

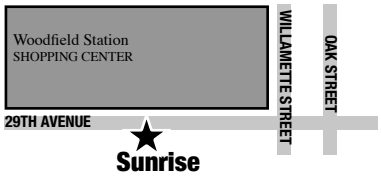


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letters

DEATH FROM A THOUSAND CUTS

The board of the Southwest Hills Neighborhood Association, SHiNA, voted (7-0) July 6 to oppose EWEB's proposed 40th and Patterson water project until and only if EWEB can better demonstrate need: need to build two massive reservoirs rather than one, need to clear cut more than two acres mature Eugene forest.

But the front page Register-Guard story 7/18 and an EW letter 7/22 have disparaged close-by neighbors as "NIMBYs" who oppose the larger public good. Our SHiNA neighborhood, I point out, is more than a mile from the proposed project. The site is not in our visual backyard, traffic backyard, etc.

The emerald city Eugene, however, is suffering death from a thousand cuts to backyard forests.

The grove of large conifer trees in question, about 60 percent water by weight, sequesters carbon and counters climate change. The grove helps cool all of Eugene on hot days, helps clean the air of pollutants, retards the fast spread of wild-fire, as well as contributing other civic values including aesthetic value and wildlife habitat, notably for Monarch butterflies.

The Eugene Climate Ordinance and Climate Action Plan – CAP2.0 – calls for 30 percent minimum forest canopy. But Eugene is less than 21 percent, going backward as one small woodlot after another is cut for housing, roads, utilities, better living room views.

Councilor Emily Semple and Councilor Matt Keating have proposed a stronger Eugene tree protection ordinance, an important step to protect our trees.

*Ralph McDonald
SHiNA Co-Chair
Eugene*

EWEB HAS PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE

EWEB is the best provider of any service that I've ever had. I've been a customer since 1974. One hundred percent of the time when I turn on the faucet, good, safe water comes out. Not one interruption of service in all of these years! Electric service is nearly as reli-

able, despite a few outages that were the result of acts of nature.

EWEB is a public agency run by an elected board of volunteers. They have earned our trust. If they think we need new water reservoirs in south Eugene, where I live, I will take their word for it. EWEB purchased a site decades ago for this purpose. They planned for the future. The future is now. Thanks, EWEB!

*Richie Weinman
Eugene*

TIME TO TALK ABOUT URBAN FIRE RISKS

If the last few years, especially 2020, have taught us anything, it is that we need to start having serious conversations about the risks our community faces from a major urban fire. On July 10, 2021, the Eugene/Springfield Fire Department was called to put out three separate fires on the south side of Skinner's Butte. It took them 45 minutes and two trees were a total loss. What if it hadn't gone quite so well?

That fire didn't just burn some grass and trees. It heightened my alarm at the potential loss of Eugene's first Historic District that is situated mere feet from the edge of that fire. The Campbell House (c 1892), the Mims House (c 1870), and Shelton McMurphey Johnson House (1888) are just a few of those historic buildings that could be lost if a fire got out of control in the heart of downtown Eugene.

Eugene has spent a lot of time working on keeping the potential fire hazards at bay, including banning fireworks in certain parts of town. However, I believe it's time to start talking to all of our neighbors about what they can do to help with this effort. How can urban homeowners work on their defensible space around their property? This is not just a rural issue. We all need to work in our own backyards.

I encourage you to call your city counselor or neighborhood association. Ask if they know how we can work on defensible space in Eugene.

*Leah Murray
Executive Director
Shelton McMurphey Johnson House*

The causes of poverty, substance abuse or alcoholism, transcend geography and race from Appalachia to Detroit to Los Angeles. People having children they can't afford, failing to value education, spending money on tobacco and drugs, and the failure or inability to break a family history of dysfunction all contribute.

The events leading to Payne's death were caused by his use of meth and Angie Payne having to call for help.

*Greg Williams
Noti*

THE RESERVOIR IS WORTH IT

Regarding the controversy about EWEB's plan for two new large water reservoirs on its 11 acre property in the Eugene south hills known as Patterson Hill: Opposition is mainly from neighboring residents, which is understandable, as they have long enjoyed a beautiful park in their backyards virtually unknown to the general public.

We endured the construction of a new water reservoir EWEB and their contractors built several years ago about 200 feet from our front door. We can confirm that it is not pleasant to live next to a large construction project with heavy equipment, traffic, noise, dust and general disruption. It would be better for the Patterson Hill neighbors to endure this disruption over two to three years only once, build both reservoirs and be done, rather than two to three years now, then another two to three years within the next decade. The cost savings from building both at once will benefit the entire community of ratepayers, so it seems a win-win for both the Patterson Hill neighbors and the community.

In our case, we thought it only fair for us to endure a couple of years of turmoil for the privilege of having one of the best municipal water supplies in the world. It would seem the height of selfishness to try to deny the entire community the benefit of a safe, plentiful and reliable water supply so you can have your own free quiet backyard parkland in perpetuity.

*Alexandre Lockfeld
Joanne Carlson
Eugene*

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