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Yes, the NW Forest Plan can stand improvement

The Northwest Forest Plan, the Clinton administration’s effort to get beyond the divisive era of “forest management by lawsuit and injunction,” isn’t popular in rural areas but has achieved some notable gains for the environment. Now, a major revision is in the works and it’s time to consider whether it’s possible to give timber communities more harvest while still avoiding excesses of the past.

In an analysis for Pamplin Media Group last week (tinyurl.com/kh4rhna), environmental writer Paul Koberstein does a good job laying out the issues. EO Media Group fully explored many of the same topics in an award-winning series in 2011.

Clatsop County forests are predominantly owned by the state, while those in Pacific County, Wash., are overwhelmingly in private hands. But elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, communities that rely on U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management forests have experienced a deep economic recession in logging and wood processing, with related impacts on all other small-town businesses. This, in turn, is directly responsible for the “two Oregons” problem—a robust economy in and near the Willamette Valley and Portland, versus entrenched poverty and social ills elsewhere in the state.

It has been argued, with considerable validity, that logging was long carried out at an unsustainable pace due to political pressures from Republican presidential administrations and the Northwest congressional delegation. In the 1980s remaining stands of old-growth forests were fast disappearing and watersheds were being degraded by logging in riparian zones near streams. It became obvious that responsible forest management can’t co-exist with the whipsaw character of national partisan politics.

The Northwest Forest Plan represented a start toward consistent, science-based management. Itself

a product of political deals, the plan certainly has never been perfect. But Koberstein reports that environmental groups are in an uproar after the Forest Service last November floated the news that it intends to begin revising the plan by again devolving some management decisions to the managers of 17 national forests on the mainland West Coast and nine additional areas in Western Oregon managed by the BLM.

This dismay stems not only from fears that reopening this debate might diminish overall protections, but also because individual forest managers used to be notorious for operating forests as private fiefdoms, making decisions that overtly favored industry. Inappropriate timber sales were made in marginal areas that cost taxpayers money after expenses for things like road building were deducted from proceeds.

There is growing political and economic pressure to ensure the forest plan delivers something closer to the 1.2 billion board feet of timber per year once promised. Harvests are actually around half that total. This broken commitment to industry and rural communities places the entire current regulatory regime at risk.

In an American West that is already experiencing species migration and droughts that many see as precursors to full-fledged climate change, it’s vital we continue to protect large forests. But doing so will require that environmental interests negotiate in good faith to make certain rural economies are returned to something better approximating long-term viability.

Climate change is real, Congress isn’t

Risky Business doesn’t care whether humans caused global warming

The politicization of climate change is one of the stranger aspects of recent American history. The big hang-up of many climate deniers is whether mankind caused global warming.

Greg Page says he doesn’t know or care whether human activity causes climate change. But as an official with the Midwest grain company Cargill, Page does know that climate change is upon us and that it will cause enormous costs for food producers.

Page is part of a business consortium called the Risky Business Project. It formed last June. Burt Helm of *The New York Times* profiled the group on Feb. 1. The project’s report is “Risky Business: The Economic Risks of Climate Change in the United States.”

The striking thing about the Risky Business coalition is that it includes high profile members who do not agree politically. But they do agree that denying climate change would be irresponsible. Its members span a spectrum that includes former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former George W. Bush Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson.

The politicization of just about

everything is a benefit to campaign fundraisers and ideological media, but it only yields stalemate. No business would tolerate that approach. In fact, many large corporations have long recognized the dimensions of climate change. The Weyerhaeuser Co. has a climate change strategy. And despite Congress’ standoff, the CIA and the Department of Agriculture long ago admitted this was coming.

In raising the alarm about climate change, this high profile group of business people is at odds with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as well as the fossil fuel industry. Helm notes that the Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce “parted ways with the national Chamber of Commerce in 2011 specifically because the views of Seattle members on climate change differed so drastically with the sort of climate-denying statements the national group was making.”

Congress is failing us on a broad range of pressing matters. None are quite as big as climate change. While the rest of America goes to work and adapts to changing circumstances, Congress collects its salary and awaits its pension while doing nothing.

OPINION

Picture Freedom to support the First Amendment

By KEN PAULSON
The First Amendment Center

You can’t take freedom of speech for granted these days. The horrific murders of Charlie Hebdo cartoonists and other staff members in Paris and the threat of bombings at movie theaters for booking *The Interview* are jolting reminders that freedom of speech is often vulnerable.

The two global incidents also illustrate that some of the most powerful and provocative free speech is conveyed visually, through cartoons, films, photographs, art and graphics.

In the United States, the First Amendment protects the expression of all ideas, regardless of medium, yet 2014 surveys by the Newseum Institute’s First Amendment Center and the Knight Foundation indicated that more than a third of adult Americans believe that the First Amendment goes “too far” in the rights it guarantees, a view shared by almost a fourth of the high school students surveyed.

Of course, those surveys took place before the Paris attacks and the threats to movie theaters, and we can only hope that Americans have a freshened perspective on the values of these key liberties. Yet it’s undeniably chilling that the five freedoms of the First Amendment — speech, press, religion, petition and assembly — are seen by millions of Americans as excessive.

A silver lining in the Knight Foundation survey: It found that students who spend some time on the First Amendment in a classroom are far more likely to embrace its freedoms.

In that spirit, educators and journalists are teaming up next month to encourage high school and college students to use their free speech to build awareness of the First Amendment.

Picture Freedom, a nationwide



To enter the campaign, all you have to do is post an original image — something you’ve photographed, drawn or designed — to Instagram, Twitter or Facebook with the hashtag #PictureFreedom. Posts should be public, and if a post is shared on Facebook, the account also needs to allow “everybody” to follow it.



The event will run this week, timed to coincide with the Journalism Education Association’s Scholastic Journalism Week. Find details, and rules for the contest at <http://1forall.us/picture-freedom-contest/>

scholarship contest that launched Sunday, invites students to post photos and images illustrating freedom of expression on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. By sharing original images with the hashtag #picturefreedom, students are automatically eligible to win. A team of educators and First Amendment experts will review the posts for originality, creativity and clarity in conveying the theme of freedom and will award 25 \$1,000 scholarships.

Picture Freedom has the support of the American Society of News Editors, the Journalism Education Association, the John Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence in First Amendment Studies at

Middle Tennessee State University, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Newseum Institute’s First Amendment Center, and hundreds of teachers and journalists.

The event will run until Saturday, timed to coincide with the Journalism Education Association’s Scholastic Journalism Week. Find details, and rules for the contest at <http://bit.ly/1E58pEF>

At a time when free speech is so often in the headlines, 1 For All wants to encourage young Americans to reflect on how freedom of expression enriches their lives and strengthens their nation.

It’s unlikely that a 221-year-old amendment to the Constitution will go viral, but it’s our hope that young Americans will help us celebrate what makes America special.

What makes America the most powerful, creative, dynamic and ambitious nation on the planet? Just picture freedom.

Ken Paulson is the dean of the College of Mass Communication at Middle Tennessee State University and president of the Newseum Institute’s First Amendment Center. He can be reached at ken.paulson@mtsu.edu

Jeb Bush’s brainless trust

By MAUREEN DOWD
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — I had been keeping an open mind on Jeb Bush.

I mean, sure, as Florida governor, he helped his brother snatch the 2000 election.

And that led to two decade-long botched wars that cost tens of thousands of lives and trillions of dollars. The nation will be dealing for a long time with struggling veterans and the loss of American prestige. Not to mention that W. let Wall Street gamble away the economy, which is only now finally creeping back.

But, all that aside, shouldn’t John Ellis Bush have the right to make the case that he is his own man?

In his foreign policy speech in Chicago Wednesday, Jeb was dismissive toward those who want to know where he stands in relation to his father and brother. “In fact,” he said, mockingly, “this is a great, fascinating thing in the political world for some reason.”

For some reason?

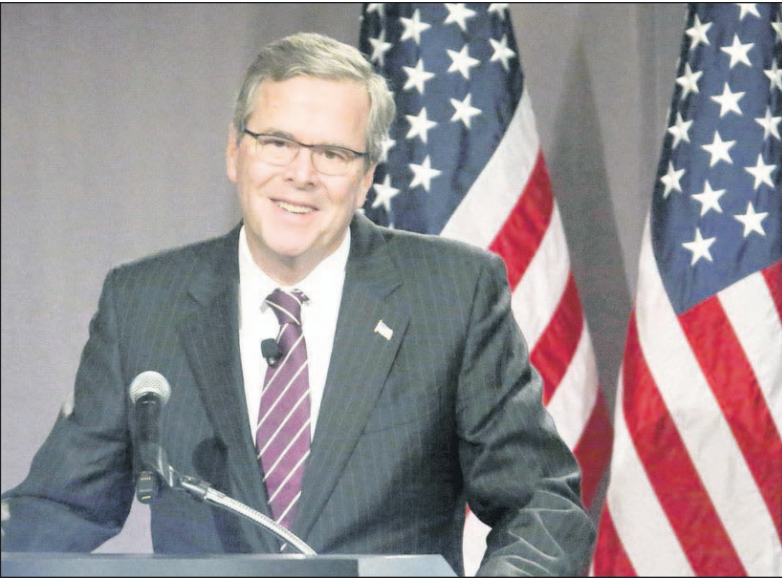
Like the Clintons, the Bushes drag the country through national traumas that spring from their convoluted family dynamic and then disingenuously wonder why we concern ourselves with their family dynamic.

Without their last names, Hillary and Jeb would not be front-runners, buoyed by networks of donors grateful for appointments or favors bestowed by the family. (When Jeb and W. ran gubernatorial races in 1994, they both mined their mother’s Christmas card list for donors.)

Yet Jeb is bristling with Jane Austen-style condescension, acting as though he would still be where he is if his last name were Tree. The last two presidents in his party were his father and brother, and his brother crashed the family station wagon into the globe, and Jeb is going to have to address that more thoroughly than saying “there were mistakes made in Iraq for sure.”

He says he doesn’t want to focus on “the past,” and who can blame him? But how can he talk about leading America into the future if he can’t honestly assess the past, or his family’s controversial imprint?

In his speech, he blamed President Barack Obama for the void that hatched ISIS, which he also noted didn’t exist in 2003 at the dawn of “the liberation of Iraq.” Actually, his brother’s



AP Photo/M. Spencer Green
Former Florida Gov. Jeb. Bush speaks to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs Feb. 18 in Chicago.

er’s invasion of Iraq is what spawned al-Qaida in Iraq, which drew from an insurgency of Sunni soldiers angry about being thrown out of work by the amateurish and vainglorious viceroys, Paul Bremer.

Although Jeb likes to act as though his family is irrelevant to his ambitions, Bushworld stalwarts recite the Bush dynasty narrative like a favorite fairy tale:

The wonky Jeb, not the cocky W., was always 41’s hope. H.W. and Bar never thought W., unprepared, unruly and with a chip on his shoulder, would be president. His parents’ assumption that he was The One got in Jeb’s head and now the 62-year-old feels he needs “to try to correct and make up for some of W.’s mistakes,” as one family friend put it. The older Bush circle seems confident that Jeb sided with his father and Brent Scowcroft on the folly of letting the neocons push America into diverting from Osama to Saddam.

So for Bushworld, Jeb is the redeemer, the one who listens and talks in full sentences that make sense, the one who will restore the luster of the Bush name. But if you want to be your own person, you have to come up with your own people.

W. was a boy king, propped up by regents supplied by his father. Since he knew nothing about foreign affairs, his father surrounded him with his own advisers: Colin Powell, Condi Rice and Dick Cheney, who joined up with his pal Donald Rumsfeld and absconded with W.’s presidency.

Jeb, too, wanted to bolster his negligible foreign policy cred, so the day of his speech, his aide released a list of 21 advisers, 19 of whom had worked in the administrations of his father and his brother. The list starts with the estima-

ble James Baker. But then it shockingly veers into warmongers.

It’s mind-boggling, but there’s Paul Wolfowitz, the unapologetic designer of the doctrine of unilateralism and pre-emption, the naïve cheerleader for the Iraq invasion and the man who assured Congress that Iraqi oil would pay for the country’s reconstruction and that it was ridiculous to think we would need as many troops to control the country as Gen. Eric Shinseki, then the Army chief of staff, suggested.

For Bushworld, Jeb is the redeemer.

There’s John Hannah, Cheney’s national security adviser (cultivated by the scheming Ahmed Chalabi), who tried to stuff hyped-up junk on Saddam into Powell’s U.N. speech and who harbored bellicose ambitions about Iran; Stephen Hadley, who let the false 16-word assertion about Saddam trying to buy yellowcake in Niger into W.’s 2003 State of the Union; Porter Goss, the former CIA director who defended waterboarding.

There’s Michael Hayden, who publicly misled Congress about warrantless wiretapping and torture, and Michael Chertoff, the Homeland Security secretary who fumbled Katrina.

Jeb is also getting advice from Condi Rice, queen of the apocalyptic mushroom cloud. And in his speech he twice praised a supporter, Henry Kissinger, who advised prolonging the Vietnam War, which the Nixon White House thought might help with the 1972 election.

Why not bring back Scooter Libby? If he wants to reclaim the Bush honor, Jeb should be holding accountable those who inflicted deep scars on America, not holding court with them.

Where’s the shame? For some reason, Jeb doesn’t see it.