

I don't want guns taken from people who purchased them legally. I just want us to protect our children and fellow citizens.

*Christopher Michaels
Eugene*

AMAZING RESOURCES

Mental illness is a hot topic these days. It seems everyone and their mother has an opinion on how it affects society, why it exists and how it should be remedied. While discussions like these raise awareness and are sometimes even productive, they rarely bring it home and focus the issue locally.

A person living with a mental illness in Eugene — and their family and friends — has access to a few supports that they likely do not even know about; I have personal experience with two such supports: Laurel Hill Center and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Lane County.

The former strives to promote the ability to live independently; this can range from supported employment and housing to Assertive Community Treatment, covering things like finding a job, communicating needs to an employer, sending rent reminders, education on best nutritional practices and evidence-based intensive psychological treatment out in the community. Laurel Hill Center also offers classes on a myriad subjects through its Pathways Learning Center.

Similarly, NAMI Lane County provides education, support and advocacy for people in the mental health community. A largely volunteer-driven organization, most of its classes and support groups are peer-led and free, which helps people feel more comfortable and makes it easier to receive help when it is needed. Additionally, NAMI does a great deal of work promoting compassion and understanding in the community, working

with local businesses, other professionals and elected officials.

Both organizations could be amazing supports, if only people knew about them! Please help spread the word!

*Ryan Moore
Eugene*

BAT FAN

Halloween is on the way with all the spooks that come with it. There is one creature that has become less sinister for me this year: the large brown bat. Over the summer I'd often take my dog out for exercise in the Springfield High School parking lot at sunset. She's a terrier and has a lot of energy to run off after a long hot day and the fenced parking lot is big enough and handy. The neighbors are also coming out into their yards or to stretch their legs on the sidewalks once the heat passed, and soon I noticed "other neighbors" of whom I'd been unaware.

Attracted by the flying insects, that were in turn attracted by the parking lot lighting, were these beautiful bats out for their evening feast. I don't know how it is that I'd never noticed them before, with their acrobatic loop-the-loops, scooping up their dinner. Often one would fly close enough, about 15 feet away, for me to get a good look at some details of their little bodies. What terrific joy they provided me and my dog, and I soon took their sighting as a good omen for the day. There were never more than four together at any time.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has a fact sheet online about bats found in the state. It's full of interesting information that puts aside fear and myth to give an appreciative perspective to our flying cousins. Bats are the only mammals that fly, and they are more closely related to us than they are to mice or rodents, as commonly thought. Also, they aren't blind at all. They aren't interested enough

VIEWPOINT BY ANDY STAHL

Streamside Buffers Threatened

BLM SEEKS TO DOUBLE RIPARIAN LOGGING LEVELS

Each month when you pay your electricity bill a generous portion of your payment is spent to restore salmon in the Northwest. In fact, when you write that check, you're contributing to the largest fish and wildlife conservation effort in our nation's history.

Since 1980, Pacific Northwest electricity consumers have paid more than \$14 billion for fish and wildlife conservation. That's right — billion. Under the 1980 Northwest Power Act, one-quarter of your monthly cost to buy Bonneville Power Administration electricity pays to restore streams, repair culverts that block fish migration, and other vital salmon conservation measures.

The scope of this effort testifies to the great value we place on protecting and restoring salmon. These dollars have allowed fish and wildlife managers to bring these fish back from the brink of extinction.

Today your personal investment in salmon restoration is being threatened by a single government agency — the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The BLM wants to double logging levels next to streams across its 2.5 million western Oregon acres.

If they get their way, BLM bureaucrats (whose salaries are paid, in part, by logging revenue) threaten to squander the billions of dollars that we have spent over the past 35 years to protect fish.

Let me share some details:

- Currently, the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan protects rivers and streams on BLM and national forest land from logging and other harmful actions. That plan calls for buffers along salmon streams that scientists say are the bare minimum necessary for salmon recovery.

- The BLM wants to excuse itself from the Northwest Forest Plan so it can increase logging to cover its bureaucrats' salaries. BLM has released a new draft plan that proposes slashing streamside buffers by more than half.

So what's going on here? Have the needs of salmon changed since the Northwest Forest Plan was adopted?

Not a bit. If anything, the science showing the importance of ample buffers next to salmon streams is more settled than it was in 1994. Those buffers help keep streams cool. The buffers are the source of logs in rivers that young salmon need to survive. The streamside forest pumps nutrients into the water, keeping rivers healthy and productive.

Perhaps the salmon have recovered so that they no longer need stream buffer protection? I wish that were so. We have made a lot of progress, thanks to your investment. Salmon numbers have rebounded in many rivers. But salmon species in western Oregon are still threatened with extinction. Nor will the need for stream protection go away when salmon are restored. Keeping salmon runs healthy will require that your investment be protected in perpetuity.

The BLM's proposal is so radical that it's drawing biting criticism from other federal agencies. The National Marine Fisheries Service described the BLM's proposed plan as "extraordinary." In fact, the fisheries service said, the BLM claims that the scientists had it all wrong when they created those buffers.

"It is an axiom of science," the service wrote in official comments to the BLM plan, "that extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof, yet the (BLM's plan) provides little data or even logical cohesion in support of this extraordinary shift in fundamental scientific assumptions."

You've been paying — month after month, year after year — to help bring salmon back from the brink. I'm guessing most of you are OK with that; there's no greater symbol of this magnificent place than healthy, wild salmon.

My question to you is simple: Are you going to let one rogue federal agency ruin all the good work that you've paid for?

Look at your last utility bill. If you're an EWEB customer, 15 percent of your power cost is spent on salmon restoration (EWEB buys

60 percent of its power from BPA, so 60 percent of 25 percent = 15 percent). Springfield Utility Board customers have 25 percent of their power cost invested in fish conservation because SUB buys all of its power from BPA.

Then call Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Rep. Peter DeFazio. Tell them you are appalled that BLM's bureaucrats want to jeopardize your personal investment in salmon restoration.

Andy Stahl is a forester and executive director of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics. He can be reached at andy@fsee.org.

