

GROSS DISREGARD

As I read Bill Fleenor's letter in last week's *EW* [5/1], I was returned to the same enraged state as 2012, when the politicians unnecessarily redistricted Lane County through the passage of Ordinance 9-11. This gerrymandering was accomplished despite overwhelming opposition through public comment of the scenario that was chosen. I was part of a group opposed to this gerrymandering, and we tried to gather signatures to put this issue on the ballot. We were denied a petition number by the county clerk, at the direction of the County Commissioners Jay Bozievich, Sid Leiken and Faye Stewart. They claimed that this gerrymandering was an administrative rather than a legislative decision, and thus not subject to a referendum.

The lack of a petition number meant that we could not gather signatures to put this issue on the May 2013 ballot. Although we took this issue to court, the county delayed matters long enough that the suit was eventually mooted (dismissed) due to the fact that more time had passed since the date of the ordinance than was allowed by law. The law allows no extensions, even when a suit has been filed.

What this whole thing means is that the conservative commissioners believe they can do anything they please in Lane County, and by denying a referendum, avoid any possibility of the voters rejecting their actions. I urge all voters to vote against Commissioners Bozievich, Leiken and Stewart to punish them for their gross disregard of the will of their constituents.

Duncan Rhodes
Eugene

ALREADY COMPROMISED

Bob Warren's Viewpoint (4/24) looking back at two memos from 1991 ignores an important piece of the puzzle that should have informed his conclusion that environmentalists are missing the opportunity to compromise in the current round of pro-logging legislation in Congress. That missing piece: Our forest ecosystems and fish and wildlife habitat were logged nearly to extinction leading up to the early 1990s.

The 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, now 20 years old, was a huge compromise by environmental interests — it set aside some areas for protecting and restoring

old-growth forest habitat devastated by logging while allowing continued logging in other areas, including mature and old-growth forests. Since the plan was put in place, logging of public lands in Oregon has continued to generate nearly 400 million board feet a year (on average) to the timber industry. Much of this has been thinning in young, managed plantations that most environmentalists don't oppose. Hardly a zero-cut position, and generally a win-win for our forests and economy.

In the current push to up logging on our public lands, it's simply inaccurate to describe the environmental position as being unwilling to compromise. The fact is our forests, clean water and wildlife can't afford any more political compromise.

Chandra LeGue
Western Oregon Field Coordinator
Oregon Wild

A POSITIVE FUTURE

After following the Lane County commissioners' actions for the last few years, I'm thoroughly disgusted with the bias towards the clearcut logging and mining industries that Faye Stewart and

Jay Bozievich have promoted. Here in Dexter we had absolutely *no* help from those two commissioners to stop the destruction of Parvin Butte by a gravel mining operation in the heart of our community. Marc Kardell, the county attorney, and Commissioners Rob Handy and Pete Sorenson spoke out for us and the need to change the flawed land use laws that allowed this injustice to take place.

The push to clear-cut 1.6 million acres of public forests on O&C lands is absolutely the opposite direction we should be going in light of climate change and species extinction. Deforestation is the second-biggest cause of global warming. There are sustainable methods of logging that create profit and maintain healthy forests.

The shady tactic of gerrymandering voting districts has also shown their true colors. There are many alternatives to create revenue and jobs in Lane County that do not contribute to the harm of future generations. We need to elect Kevin Matthews and Dawn Lesley and work toward a positive future.

Pam Driscoll
Dexter

VIEWPOINT BY NIRIA A GARCIA

Pesticide Drift

BAD FOREST PRACTICES CROSS CULTURAL LINES

As an environmental studies major at the UO I've gotten very used to discussing issues of injustice and land degradation through a scholarly/ objective lens; however, I had never drawn these connections back to myself and how they affect me as an Oregonian. Never would I have imagined that a trip out to interview a community affected by pesticide drift — a predominantly middle class, white conservative community in Gold Beach — would connect directly to the working-class Latino-immigrant farmer community I grew up with in the Rogue Valley.

"What does this have to do with me?" were the exact thoughts going through my head on the drive down to Gold Beach. Convinced of my disconnection, I was reluctant to feel a sense of investment or commitment to this issue. My thinking began to change during our first interview with Kathryn and Erik Rickard, both Gold Beach property owners who believe their dog's wasting disease, along with their recently emerging health issues, are directly linked to the sprays.

When we interviewed Kathryn about why she decided to take action to stop aerial pesticide spray, she truthfully responded, "to be perfectly honest, I didn't want to pick this up ... I was just going along with my life and just didn't want anything extra." She went on to elaborate on the overbearing demands of everyday life as a mother, wife, student and medical transcriptionist. It wasn't until she began fighting for her own health, along with that of her dog, that she



found herself doing battle at the intersection of bad pesticide policies and public health rights.

I still wondered, "What does the struggle of property-owning, white community have to do with my own struggle coming from an immigrant Latino community in southern Oregon?" The tipping point for my paradigm shift was when, that afternoon, we interviewed James, a logger who for decades has worked for the forestry company that was spraying timber that day. James was perhaps the most affected by the sprays and as a result must now take dangerously potent drugs everyday to combat paralysis. He, like his neighbors, is pro-timber but against aerial pesticide

sprays because of the threat to his community. Pinned between fighting for his own health versus fighting for the industry from which he makes his livelihood, it was in that moment that in James, I saw the reflection of my dad, brother and community members who, for decades have worked for the forestry industry as well.

This led me to wonder if these folks who have felt the effects of drift are suffering these severe symptoms and economic losses, what about the people who go into these sprayed areas to work and replant trees? Who is doing this work and what are they experiencing? At this point I found myself hearing two parallel narratives that might not yet be connected due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Had I never taken this trip I would have probably continued to perceive the struggle of this coastal community as a separate issue from that of the Latino community I grew up in.

The long drive back to Eugene with my fellow UO students was partly sunny but mostly rainy, and as I looked at the rain I thought about the water cycle. Could it be that the rain shooting down onto our windshield

could once have been the same water that fell down onto those forestlands and carried with them the pesticides that contaminated the wells that made the Cedar Valley people and my relatives sick?

Niria A Garcia of Eugene is an environmental studies major at the University of Oregon.