

Member and a member of the AIA Education Committee.

*Richard Pettigrew, Exec. Dir.
Archaeological Legacy Institute*

IT'S ABOUT TIME

All the letters of complaint and accusation are evidence of how many people are frustrated and upset at just about everything that is happening in this society. From my slightly skewed perspective on things (poor, disillusioned and somewhat right of far right, which is nearly left of left), I see it all running down, like some old clock that no one knows how to wind.

We have a government more interested in extending its surveillance and control over our personal lives (thank you, Dick) than in dealing with critical social and environmental problems. We have witnessed massive wealth transference from the public sector to the wealthiest of the private sector, which has resulted in the peculiar situation of George spending millions in order to hold office so he can continue to bankrupt the federal treasury, turning our children and grandchildren into permanent paupers.

Since the Republican Party is so adroit at raising money, why don't they raise money for their country instead of just for themselves? Oh, sorry, what am I thinking? Anybody out there remember Watergate, Iran-Contra, the savings and loan debacle? Why do we continue to allow any Republican to hold high office?

If we don't like the effects of George and Dick in power, than we should cause them to

lose the power of their offices. Impeach George for crimes against the Constitution (officially lying as policy of state) and throw Dick out of his bunker if he continues to refuse to explain to the American people what he is doing as their vice president.

These people only get away with this stuff because we let them. Isn't it about time to call them to account to the American people rather than to their corporate bosses?

*D. McDougal
Eugene*

ASKING FOR TRUTH

I have a lot of questions to ask George Bush. First, what is the Bush administration hiding? Why won't the White House release the 28-page section of the 9/11 Report? Are we to believe that it contains materials critical to "national security?" How can the administration expect us to silently accept this refusal to reveal the contained information? Who does it implicate? Can we assume anything but the worst from an administration now blatantly on a path of one deception after another?

And my final question is for Americans everywhere: What is more important to you, learning the truth, or protecting the image of the man we call our president?

*Henry Snow
Eugene*

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**Livestock-Free
Hells Canyon finally gets some relief. A tale of civic action.**



Six of us were resting after a day and a half of building a rock jack fence to keep cattle off the Vance Knoll mounds in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (W-WNF) of northeast Oregon. These mounds are strange swellings in the ground, sporting bunchgrasses on their tops and flanked by rock-strewn flats that appear barren in the summer, but in springtime hold thousands of colorful flowers. The mounds and their rocky necklaces are being drowned in weeds, abetted by 1,000-pound cattle feeding and trampling on them. Hence the fencing project.

Rick Smith, long-time Forest Service range conservationist for the area, and chief designer/builder of this three-mile fence, was gazing into the gold-and-green bunchgrass draw below us. "Indian, trapper, homesteader, rancher," he said gently. "When I'm out here, I look and wonder who all has passed through there."

To Smith, I thought, this draw must seem lonely. The Indians, trappers and homesteaders are gone, and in this economy and dry region, one seldom-seen ranch hand will run cattle over thousands of acres.

I didn't say it aloud, but the draw seemed lonely to me, too. The ghosts of Grizzly, Beaver, and Wolf were passing before me.

Smith and I were aware that earlier in the week, something remarkable had happened in this national forest: Almost a quarter million acres of designated livestock rangeland were transformed into protected native bunchgrass lands. These particular acres were currently "vacant" of livestock, but had been at risk of being "reactivated" for cattle or sheep. That won't happen now. With Supervisor Karyn Wood's July 22 decision on the new Hells Canyon Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP), 100 years of marginal livestock grazing came to an end on one-half of Hells Canyon's steep, dry, spectacular, but battered, grasslands. For 10 years, I had worked for this day with the Hells Canyon CMP Tracking Group and the Nez Perce Tribe. I hadn't been sure we would succeed.

The saga "began" in 1994 when the W-WNF announced it would develop a new CMP for the 662,000-acre Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, to replace the then 12-year old plan. At the time a staff ecologist for the Hells Canyon Preservation Council, I gathered individuals and representatives of two tribes and 10 local, regional, and national conservation and hunting organizations that were convinced we could, as a coalition, profoundly affect the future of Hells Canyon. We submitted an 80-page "Native Ecosystem Alternative" for consideration in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the new plan. We knew the National Environmental Policy Act requires that "all reasonable alternatives" be considered in an EIS. Our alternative proposed management for recreation, roads, fire, forestry, livestock grazing, mining, aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat, and European and non-European cultural features in Hells Canyon.

When the first Draft EIS came out, then-Supervisor Bob Richmond had left our alternative out. Karyn Wood became the new supervisor, but she, too, refused to consider our alternative, as did the regional forester. Six days before her hefty, two-volume Final EIS was to go to the printer in 1998, I was granted a meeting with Washington, D.C., Forest Service and White House representatives. I laid out the case that our alternative was both reasonable and different from the W-WNF's alternatives, and shouldn't have been ignored. That afternoon the Forest Service phoned Supervisor Wood to say that her EIS would likely fail in court because it had not considered our reasonable alternative. It was time to start all over.

A second Draft EIS was published in 2000, and the W-WNF then carefully analyzed the more than 2,000 public responses to the Draft. Wood assembled teams within her staff, and a multi-stakeholder group, to consider the comments. Her July 2003 decisions on the final EIS were astounding, including the following: Half of Hells Canyon is now designated grasslands free of livestock; one-third of old logging roads will be closed; vehicles will no longer be free to drive a football-field's length out from either side of every open road for purposes of camping; all roads will be closed unless posted open; and three ridge roads key to wildlife will be closed to motorized vehicles from before August archery season through late spring.

And so, on July 22, Hells Canyon got some relief – because citizens concerned about their public lands had worked hard, because public land managers were willing to consider changes in entrenched habits, and maybe, just maybe, because Hells Canyon had so eloquently made her own case for healing.

Mary O'Brien of Eugene has worked as a public interest scientist for the past 22 years. She can be reached at mob@efn.org



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