

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Time has come for solving wild horse problem

The concept of wild horses running as free as the wind across the open spaces of the West is admittedly appealing. The horses, which over the centuries have become a part of the Western landscape, offer a glimpse of the old days.

But the difference between the concept of wild horses and the reality is vast.

The reality is the population of invasive wild horses is so far out of control that they damage the land, streams and rivers, causing harm to the habitat of native species such as greater sage grouse, pronghorn, deer, elk, fish and bighorn sheep. By destroying range land and stream banks, the horses reverse any progress that has been made by land managers and ranchers aimed at restoring habitat.

Ranchers say the wild horses have forced federal land managers to curtail livestock grazing in some areas. They fear the spiraling horse population will only mean more restrictions — and damage to range land.

But there's an even darker side to leaving wild horses unmanaged in the West. Just last week in Arizona, more



Larisa Bogardus/Bureau of Land Management

Wild horses from the Beaty Butte Management Area, adjacent to the Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge in southern Oregon. The Bureau of Land Management has come up with four plans for managing wild horses.

than 100 wild horses died, the victims of the drought that has overcome parts of the state. More horses will die of thirst and starvation as the drought continues and the land cannot sustain them.

Elsewhere, officials with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management have struggled with the overwhelming number of horses. The estimated wild horse population has grown to 86,000 and ranchers say it could as much as double every four years. BLM has rounded up tens of thousands of horses, but without

birth control and other efforts the population will continue to grow out of control. The cost of keeping horses in BLM holding facilities is estimated at \$1 billion for their lifetime.

The BLM has come up with a plan — actually, four plans — for reducing the wild horse population to 26,715, which they figure is a manageable and sustainable number. The plans include a variety of tactics, including the sale of horses without restriction, adoption, contraception and sterilization. One even suggests

giving as much as \$1,000 to anyone who adopts a horse.

Because Congress has the ultimate say on how the BLM will proceed, it's difficult to tell which option — or combination of options — will be used.

We urge Congress to approve an effective combination that will help BLM managers get the wild horse problem under control as quickly as possible.

Clearly, something needs to be done with the wild horses, because what's already been done hasn't worked.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Orr for House District 32

John Orr has our vote because we believe he has the best understanding of our Lower Columbia area. He will protect this place we call home.

John has lived and worked here for the last 28 years, and is not beholden to any outside influence.

John Orr stands for the following: responsible forest management, clean air and water, the local commercial fishing industry, and the protection of children. He has proven this by the work he has done here.

The importance of our Columbia River region calls for John Orr, whose experience and professional background qualify him to be the Oregon state representative for District 32.

CARL and JEAN DOMINEY
Astoria

What direction do you want?

It is time voters decide what kind of democracy they want in Oregon. They can have candidates with the strong financial backing of special interests, who show loyalty to their contributors first, and the citizens of their district second. Or, voters can embrace people-focused, issue-oriented, grassroots democracy like our campaign.

If I am elected, your voices will be heard on raising taxes on the 1 percent and the large corporations that have profited from doing business in Oregon. Their taxes have dropped dramatically over the years while their benefits have gone up.

With me, your voices will be heard on seeing our forests not only as sources of income, but as expanded recreation and carbon-storage areas. This will protect and enhance water for the North Coast, giving us timber for construction and new sources of revenue and jobs from our trees.

As it is, Salem can't respond to the need for revenue because it is choked by the grip of special interests. There is another way — a way that chooses solutions.

The question on the ballot is not only who your state representative should be, but what kind of government you want for Oregon.

JOHN ORR
Candidate, House District 32
Astoria

Sunset Empire pool is jewel in the crown

In response to the letter, "Vote 'no' on Sunset Empire bond" (The Daily Astorian, May 4): If our long beach is the crown of Seaside, then the pool is the jewel in the crown. The elderly have arthritis classes and, for many, social contacts that might not be available otherwise.

Families have wholesome activities that are affordable and create memories that last for generations. High school students train for competitions under the tutelage of master swimmers, and represent our North Coast in high school and college settings. Many of the young guards who train at the pool are taught valuable work ethics as they move into college or careers.

Elementary students get swim lessons during school every year. Babies receive lov-

ing attention and fun with parents and grandparents in warm water. In short, the Sunset Empire Parks and Recreation District should be enjoyed, celebrated, and supported. If you could see the plan for the expansion you would vote yes, definitely yes.

Thanks to the board for their hard work (they have jobs beside volunteering), the management and oversight of Skyler Archibald, and his love and vision for our community's potential, and the people who serve the patrons. It all adds up to fun and a bright future for the North Coast: a pool and programs that continue to improve because of the foresight and hard work of others before us.

Let's continue to work and plan to meet higher goals.

BARB MILLER
Seaside

Vote 'yes' for Clatsop health district levy

Please consider joining me in supporting Clatsop Care Health District by voting for their operating levy on May 15. I believe Clatsop Care Health District is a crucial piece of our community health care — it's here, and it's ours.

The health district operates in a hostile funding environment, in which both the federal government and the state of Oregon reimburse at a level guaranteed to make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to thrive. There's a reason hospitals no longer maintain long-term beds.

But the health district has thrived, in spite of the adversity, and now provides services to include a nursing home, an assisted living facility, a memory care facility and an

in-home care program, thanks to community support.

To make good care even better, I urge you to vote "yes" for Measure 4-192, and keep our local health care robust and able to provide the best service.

R. HOWARD CLARKE
Astoria

Vote Wev for county commissioner

Among Clatsop County Commission candidates in District 3, Pamela Wev qualifies as a public servant and is prepared to function effectively in a home rule county.

In 1988 a campaign to change the system of Clatsop County government to home rule was passed by voters: Yes — 4,904; No — 4,568. Since that date elected county commissions have hired a succession of 10 county managers.

Pamela Wev is the only District 3 candidate to file information in the voters' pamphlet for the primary election. A land use planning consultant operating as Wev Consulting LLC, she declares, "I am eager to help Clatsop County prepare for the growth we know is coming." She proposes that "the county commission deliberate in a collegiate manner, and produce a strategic plan every year for their priorities."

She will focus on public safety and emergency response, affordable housing and economic opportunity for small business, workers, and students, and protection of natural and historical resources and the arts.

Pamela Wev earned academy certification in a county government course sponsored by the Association of Oregon Counties. She holds an undergraduate degree in political sci-

ence from Mary Baldwin College, and a master's degree in urban and regional planning at Penn State University.

Her career spans 40 years of experience as a consultant to agencies and developers, including comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances for ports and cities in Oregon and Washington.

Vote for Pamela Wev for Clatsop County Commissioner, District 3.

JUANITA B. PRICE
Astoria

Vote Orr for state representative

John Orr for state representative, District 32. In his campaign, John is addressing one of the most disturbing factors of current electoral politics, namely, vast amounts of corporate cash influencing electoral outcomes, as well as the votes of our representatives.

The pressure is great for politicians to represent their wealthy donors, rather than the voters. John's campaign is funded almost entirely by grassroots donations from the people he will actually represent.

More importantly, John Orr will focus on the issues regular citizens will benefit from: infrastructure, health care, equality. John cares about working families and those less fortunate.

John is intelligent and reasonable. He will support solutions that work for our community. John is smart, has a heart in the right place, and will be beholden to no one but the folks who elected him.

Vote for John Orr May 15.

JD WELLS
Astoria

