

thinning as misguided as industry's.

In his Nov. 8 Viewpoint, Hermach says the forest can take care of itself. In the wet forests west of the Cascades, this argument has merit. Logging these rain-drenched forests to reduce fire hazard is a dubious objective.

In the dry pine forests of Oregon's east side, a completely different situation exists: 100 plus years of fire suppression and logging the biggest trees has left a tangle of small trees many times denser than a century earlier. Old growth trees are being choked out by this unnatural ingrowth and, as a result, are at high mortality risk from beetle epidemics and wildfire.

These fires burn much hotter and more destructively than the historic frequent, low severity fires that removed small trees in favor of larger ones. The recent Davis Fire near Davis Lake is a stark example of this catastrophic effect.

Nearly all the old pines were killed, soils were cooked and essential habitat was lost, and industry enjoyed a salvage logging bonanza. No informed person physically reviewing this kind of burn would characterize this fire as "natural."

In the dry forest, preserving native ecosystems requires prudent understory thinning and use of prescribed fire to restore ecosystem function. Without this kind of active management, the stage is set for dysfunction and more destructive fires.

Hermach's uninformed blanket rejection of thinning as a forest restoration tool does the struggling dry forests of the West a great disfavor.

*Darin Stringer
Integrated Resource Management
Eugene*

GET ON WITH IT

Regarding the failure of the recent downtown renewal measure: It's clear that the city elected officials and staff are out of touch with the citizens on this one. While I agree that apathy, anti-tax sentiment and other factors all played a part in this failure, I'd like to add one more for consideration: Perhaps downtown does not need to be fixed.

Based on my experiences downtown, the real problem is simple fear. Many suburbanites assume that downtown is a den of iniquity populated by dope dealers and thugs. This may be true to some extent, but it's not relevant. I've been offered drugs in downtown Seattle, Santa Cruz and Portland's Washington Park Zoo; I've been threatened with random violence in downtown San Francisco. None of these areas can be considered wastelands, as so many people seem to think of downtown Eugene. The difference is that in those cities, people just accept some of this as part of life, and get on with their business.

Of course downtown does need some physical renovation. The site of the former Western Office Exchange building (which some folks insist on calling the former Sears building) is an obvious eyesore as are the Willamette pit and the abandoned Connor/Woolley buildings. But each of these are the result of renewal efforts gone awry. If these problems are fixed, and if downtown were then left to evolve on its own, I think we'd eventually have an entertainment district to rival that of any similarly sized city in the country.

*Jim Johnson
Eugene*

SMALL PRICE TO PAY

This letter is in response to the Nov. 8 letters by Peter Howland ("Crude Propaganda") and Chris Fanshier ("Toss My Cookies"). Of course the meth ads are gross and disgusting because meth is a gross and disgusting drug. A little revulsion of your appetite while you choose on your own to thumb through a highly opinionated free newspaper is a very small price to pay in the grand scheme of the positive benefits of grossing out people stupid enough to consider doing meth.

Anyone whose ever lived by tweaker neighbors and has been victimized by their gross and disgusting criminal behavior knows exactly what I'm saying. *EW* published a letter by Eugene resident Davy Ray a while back (12/8/05) called "Demon Meth" where he said it perfectly about meth addicts: "They subject their children to houses of ridiculously toxic chemicals

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