

Connect to Oceans

Protection of our state's resources shouldn't stop at the shoreline

One of the reasons I love serving the city of Eugene and the state of Oregon is the dedication of so many to preserving our most spectacular natural resources. We act locally to ensure these protections. Surely one of the most important is our beaches. Every year, Eugeneans flock to Strawberry Hill, Heceta Head and the Oregon Dunes to stroll, boat, fish and tidepool with their friends and families. Oregon would not be the same without these special places. The world depends on their survival.



As we approach Earth Day, I urge each of you to remember former Gov. Oswald West's move, almost 100 years ago, to create strong protections for Oregon's beaches. I think we can all agree it was done with much foresight and planning for the future. That bold stroke ensured preservation of our beaches' natural beauty and heritage for generations to come. Now there are efforts underway to protect the waters that flow into the cliffs and rockpiles around Astoria Canyon and the rocky reefs off Cape Blanco. As interconnected elements that contribute to the survival and health of Oregon's ecosystem, our ocean and its beaches depend on each other.

We in Oregon see sea otters only in aquariums.

Our ocean is not inexhaustible. We've seen the rich array of Oregon's ocean creatures seriously decline over time. More than 150 years ago, fur traders exterminated sea otters from our coast. While California and Washington residents still witness sea otters living in their natural habitat, we in Oregon see them only in aquariums. Oregon's groundfish industry has lost more than half its income to declining fish stocks since the early 1990s. Beach and fishing closures have become all too commonplace.

One solution proposed by the nonprofit group Oregon Ocean and Gov. Kulongoski is the implementation of marine reserves in our state waters – areas where fish, wildlife and plants can thrive untouched by invasive trawls, traps, nets and lines. It seems unworthy of us that Oregon, a pioneer in the creation of state parks along its coastline, is the only state on the West Coast without any marine reserves. California has just adopted a marine habitat protection plan in waters off their central coast between San Jose and Santa Barbara that would put in place a network of marine protected areas across 200 square miles of ocean.

Studies have shown that these marine reserves are particularly valuable in promoting stable, healthy fisheries. With a large host of plants and animals living in a pristine area, fish have a chance to recover, growing big and fertile. Scientists have found that fish in marine reserves will double their population size and grow 30 percent larger than fish outside of reserves. When these networks of marine reserves are carefully placed, they can help the areas in between the reserves, since healthy fish "spill over" into areas that are valuable to our state's fisheries.

What made the creation of California's marine protected areas so unique was the high level of public involvement. The state brought together an enormous, diverse group of people – divers, fishers, local residents, business representatives and scientists with decades of experience studying California's coastal waters – to design a proposal for the Fish & Game Commission. This process underscores the importance of taking into account *all* of the ways Oregonians use the ocean – from fishing and boating to research and surfing.

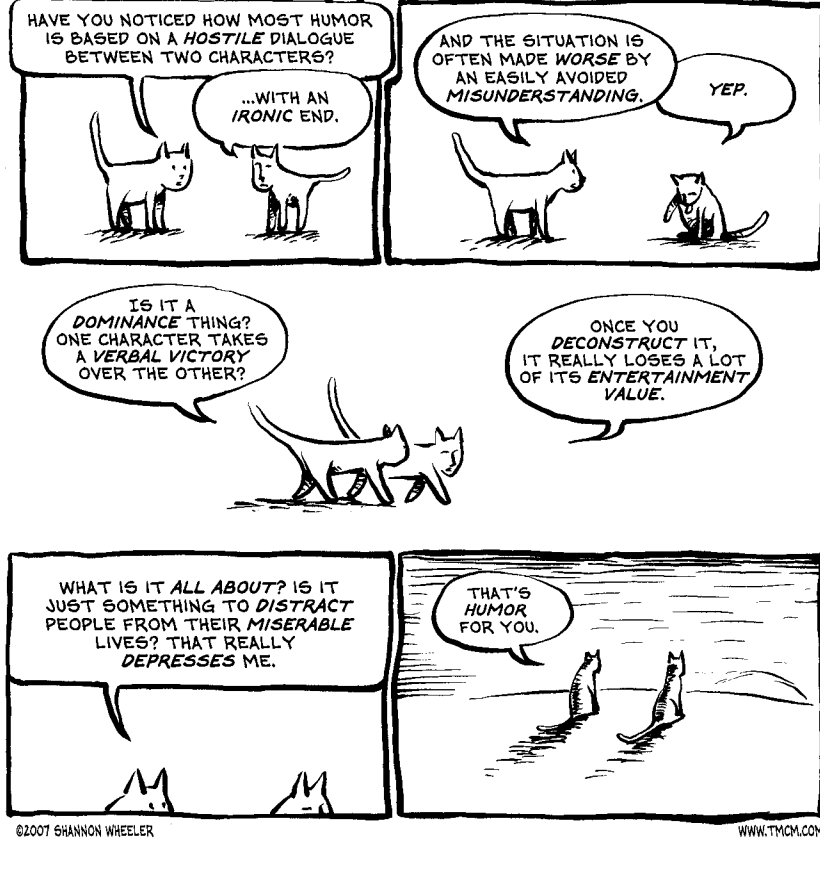
Educating the public is essential in order to ensure that our state's ocean conservation efforts are well-understood and inclusive. I want you to know that a great opportunity for each of you to learn more about the science of marine reserves and the threats facing Oregon's ocean is the screening of the film *Common Ground: Oregon's Ocean*, playing Tuesday, April 24, in Lillis 182 at the UO. The short, free documentary will be followed by a panel discussion with scientists, fishermen, conservationists, policy makers and the audience. Put it on your list of really important "to dos."

We in Oregon led the nation in creating public beaches and ocean state parks. We should show this same foresight by creating "underwater parks" through marine reserves. We mayors across Oregon need to join with our communities and band together to create a strong voice in support of this state, national and, yes, world resource. One great way to celebrate Earth Day is to view next week's film and talk about how marine reserves make us responsible stewards of our ocean's wealth for this and future generations. Oh, heck, do more than view. Get inspired, and like Eugeneans always do, take action.

Kitty Piercy is the mayor of Eugene. For more info on the oceans, visit www.oceansonline.org

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOPE AND SKEPTICISM

I am ever hopeful for the sake of all the life and places I hold sacred that our society will soon embark on a new "green" paradigm shift. However, I hold on to much skepticism that big business and the good ol' boy networks will never let go of the current "use it all for our immediate gratification" paradigm. You may have noticed that all the extractive industries, corporate America and even government agencies are trying to "greenwash" themselves to try to convince the average citizen that they now care so much for the health of the biosphere and planet.

Now, it is up to you to look at these public relations campaigns and the "technological fixes" critically and choose the products, companies and politicians that are bringing about real change and real solutions.

Just because a corporation, a not-for-profit or government agency uses images of whales or forests in ads and commercials or states its products are organic doesn't make the group "green" or remotely sustainable.

If it's just playing a public relations game, call the group on it publicly and remove your support from such an entity.

So, again it's up to you. When a critical mass of people anywhere set their minds to real change, embrace and support real solutions, then we will start to realize a paradigm shift that truly heals the biosphere.

Shannon Wilson
Eugene

SHORT-SIGHTED POLICIES

Today I drove 26 miles from Marcola to downtown Eugene to spend my birthday money. I wanted to buy some beads and visit the library. I try hard to support local, independent businesses. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify trips to downtown Eugene. There isn't much there to begin with, and to have to pay for parking so that I can spend my money seems ridiculous. But today I put money in the meter, which had a limit of 30 minutes, and went shopping.

Seems pretty ridiculous, too, limiting people to 30 minutes when there is so much talk about getting people to visit this area. Yeah, I know about the parking garage, but I choose not to go there. After all, the streets were opened for us shoppers, weren't they? Well, my shopping trip took 32 minutes, and I had a ticket on my window. Welcome to Eugene!

I realize it was my responsibility to get back to my car in 30 minutes. But sometimes you have to wait a little longer than you anticipate when paying. Sometimes the service in a restaurant is slower than it should be. Sometimes you have to wait for a traffic light. On I went to the Eugene Public Library, for which I gladly pay a fee of \$80 per year because I am an out of town. Again I fed the meter my quarters, and it seemed ridiculous, again, to have to pay for parking to go to a library and to put a limit on the time you can visit there.

I surely would like to see downtown Eugene thrive with local businesses, but I believe that the city's short-sighted policies are killing it. I, for one, will limit my visits to this area to those only absolutely necessary. I will go where the parking is free and I am not punished for staying two minutes past my time because I am actually buying something.

Ellen Furstner
Marcola

THE MAN ON HIGH

Before President Bush gave the order to attack Iraq he professed that he had prayed after 9/11 and that "There is a higher father that I appeal to." It is apparent that this "higher father" must have been Ares, the Greek god of savage war. After the Amish community had five of their young daughters abducted, bound and shot in the head while at school, they set up a charitable fund for the family of the murderer and told the world "We must not think evil of this man." This is the "higher father" that we must urge our president to listen to before he launches a pre-emptive strike against Iran.

From Feb. 17 to 25, a 13-member delega-