching solidly to the east. Interdunal waterways once extended from Warrenton all the way to Seaside, and the original occupants of this region used these to traverse north and south in their canoes. Vestiges of these waterways can be glimpsed just south of Camp Rilea, and southward by the Country Club.

We ingenious Americans, however, took exception to this strangely chaotic beauty and, through the use of jetties, dune stabilization plantings and the filling of the interdunal waterways, managed to bring this unruly land into conformance with the rigid order so preferred by, for example, the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Undemeath this now tamed landscape lies another natural wonder, The Dunal Aquifer. Recharging out of the Coast Range at the rate on tens of million of gallons per day, this resource is one of the largest sources of clean water in the Northwest. As we continue to overpopulate our planet and to spew all sorts of chemicals into the air and water, the value of this resource is increasingly apparent. All large community water systems in Clatsop County rely on surface water as a source. Surface water is obviously vulnerable to contamination and federal law now requires treatment (usually filtering or flocculation, or a combination) in an attempt to make it clean enough to drink. Until recently the dunal aquifer was very pure, requiring no treatment, and very well isolated from the pollutions of modern man.

Substantial research has been done in the past twenty or thirty years on the aquifer and related geologic issues. Some of this information can be found at the Public Library in Astoria, and a lot more can be gleaned at the Clatsop County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Federal Natural Resource Conservation Service. If you are really interested in this issue, I would recommend a visit with Dr. Kathy Taylor at the CREST (Columbia River Estuary Study Task Force) office in the Post Office building in Astoria.



Once we stabilized the dunes, Clatsop Plains became a very desirable place for folks to live. It's close to the beach and rural enough for summer homes, retirement cottages, golf courses and upscale subdivisions. Camp Rilea, Glenwood Village and Cullaby Lake are the only Plains communities that have any kind of sewage treatment facilities and they vary in effectiveness. Everyone else uses the old fashioned septic system, where untreated effluent is discharged directly into the very porous soils that occur here. Surf Pines, the county's largest (and maybe only) gated community, practices an interesting kind of closed loop recycling. They draw their domestic water out of the aquifer, run it through their household plumbing and discharge it back, untreated, into the aquifer. The entire town of Gearhart is unsewered, although they buy their potable water from the surface water source maintained by the City of Warrenton.

DEQ monitor wells are now detecting some impact from all of this on the groundwater. The fact that contamination is not far worse speaks clearly about the regenerative capacity of the aquifer, but remember — dilution is not treatment. One high ranking DEQ bureaucrat was recently quoted as saying that the town of Gearhart should have built a sewer system years ago. Gearhart, it should be mentioned, seems quite happy with the status quo.

Providing sewers for all of Clatsop Plains would certainly do a lot to preserve the aquifer for future generations, who undoubtedly will need it if Corporate and State interests continue to plunder the planet, but it presents an interesting dilemma. Using State land use laws, which require the protection of resources like the dunal aquifer, it may be possible to slow growth on the Plains, preserving the beauty that people value, but existing septic systems would continue to operate. Building a sewer collection and treatment system, and getting all properties connected, would help protect the aquifer, but would then probably concede growth, allowing Seaside and Warrenton to gradually grow together into one very long strip mall like the "20 Miserable Miles" in Lincoln County. These are not easy choices for local politicians, especially those who understand the question. Most elected officials pay close attention to thoughtful and concise citizen input, and it is actually not completely futile to let them know how you feel about issues like this.

Jim Wilkins owns a construction company and restaurant in Astoria, and is a former Astoria City Councilman.

STOP DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Do you feel that your home and community are safe, so long as violence occurs all around you? Clatsop County has high rates of interpersonal violence and the majority of incidents happen within families.

Most often a man hurts and even injures a woman. Next most often, a parent hurts or even injures a child. A serious domestic violence problem does exist in our midst.

Local families have members hurting one another in ways we consider criminal, and much of it goes on out of sight, even beyond the reach of the law. Women with limited means to escape, as well as children and elderly parents, go through frequent terror as self-entitled perpetrators inflict pain and chaos that most people don't want and many abhor. The true tragedy in our community is not only that we have not stopped these crimes, but also that we have yet to create a coordinated multi-agency response to address this problem as vigorously as possible.

Our community is far from alone in this problem. In fact, a statewide council recently published the *Oregon Protocol Handbook: A Collaborative Approach to Domestic Violence*, a work called for by the Oregon Supreme Court and the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, then funded by the State Justice Institute. The council took great care in recommending how any Oregon community could effectively address domestic violence. The effort depends on a practical understanding of why domestic violence occurs, on a broad-based community commitment to stop this violence, and on a comprehensive community-wide response.

That means we need:

- ~Strong and consistently enforced standards and policies for holding perpetrators accountable.
- ~To support law enforcement and criminal justice to act swiftly and strictly.

~Funding to guarantee victim safety and to support their advocacy.

~Education for professionals and agencies who work with the problem as well as victims and people at risk.

~Social change to overcome the insidious force of anyone feeling entitled to, permitted to or supported in establishing control over another through violent, abusive treatment.

Last November a number of concerned community members, now known as the Clatsop County Domestic Violence Task Force, started meeting to establish a local protocol for domestic violence intervention.

The Task Force was formed to raise awareness in our community and to ensure safety to victims and people at risk. We strive to ensure that perpetrators are taught to be accountable for their actions, and to support the justice system in its effort to confront criminal actions.

Task Force members believe that our community needs to appreciate several fundamental concepts and key words in the current theories of domestic violence. These concepts and words appear in the *Protocol Handbook*. An "assault" is an incidence of physical violence that is legally defined and the necessary focus of law enforcement, prosecution and defense.

"Battering" describes a relationship with persistent "abuse." A reported and prosecuted "assault" or lesser offense is repeatedly found to be the tip of the iceberg. People affected (victim, perpetrator, family members and friends) will avoid disclosing the rest of the story in many cases, as these people don't recognize the hurt caused by abusive treatment.

Abusive treatment becomes a powerful component in the dynamics of a relationship. "Battering" is a form of relationship that includes subtle as well as dramatic and terrifying harm to its victim. The victim often becomes engaged in the process of making the relationship work or may know of no other way to be in a relationship.

The batterer is an individual who must be held accountable for his (the overwhelming majority are men) actions, feelings and beliefs. The victim is an individual, too, who needs help to recognize her (the overwhelming majority are women) rights and options.

One thing our community needs to recognize is that domestic violence is too often understood to be a series of violent acts that can be stopped by training the man to control anger outbursts and coaching the woman to avoid provoking him.

Instead, domestic violence must be understood as one person taking and maintaining control in a relationship. That person typically feels entitled to manage and even emotionally or physically beat down his partner or family members in order to stay in control.

The evidence can be very subtle as well as quite dramatic. For some, it is hard to even think about domestic violence in these terms, let alone adopt this understanding as one necessary for solving the problem.

One reason it is hard to think about is that some of us would have to look at our own misuse of power and the harm we have caused people we love.

Another reason is that many of us are not ready for the memories it stirs up about times when we have felt hurt by someone who loved us (or whom we thought loved us).

The Clatsop County Domestic Violence Task Force wants to inspire our entire community to join in its efforts — the work needs many hands. Considering our culture's history and structure, men more than women need to take a stand and actively rebalance the power in every love-based relationship.

That will be a big step toward stopping the violence around us.

~LAYNE HOOD (& 15 OTHERS)

WAR ON DRUGGIES

TO THE EDITOR

I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude to the legislators in Salem for their efforts to recriminalize the possession of less than one ounce of marijuana.

As a former college instructor who left academia to practice criminal law, I am fully aware of what this legislation will mean to my checkbook. I laud all efforts to construct jails, treat a medical problem (addiction) as a criminal matter and generally increase my caseload.

Funding education does nothing but engender a sense of self-worth and a broadened awareness of the richness of life and enhances one's chances of financial success. It does nothing for my criminal-law practice. In fact, funding education cannot help but endanger my income, since education exposes students to the richness of life found in art, music, theater, math and science.

Education does nothing but dissuade students from vandalism, theft, drug use and violence — all activities upon which my practice is dependent.

By diverting public funding from education to the criminalization of possessing less than an ounce of marijuana (a substance that has been demonstrated to have some positive medicinal uses) my criminal-law practice is enhanced and my financial security ensured.

~D. MICHAEL HATCH
(Salem)

THERE IS A STORM

"There is a storm," I say.

"We are busy," they say.

"No look, look," I say,

"the clouds are on the horizon."

"We are in control," they say.

"It will go away, it doesn't exist;

if you persist we will change the rules."

"It is with anger I will respond," I say.

"you cannot prevent tragedy by changing the rules,"

"But we can prevent you," they say.

And so they change the rules.

"There is a storm," I say.

"We are busy," they say.

"No look, look," I say,

"The clouds are on the horizon."

"We are having fun," they say.

"Where is the marijuana petition?" they say

"I came here for the music," they say.

"It cannot be done," they say.

"You are undemocratic," they say.

"It is nuclear weapons," they say.

"It is Central America," they say.

"It is old growth," they say.

"It is whales and seals," they say.

"It is us," I say.

"There can be no compromise

with life support systems," I say

"We cannot settle for less,

we must do it together."

"You cannot mix issues," they say.

"The time is not right," they say.

"You cannot do four petitions," they say.

"You cannot do three petitions," they say.

"You cannot do two petitions," they say.

"You cannot do one petition," they say.

"You cannot," they say.

The citizens' legislatures.

The legislatures.

The siting councils.

The protection agencies.

The corporations.

The foundations.

The environmental organizations.

The peace groups.

The governments of the world.

The dictatorships.

The democracies.

The churches.

The media.

The people.

The end.

~LLOYD K. MARBET

Old Trojan Nuke Buster Lloyd Marbet celebrates his 50th birthday July 12.

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