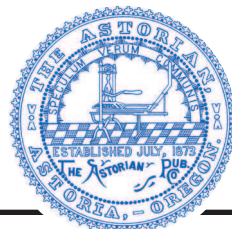


OPINION



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

JIM VAN NOSTRAND
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW

Rebuild partnerships to protect salmon

It is in these early months each year when a sense begins to emerge about the condition of forthcoming salmon runs in the Pacific Northwest. Mysterious to the uninitiated, the North of Falcon season-setting process is of prime importance not only to fishermen but to all who care about the struggles of iconic regional species.

This year's tentative seasons are a mixed bag. (The plan will be finalized at a meeting in Northern California in April.) Coho returns to the Columbia River system are the best news. Roughly a million are expected. Since coho form the backbone of popular recreational fisheries in the late summer and early fall, this relatively positive forecast bodes well for anglers and the many local businesses that depend on them.

Summer and fall returns of Chinook salmon — still the prestige species of the Pacific Northwest — aren't predicted to be very good in comparison to the recent average. But the sport season will be about on par with last year, which produced some good fish and economic benefits. Chinook fishing in the second half of 2019 is expected to be significantly better than this spring, when the season was truncated.

The status of the Columbia's fisheries — both in the river system and the nearby ocean — is crucial to the survival of estuary-based charter businesses. Their plight was recently detailed in news coverage that highlighted the few surviving operations still plying an industry that was many times larger a few decades ago. Although many factors are to blame, ample availability of salmon is the obviously fundamental attraction for charter customers. A quarter-century ago, it was possible to encounter celebrities like Mel Gibson breakfasting before predawn departures onto the water from local ports. Nowadays, the Columbia is seldom on the top of wish lists for "bucket list" fishing adventures.

Commercial salmon fishermen are on the cusp of a reprieve from extinction of their industry on the main stem of the Columbia. The appointed fisheries commission-



Luke Whittaker/Chinook Observer

At an October 2018 meeting in Ilwaco, commercial fisherman and clam farmer Ernie Soule pleaded with U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler for changes to ease the burden on commercial fishermen, who often face a 'fish or go hungry' scenario as a result of increased regulations.

*FOR THE SAKE OF SALMON — PLUS
NATIVE AMERICANS, LOCAL ECONOMIES,
ORCAS AND ALL THE OTHER CREATURES THAT
RELY ON THEM — WE HAVE TO DO A BETTER
JOB MANAGING THE FACTORS OVER WHICH
WE CAN EXERT SIGNIFICANT CONTROL.*

ers in both Washington and Oregon have acknowledged the failure — thus far anyway — of former Gov. John Kitzhaber's abrupt and unilateral decision to severely marginalize an already-struggling industry. Kitzhaber, to give him his due, believed it would be possible to keep commercial gillnetters economically whole by developing new off-channel fishing zones and harvest methods. This assumption proved inaccurate, and the states' salmon managers appear likely to allow gillnetting in the Columbia this fall. Gillnetters will, at most, be permitted to harvest a minuscule percentage of returning salmon on behalf of consumers.

Despite fairly good predicted coho returns, there isn't a straight line between more coho and great fishing. Some salmon runs continue to struggle, and will be intermingled with abundant returning hatchery coho. This mandates caution in scheduling and managing seasons.

Columbia River treaty tribes are entitled to half of catchable salmon. New this year, endangered Washington state orcas must be considered. Columbia spring Chinook are especially vital to orca survival, a factor that was largely unrecognized until satellite tracking of orca hunting patterns a decade ago.

All salmon and steelhead — plus other locally important seagoing species including shad and smelt — are at the mercy of Pacific Ocean conditions, loss of freshwater habitat, hydropower operations and other factors. It's great news that scientists see a return in the ocean to more normal temperatures, since these are key to the health of the marine food web, starting with nutrition-rich microorganisms. It is difficult, however, to maintain much optimism about the ocean's longer-term health in the face of news that it is soaking up a large percentage of the carbon dioxide we're injecting into

the atmosphere.

For the sake of salmon — plus Native Americans, local economies, orcas and all the other creatures that rely on them — we have to do a better job managing the factors over which we can exert significant control. It is pie-in-the-sky to hope — as some continue to do — that natural salmon runs can replace hatcheries. It wasn't possible to depend on naturally spawning fish nearly a century ago when Astoria-based Columbia River Packers/Bumble Bee led the way in advocating for hatcheries. It is far less possible to depend on natural spawning today. Adequate state and federal funding for hatcheries is essential.

Many strides have been made in the past 25 years in saving and restoring fresh and brackish water habitat. These efforts must continue — perhaps a tall order in a time of exploding federal budget deficits and proposed cutbacks in domestic spending. Even so, the states can and must continue funding restoration projects, while ensuring sensible land-use policies in riparian areas. Tribes, including the Cowlitz in our area, make important contributions to these efforts.

Of all that could and should be done to protect salmon and those who rely upon them, perhaps the most important is to work together. Although the 1990s and 2000s certainly were not glory days for salmon, at least that period was marked by robust cooperation between disparate fishing groups, government entities and even some conservationists. They all understood the benefits of presenting a united front on behalf of salmon fisheries — all for one, and one for all. There are some indications of a renewed understanding that there is strength in numbers, which brings an ability to exercise political muscle at all levels.

This year, with its old struggles and new complexities, is a perfect impetus to begin reaching out and forging stronger partnerships on behalf of fish most of us still regard as essential to our Pacific Northwest heritage.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Suspicious legislation

I write to highlight suspicious legislation and a growing issue: housing. Senate Bill 621, as proposed by state Sen. Fred Girod, "prohibits local governments from restricting use of lawful dwellings for vacation occupancy," rendering local government unable to execute legislation in their own communities. This would be a severe overextension of the state's authority.

On March 5, the bill was handed off to the Committee on Business and General Government (of which Sen. Girod is vice-chairman), and no more meetings on the subject of the bill have been announced. However, if the Senate chooses to listen to the outcry of the community, the results could quickly be predicted.

Only 12 testimonies out of the 95 sent to the Oregon Senate were in favor. With the exception of one letter, all of the testimonies praising the bill were written by self-proclaimed vacation rental owners or agencies representing them. This highlights a bias among the group promoting this bill, and in fact, there is another conflict of interest involved — through public record, it can be shown that Sen. Girod owns five vacation rentals in Depoe Bay.

In reviewing all of those letters, it can be seen that residents want their neighborhoods free from short-term renters, and to keep residential areas just that: residential. Tourist dollars are those if the people meant to be serving those tourists are driven out of Oregon by high living costs and minimal housing, which we can already see in our city.

Love thy neighbor, advocate for affordable housing.

ILLIANA PORTEUR
Astoria

Two bills affect Astoria

Restore Oregon, a statewide nonprofit that advocates for historic preservation, is proposing two bills that directly affect those of us who live here.

Senate Bill (SB) 927, the Public Participation in Preservation Act, changes the way buildings, sites or objects are nominated to "historic" status. The bill aims to treat the process of designation like any other zone change. Currently, property owners can "opt out" of the designation process. Although it sounds reasonable to some, the process is abused in many communities. In Portland, for instance, historic neighborhoods have been significantly compromised by developers using this "out."

We've been lucky in Astoria. And, we have limited areas to construct new buildings. Nevertheless, as our city becomes more popular it is only a matter of time before developers turn their sights to our neighborhoods — particularly undesignated neighborhoods such as Astoria's south slope. While change is inevitable, this bill intends to increase a community's voice in that change.

SB 929, the Preservation, Housing and Seismic Safety Act, provides financial incentives for those who are seismically upgrading their historic properties. The North Coast is in a seismically active zone. That means, if you are renovating your building, you may be held to stringent seismic retrofit standards. Few people have the money to meet those standards. SB 929 aims to use state tax credits to provide a "rehab rebate" for those doing qualified work.

For more information, please see Restore Oregon's website, restoreoregon.org
JOHN GOODENBERGER
Astoria

Let's talk about socialism

Everybody's talking about socialism lately, and I think it's a discussion we need out on the table. Working at the U.S. embassies in Poland and in England in the 1960s, I saw some so-called "socialist" societies up close. They were neither evil nor entirely ineffective.

There is no real socialist country in the world now, and really never has been. Any place that tried, the Western countries bombed, invaded, embargoed, blockaded or otherwise subverted, so that they all failed. See Cuba, Vietnam, Korea and Chile, for examples.

Today, every country worth its salt, including all of Europe, China, Russia and the U.S., has some combination socialist/capitalist economy. Many things just work better when nationalized: health care, education, the military, the highway system, the post office, the libraries, the fire departments. Obviously, we have many of those things now.

If we really want government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," I think we need much more of that kind of approach. That's all the Democrats are advocating. Nobody is suggesting that the workers take ownership of all the means of production. That's hokey. The countries that actually tried that ended up being tyrannical, and have either changed themselves, without our dictating it, or are in the process of doing so.

But, if we don't make some solid corrections right here, we appear to be heading for our own tyranny, by virtue of the coterie of thieves and dingbats we somehow elected last time.

JOSEPH WEBB
Astoria

CBH helps our community

Here at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, I work part-time as a case manager and supported employment specialist. As an employment specialist, I engage individuals and establish trusting, collaborative relationships with the goal of obtaining competitive employment in community job settings with other workers who do not necessarily have disabilities.

The clients rely on having consistent support from a long-term employee of CBH. Clients and I work collaboratively on their employment goals. I provide individualized follow-along supports to assist clients in maintaining employment, write job support plans with individuals, incorporate input from the mental health team and adjust plans as needed according to individuals needs and preferences. This work is vital to ensuring our clients can lead productive lives outside of CBH.

As a case manager, I work with individuals who often have complex needs to ensure they have proper medication and transportation to medical/counseling appointments.

Our specialty is in assessing the needs of the individual, then assisting the client and their families in accessing the needed services, while coordinating care among service providers. We also assist individuals with establishing and maintaining effective relationships with the support systems they require.

All the work that I do in this community helps our community members maintain gainful employment and develop healthy lifestyles. This work does not happen overnight. It takes dedication to build a rapport with a client, and an abrupt change in their care and relationships would have a disruptive impact.

AUDREY WILLIAMS
Astoria