

PREDATORY NONPROFIT?

Fight over cougars and finances

It seemed so easy to businessman Steven Chapman — an avid hunter, he wanted to influence the Oregon Legislature on hunting bills. The deer and elk herds in Oregon are too small, Chapman said, and he wanted to do something about it. It takes millions of dollars in California to influence legislation, according to Chapman, but only thousands in Oregon.

In only a few years, the lobbying group he helped form in 2011, the Oregon Outdoor Council (OOC), shot from obscurity to a legislative force, but now Chapman finds himself pitted against fellow hunters as he alleges misspent money and ethical wrongdoings by the OOC and its non-lobbying partner, the Oregon Outdoor Council Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Chapman says he wants to expose OOC and OOCF because he feels that he created a “haphazard” group that isn’t targeting the real source of problems for the animals he hunts.

Together with Pendleton-based media-group owner Jerod Broadfoot, Wayne Endicott of Springfield’s Bow Rack and others, Chapman formed OOC with goals that included repealing Oregon’s Measure 18, which keeps hunters from chasing cougars with dogs. OOC was also behind a push on Oregon House Bill 3437, which required that gubernatorial nominees to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission have held some form of fishing or hunting licenses for 10 consecutive years. This would leave nonhunters out of wildlife decisions.

Chapman, OOC and the long-established Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) all share similar goals — to improve the

herds for hunters in Oregon — but Chapman says he is not certain that targeting predators and pushing bills allowing hound hunting or bear baiting are the answer. The problem lies with lands lost to grazing and roads built for logging, he says, not cougars and wolves. That’s not a popular stance to take among conservative hunting organizations that have long blamed predators.

But Chapman’s stance on what’s reducing deer and elk herds isn’t what has him at odds with the nonprofits he was once part of. Chapman alleges that the OOC and the OOCF unethically misspent funds, misrepresented information and aren’t acting “in the best interests of hunting, angling or wildlife.”

Chapman says that OOC got \$25,000 from the Oregon Hunters Association to conduct a poll in support of legislative initiatives and a potential constitutional amendment, and that part of the reason OOC got the money was because Broadfoot told the group and the OHA that \$500,000 in donations would be coming from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Safari Club International. That money never materialized. Chapman alleges that Broadfoot misrepresented the results of the poll and this damages OOC’s credibility.

Chapman, who was OOC’s secretary-treasurer, also worries that the foundation, OOCF, jeopardized its nonprofit status when out of its \$33,000 budget in 2012, it spent \$16,000 on a poll relating to a prospective ballot initiative and legislative actions. The IRS limits small nonprofits to spending less than 20 percent of their budget on lobbying.

Chapman alleges that Broadfoot diverted nonprofit funds for personal use for himself and his wife on a trip to Las Vegas where they stayed in a luxury hotel. He had an accountant review the books, and the CPA wrote, “It appears that proper expense authorization and follow-up procedures are not being followed carefully, if at all.”

When asked for comment, Broadfoot referred *EW* to OOC’s attorney Ross Day. Day is also Chapman’s personal attorney, and when asked if that was a problem due to a

conflict of interest, Day said, “Not that I’m aware of.”

Chapman has contacted the Department of Justice over the money issue and says that in turn, OOC board members have sent a state police officer to Chapman’s doorstep.

Day says the OOC board has concluded that Chapman’s allegations are unfounded and “we have a disagreement here, whether or not money was spent, I don’t want to say wisely, but as efficiently as possible. It doesn’t mean anything untoward has occurred.”

But in a July 2012 email to the OOC board, Day wrote “if someone goes to a conference, for instance, on OOC’s dime, and then promotes another organization (say, Oregonians In Action), there could be problems down the road with the IRS.”

Later in August, Day wrote, “Steve is right to be concerned about what is going on, especially in light of the fact that all of the OOC board members could be held personally liable.”

The July email also detailed a report from former Republican state senator-turned NRA lobbyist Roger Beyer, who had been asked to join the OOC board but declined. Beyer discussed a “breakdown” in the relationship between OOC and OHA, citing among other things the claims of funding that didn’t materialize and that OHA was not given the full poll results. Broadfoot had sent an email to the OOC board saying, “Do not share. We need to discuss this tonight.”

Day says, “Taken out of context I know what that email looks like,” but says OOC was under no obligation to release the results of the poll. Duane Dungannon of the OHA says that there were “differences of opinions about the results that were obtained” but that OHA thought it made sense that the poll results would be held close and not sent out to wind up in the hands of opponents.

Whether OOC survives and if it works with OHA on future hunting legislation or not, Chapman says he feels culpable for having created an organization that by targeting predators and not the true culprits — grazing and road building — is doing a disservice to the hunting community. ■

Tweet Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics Presents

New Media, Race, and Participatory Politics: Democracy in the 21st Century
featuring Cathy Cohen

Thursday, May 16, 2013, 4:00 p.m.
Night Law Center

Cathy Cohen is the David and Mary Winton Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, where she also served as the director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture. She is the author of *Democracy Remains: Black Youth and the Future of American Politics*, *The Broken Promise of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*.

This event is part of the “Opening a Polarized Republic: Is This How We Can Have a Democracy?” speaker series cosponsored by the Department of Political Science.
#free #opentothepublic

If this topic interests you, stay tuned for our next theme, **Media and Democracy**, which kicks off in Fall 2013 with Wayne Morse Chair Tom Ichniowski. More info at waynemorsecenter.uoregon.edu.

MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY
2013-15 Theme

The University of Oregon is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics | **UNIVERSITY OF OREGON**

EVERGREEN
SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN INDIAN CUISINE

BEST of Eugene
2008-09

EW's BEST ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET 2008-2009

LUNCH BUFFET
7 Days a Week 11:30am - 2:30pm • Dinner 5-9:30pm • 5 Years in Eugene

EAT & PARK
FREE PARKING FOR EVENTS AT MATT KNIGHT ARENA
WHEN YOU DINE WITH US

* 1525 Franklin Blvd. Eugene, OR 541-343-7944 | * 136 SW Third • Corvallis, OR • 541-754-7944

When Pets are Family.

ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATES

2835 Willamette St.
541-345-1544
www.animalhealthassociates.org

Now open until 8 PM
Tuesdays and Thursdays!

Sheila Johnson, DVM
Judy Schroeder, DVM

South Eugene's Most Enduring Independent Veterinary Clinic - since 1947