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What are they waiting for?

Gov. Brown and state Land Board must say the obvious about LNG

If you needed a reminder of why we don't want a liquefied natural gas terminal on the Skipanon, *The New York Times* Business section provided it Sunday.

"A Global Chill Hits Home" was a startling report on downward job trends in America's heartland, all driven by China's slowdown. For American commodity manufacturers who have fed China's exploding economy, this is an earthquake.

"Whether it is roustabouts and other oil field workers in Texas and North Dakota, miners in Minnesota, farmers in Iowa, or heavy equipment makers and sellers in Illinois, the reason for the fear is the same: a sudden plunge in demand for commodities," noted the *Times*.

North Dakota's booming oil business looks much different today. Its crash is a reminder of how Big Energy typifies boom and bust economic cycles. And that is one big reason not to want an LNG terminal in our midst.

The people who make the real money on an LNG plant are those who build it and flip it to another owner.

Among the disappointments in our region's decadelong LNG debate, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) looms large. There is no national strategy for where to put these massive facilities. FERC is comfortable to license the plant that

gets through its process first.

The most revealing thing about FERC is that it has never rejected a request for a permit for an LNG terminal. If you need an example of a federal bureaucracy that consumes massive amounts of paper and the public's time, but does nothing to advance the regional discussion about national energy policy, FERC fits the bill.

Fortunately for our region, certain powers in the LNG siting process are retained by the state. Those especially relate to the Coastal Zone Management Act. It already has been decided that Oregon LNG's proposal for a terminal site on the Skipanon does not meet state law, because the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners denied Oregon LNG's permit for a pipeline.

FERC may not approve a project that is inconsistent with a state's coastal zone management plan. That describes the Skipanon site.

The ball is in Salem's court. It is time for Gov. Kate Brown or other members of the state Land Board to state the obvious.

What is Gov. Brown, Treasurer Ted Wheeler and Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins waiting for?

Dementia takes costly toll on coast

While our nation faces a tsunami of rising care costs for people suffering from dementia, these challenges threaten to be even more overwhelming in rural areas like the Pacific Northwest's coastal counties.

A study released in recent days found dementia care to be economically devastating for Medicare patients in the last five years of life — far more costly than treatment for cancer or heart disease. End-of-life costs for Americans facing these three top killers totaled \$287,038 for dementia, \$175,136 for heart ailments and \$173,383 for cancer.

Medicare ends up paying about the same amount for all three diseases, nearly \$100,000. When it comes to cancer and heart disease, supplemental policies often pick up much of the balance. But with dementia, private coverage for long-term care is expensive and rarely purchased. As a result, dementia expenses are especially punishing to patients, their spouses and families.

"On average, the out-of-pocket cost for a patient with dementia was \$61,522 — more than 80 percent higher than the cost for someone with heart disease or cancer," according to *The New York Times*. "The reason is that

dementia patients need caregivers to watch them, help with basic activities like eating, dressing and bathing, and provide constant supervision to make sure they do not wander off or harm themselves. None of those costs were covered by Medicare."

Professional dementia care costs thousands of dollars a month, swiftly denuding savings. Driven to destitution, people with dementia finally may qualify for Medicaid-funded institutional care.

All these issues are magnified in rural areas like ours. Incomes and savings tend to be lower. Nursing and assisted-living facilities are less available. Children and grandchildren may be living far away in pursuit of jobs. Coastal counties have among the highest percentages of older residents in Oregon and Washington.

What to do? This is not an issue that can be fixed by minor adjustments in Medicare and Medicaid. We must re-envision all our concepts for caring for dementia patients and the elderly in general. Federal tax policy needs to do a far better job of helping families cope with care costs, while federal spending priorities must be redirected to aiding vulnerable citizens.

GUEST COLUMN

Let Oregon's wolf plan work

It is time to delist

By JIM AKENSON
Oregon Hunters Association

When I look at Google Earth, my first reaction is to zoom in and out for perspective.

Greater perspective helps us gain a better view of wolves in Oregon, and how removing them from the state's threatened and endangered list will allow them to be managed as a species that has successfully recovered.

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report from April 2009, states that there were already between 60,000 and 70,000 wolves in North America at that time, including an estimated 12,000 in Alberta and British Columbia, and at least 1,645 in the northern Rocky Mountains recovery area, which is recognized as a southern extension of the robust Canadian population.

Zooming in tighter to Idaho, which was a node for Rocky Mountain recovery with 15 wolves reintroduced in 1995 and another 20 in 1996, we see that Idaho's wolf numbers tripled in just two years to 115, and reached 192 by 2000.

As of late 2014, there existed a minimum pack count of 104 (with another 23 state border packs) and an estimated population of 770 wolves. This all follows six years of regulated hunting and trapping of wolves.

Idaho has been the source population, through dispersal, for wolf re-establishment in Oregon. The first Oregon pack to be confirmed was the Wenaha Pack, documented in 2009.

Our state anticipated an inevitable wolf movement from Idaho, and by 2005 had produced and adopted

a Wolf Management Plan. This three-phased approach called for evaluating an option for delisting once the criteria were met for Phase II.

The criteria called for four breeding packs to successfully rear two or more pups for three successive years. By 2014, these criteria had been met and exceeded, as there were nine known successful breeding pairs of wolves in Oregon, including eight packs in northeast Oregon and one in the southern Cascade Mountains. In recent weeks, there have been three wolf activity areas identified in southern Oregon. The minimum population is estimated at 81, not counting this year's pups (13 of the 16 documented pairs had litters this year).

Now, zoom out to include the entire northern Rocky Mountain region, and it becomes obvious that Oregon's wolves are well connected and thriving, and it is equally clear they are ready to be removed from Oregon's endangered species list.

We need to look more broadly on the issue of wolves and expand our focus to see beyond state lines.

We also need to look at how wolves have affected neighboring states to gain a clearer picture of what we can expect in the coming years.

In Idaho's Unit 26, within the Middle Fork Zone of central Idaho, wolves were reintroduced in the mid-1990s. The elk population was 1,270 and hunter harvest in 2006 was 89 bull elk.

By 2011, counts for Unit 26 were just 366 total elk and hunter harvest was a meager 24 bulls. Hunter numbers for the three units comprising the Middle Fork Zone dropped in half, going from 1,678 in 2006 to 821 in 2011. The pattern of decline continued with only 757 elk hunters going to those wilderness units in 2012.

The pattern here is crippling for



Jim Akenson

the local rural economies, where hunters start their journeys to the backcountry. Wolf predation might not be the only factor influencing central Idaho elk numbers, but with a high wolf pack density in the Middle Fork Zone, it is the dominating factor according to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Contrary to claims made by animal protectionist groups, delisting does not remove protections for wolves in Oregon. Wolves will remain a protected species, and they are still federally listed in all but the eastern-most sliver of Oregon. Delisting will, however, start the journey down the road to Phase III and allow the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife more options for applying management practices.

Following through on the promises made to Oregon's agricultural community will also foster better tolerance of wolves and maintain the credibility of Oregon's Wolf Plan.

We need to look more broadly on the issue of wolves and expand our focus to be able to see beyond state lines. Wolves have demonstrated the ability to look beyond state borders, and we should, too.

Oregon developed a very effective management plan with detailed criteria to recover wolves in this state, while also protecting other wildlife species and agriculture. It is vital that we carefully follow the direction of the wolf plan, which was developed with buy-in from many diverse stakeholders.

We must stick with the plan and delist wolves in Oregon.

Jim Akenson, conservation director for the Oregon Hunters Association, holds a master's degree and a bachelor's degree in natural resources. He had long tenures working for the University of Idaho and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. In Idaho, he managed a remote field station and conducted studies on cougar and wolf predation effects on big-game populations.

Mideast negotiators, 'Have a nice life'

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
New York Times News Service

In *The New York Times* review of the American Mideast negotiator Dennis Ross' important new history of Israeli-U.S. relations, *Doomed to Succeed*, a telling moment on the eve of the 1991 Madrid peace conference caught my attention.

The Palestinian delegation had raised some last-minute reservations with the secretary of state, James A. Baker III. Baker was livid and told the Palestinians before walking out on them: "With you people, the souk never closes, but it is closed with me. Have a nice life."

I was struck because that kind of straight talk has been all too absent from U.S. Middle East diplomacy lately. Israelis and Palestinians — way too long at war — are trapped in political hothouses of their own making, incapable of surprising each other with anything positive, and desperately in need of a friendly third-party dose of common sense.

Listening to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel claim last week that the Palestinian grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini — who met Hitler in the early 1940s — gave Hitler the idea for mass murdering all the Jews, you can only conclude that Bibi is in a sealed bubble, with no one around him able to say: "You know Bibi, that is provably historically false. You might want to keep that one to yourself."

We forget how much the parties need America at times to play the reality principle to break the paralysis in their internal politics. Sometimes their leaders need to say to their cabinets: "I would never agree to this, but those damn Americans broke my arm. See it dangling here! It's broken! I had to say yes!" Israeli and Palestinian internal

politics are brutal. As Baker learned, if you don't get in their faces on a regular basis, you're listed as "nap time" on their daily schedules.

What would such a U.S. message sound like today? It would start by saying publicly to the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, "You rejected Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's unprecedented September 2008 offer of a two-state solution, in which, as The Jerusalem Post later reported, 'Olmert essentially agreed to forgo sovereignty of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, Judaism's holiest site, and proposed that in the framework of a peace agreement, the area containing the religious sites in Jerusalem would be managed by a special committee ... from five nations: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Palestine, the United States and Israel.'

"The *Post* also said, 'Olmert laid out for [Abbas] ... a large map upon which he outlined the borders of the future Palestinian state,' which included a roughly equal swap of Palestinian land in the West Bank to house Israeli settlements in return for parts of Israel.

"Abbas, Olmert is still waiting for your answer.

"It's clear that with the Palestinians now split between Hamas-led Gaza and your Fatah-led West Bank, there is no single, legitimate Palestinian Authority to formally approve a comprehensive peace deal. And it is also true that you have been committed to nonviolence — and bless your for that. But where is your creative plan for an interim solution that can at least move the process forward? Why do you just sit there like Buddha, rejecting creative ideas like the one put forward by Secretary of State John Kerry?"

As for Netanyahu, the blunt U.S. message might be: "You are going to be a historic figure: the Israeli leader who left Israel with nothing other



Thomas L. Friedman

than a one-state solution, in which Israel will gradually give up being Jewish or democratic. We know exactly what a one-state solution looks like. Just look out your window: Palestinians grabbing a kitchen knife and stabbing any Israeli Jew, and masked settler vigilantes retaliating back."

I visited Monday with Israel's very decent defense minister, Moshe Ya'alon. Hearing him describe Israel's strategic theater is hair-raising: The nation has nonstate actors, dressed as civilians, armed with rockets, nested among civilians, on four of five borders — Sinai, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria — and he does not want to chance opening a fifth one by just evacuating the West Bank. I get it.

But there has to be some alternative to doing nothing or doing everything. It needs to be an alternative that at least tests Palestinians to really control some territory — and creates some hope that the two communities can separate securely. And it has to involve Israel at least stopping all settlement-building in the heart of the West Bank, in the areas long designated for a Palestinian state. Some 70,000 of Israel's 400,000 settlers now live in those areas, and it's making any separation increasingly impossible.

This is what Israel's friends are missing. Israel has so much creative energy — in science, tech and medicine. But you don't see it today in diplomacy. It's true that Israel can survive this war of the knives. But will it thrive? Will it remain a place where you will want to visit and raise their kids?

It may be that Israel has no choice. But Israel is a really powerful country. It's not a disarmed Costa Rica. No one expects it to give up everything. But fewer and fewer can understand why it puts so much energy into explaining why it can't do anything, why the Palestinians are irredeemably awful and why nothing Israel could do would affect their behavior. I truly worry that Israel is slowly committing suicide, with all the best arguments.

Where to write

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