

Smells Fishy

DeFazio's role in the Columbia Basin salmon crisis

It gets even more complicated once they're smoked."

President Obama playfully joked about the mismanagement of salmon in his January State of the Union address. Very funny, Mr. President, but not everyone is laughing, including locals from Lane County and UO students who reached out to Congressman Peter DeFazio to help create better solutions to recover wild salmon in the Columbia-Snake River Basin.



At only 1 percent of historic populations, the only condition wild salmon will be in if we don't change course is *extinct* – not smoked. Obama's current salmon plan is a repackaged version of Bush policies that have already failed to pass in court.

Unfortunately, DeFazio's current support for these same policies reveals that he seems less concerned with the future health of our ecosystems and communities that rely on Columbia and Snake River salmon than on maintaining the status quo of hydropower operations.

In a recent *Oregonian* opinion piece, DeFazio teamed up with Rep. Doc Hastings (R-WA) to express support for the federal salmon plan awaiting court approval by Judge James Redden. DeFazio claimed that salmon policies were just fine as is and that it's "time to get out of the courtroom." He's right; this plan has been in court since it was originally deemed illegal by Redden during the Bush years. Oregonians, and citizens from Idaho and Washington, have been desperately waiting for a decision that determines the future of salmon and steelhead populations as well as the cultural and economic values affected by salmon.

Rushing to pass bad policy is a mistake. DeFazio's eagerness to get out of the courtroom should be directed towards creating the "aggressive measures" he claims to support in his personal response to local salmon advocates of Lane County. But the federal plan which he wants to speed through court has no such "aggressive" measures and has been criticized by the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society (WDAFS), calling it "inadequate." In their assessment, WDAFS concluded that by monitoring and evaluating declines while continuing programs such as trucking fish around dams, the federal agencies seem more determined to defend the status quo than secure the viability and survival of wild salmon.

DeFazio should seriously consider the possibility of removing the four dams of the lower Snake River in eastern Washington. It would be the most effective solution for wild salmon, returning them to the largest and best-protected habitat in the lower 48 states – the Snake River basin in central Idaho and northeast Oregon. Unfortunately, DeFazio refuses to consider this option. Instead he confuses the breaching of these four dams with "dismantling our hydropower system," as if advocates wanted to take out everything from Grand Coulee to the Bonneville dam. He claims that these dams are necessary to integrate wind that is coming onto the grid, and removing them would be a huge economic loss.

Even the mandated spills, which have aided recent increases in Chinook returns, he views as wasting water that could be used to generate power and dollars.

Frankly, DeFazio has got it wrong. The four lower Snake River dams are "run-of-the-river" dams making them relatively poor at storing water, therefore unreliable for backing up wind energy compared to other larger dams in the region. The dams satisfy less than 4 percent of our energy and can largely be replaced by conservation measures.

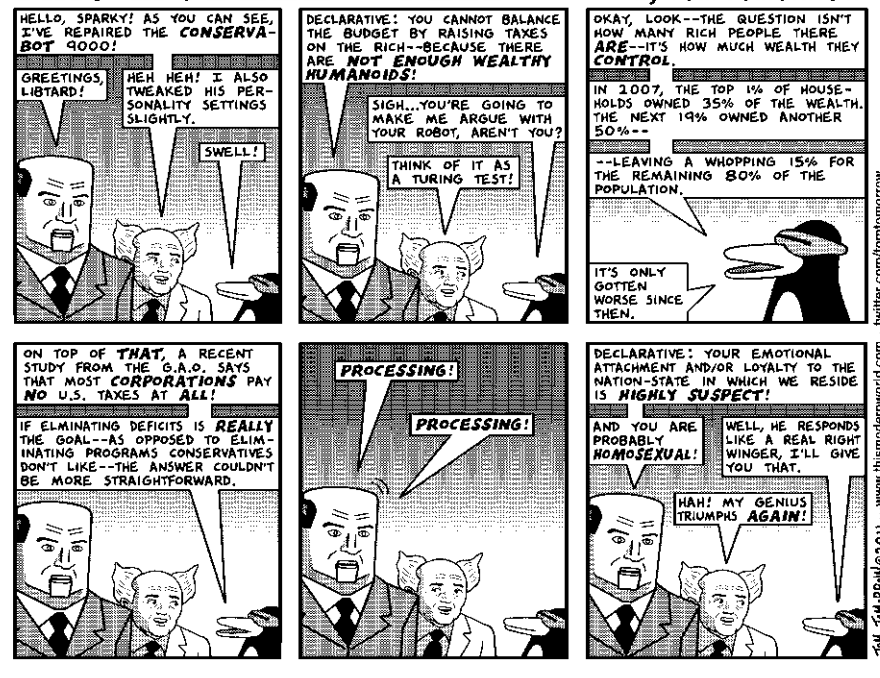
In fact, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, appointed by Northwest governors to balance power and wildlife concerns, determined in their latest plan that the Northwest could meet its increased electricity needs over the next 20 years, remove the lower Snake River dams and retire all Northwest coal plants, and we would actually see lower, not higher, energy bills.

Right now DeFazio seems clouded by old arguments. That's why I urge him to join other leaders – Gov. John Kitzhaber, former governors Cecil Andrus (Idaho) and Mike Lowry (Washington), Sen. Jeff Merkley and Idaho's Sens. Mike Crapo and Jim Risch – who have called for a third option to find solutions that benefit a diversity of Northwest interests. At the very least, Congressman DeFazio, we deserve a real opportunity to end government mismanagement of Northwest salmon. And when the smoke clears from the courtroom, I hope we'll see wild salmon thrive again.

Sheena Moore was born in Oregon but spent much of her childhood in Idaho. She is a senior in environmental studies at the UO and volunteers with Save Our Wild Salmon.

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GLAD IT'S OVER

Many people have expressed concern to me about the lawsuit that was filed against me. I'd like to make a few comments, now that the court has allowed us to talk about this process.

First, I'd like to say I'm glad that it's over. It's been a huge stress on me, my health, my family and the community. So, it's a good thing that this lawsuit is over. I agree with Federal Judge Michael Hogan, who assisted the parties in reaching the agreement, that we took the "high ground" in putting this dispute behind us.

Second, many people did not know that I was facing financial ruin. I could have faced nearly three quarters of a million dollars in financial liability, and I faced the very real possibility of having my property taken from me. I'd like to reassure the public that as a result of this settlement I'm not facing financial ruin. I signed a settlement agreement and I admitted no wrongdoing and I will be voluntarily contributing \$20,000 to the county taxpayers to partially offset the settlement.

Third, I want to make it clear that I am opposed to the taxpayers paying \$350,000 to the people who brought the lawsuit and the hidden special interests that they were fronting for. To be clear: I did not vote to authorize the payment of \$350,000 in taxpayer funds. Because the county would not appeal the trial court's decision, I was left with little practical choice but to settle.

Fourth, this lawsuit accomplished nothing but harassing duly elected officials. The heart of the lawsuit sought to prove something that never happened.

In the end, the lawsuit was shown to be the politically motivated lawsuit it was and a waste of taxpayer dollars. I'm glad it's over.

*Pete Sorenson
Lane County Commissioner*

BEHIND THOSE EMX SIGNS

Many businesses displaying anti-EmX signs along West 11th are not actually against EmX. After publishing a letter calling for a boycott of West 11th businesses displaying these signs, I contacted those businesses where I had

been a customer. Remarkably, only one of nine said they were actually against EmX! Some businesses said their landlords were responsible for the signs, others said the signs were placed there illegally, and the owner of the parking lot placed the signs at one shopping center.

So once again we have the wealthy elite in our community having an unfair influence in decision-making. Real estate owners are placing signs to make it look like their tenants are against mass transit. Signs are being placed illegally which explains why porn shops and vacant lots are against EmX.

While there is legitimate grassroots opposition to EmX, their numbers are being inflated by those who do not hesitate to bend or break the rules. The actual business opposition is much more limited than it would appear.

The next time you see an anti-EmX sign, don't think about grassroots efforts to stop big government, but instead recognize the pretense of a small, elite group who are trying to diminish democracy in our community. I implore the citizens and decision makers to end this charade: Fund EmX in west Eugene.

*Chuck Areford
Eugene*

150 YEARS OF BIAS?

Regarding your Slant column April 14: Although the predecessor to the *R-G* was founded in 1862, the 1927 photo at <http://wkly.ws/11v> well illustrates that Eugene hardly "sprawled" until sometime after World War II. In 1930, the west city limit was Chambers Street and the airport was at 18th and Chambers, and south Eugene barely extended to 24th Avenue in 1927. The area north of the Ferry Street Bridge was farmland. Urban growth boundaries were not required until the statewide land use planning law was enacted in 1973.

The *R-G*, like virtually every other newspaper in the country, no doubt was in favor of economic development and "progress" throughout its history, but this is hardly "150 years of pro-sprawl bias." In any event, two wrongs never