

OPINION



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GUEST COLUMN

Oregon's forest laws are outdated

By **KATE CRUMP,**
MICHA ELIZABETH GROSS
and **VIK ANANTHA**

Oregon's outdated forest laws are failing our communities and our environment. They threaten our water and degrade our land, exacerbating both droughts and floods. They pollute our drinking water with mud and toxic chemicals. They endanger salmon and wildlife habitat.

Appeals to the state Department of Forestry have fallen on deaf ears and Oregon politicians have turned a blind eye, while at the same time filling their campaign coffers with more campaign cash from the logging industry per capita than any other state.

That's why we signed on as the chief petitioners for initiative petitions 35, 36 and 37.

We hope to qualify these initiatives for the November 2020 ballot so that we can bring protections for rivers and streams in Oregon's forests up to the level of neighboring states to better safeguard clean water and rural communities.

Logging corporations in Oregon have insulated themselves from any modernization of our forestry rules and made it so the only viable option to save our forest waters is to take a vote of the people through the ballot measure process.

We know we need to cut through the political money and influence that have paralyzed the state and give a voice to the hundreds of thousands of Oregonians who are sick and tired of the status quo. However, even this ultimate exercise in democracy isn't beyond the reach of the timber industry.

Last month, on the final day of the initiative review process, Oregon Secretary of State Bev Clarno and Deputy Secretary of State Rich Vial rejected these three ballot measures and denied Oregonians the right to vote on these critical issues. Independent election experts have called the decision unprecedented and the lack of a legal justification from the attorney general's office highly unusual.



Tony Schick/Oregon Public Broadcasting

The forest surrounding Jetty Creek, the water supply for Rockaway Beach, has been logged heavily.

It must be noted that Secretary Clarno and Deputy Vial — like many other government representatives — have taken tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from the timber industry during their political careers. Emphasizing this point, a press release from Clarno and Vial declares that the "Oregon Forest Council" manages logging in Oregon. The Oregon Forest Council does not exist. However, the Oregon Forest & Industries Council is a lobbying group that has given money to both politicians and opposes our initiatives.

What the secretary of state's office doesn't realize is that we are used to fighting entrenched interests and long odds in an effort to protect Oregon's communities and wildlife from the excesses of the logging industry. We're tired of this blatant corruption, but we are not giving up the fight.

Earlier this month, we filed a complaint in Marion County Circuit Court to have Clarno and Vial's decision reversed. We're doing that on our own behalf, and on behalf of the countless

future community members who come forward with a proposal to place before the voters. Whether we agree with them or not, Oregonians should not be subject to secretive decisions lacking legal justification that deny them access to the ballot.

Moreover, we have refiled these measures (now initiative petitions 45, 46 and 47) with the supposed offending passages removed. We turned in sponsorship signatures to restart the ballot title process to get us back on track for the November 2020 election. The logging industry and the politicians in their pocket should take note that we collected these signatures faster than any other ballot measure this year. People in Oregon are fed up and ready for change.

The great part is that Oregonians understand that we don't have to make the false choice between logging and protecting our forest waters. Everybody uses wood products and no one is talking about shutting down all logging in the state. Rather, we are simply asking that we catch up with our neighbors and do a better job of logging in a sus-

tainable way that adequately protects drinking water and doesn't put communities at risk.

In Rockaway Beach, where one of us lives, we watched as about 90% of the forestland from which our drinking water flows was clearcut. Cannon Beach, Yachats, Newport, Arch Cape, Wheeler and other communities have watched in alarm as their forested watersheds have been clearcut and sprayed with toxic chemicals.

It's not just folks on the coast and coast range that are worried. Seventy percent of Oregon's residents and communities draw their drinking water from rivers and streams that begin in a forest. With the effects of climate change becoming more real by the day, now is the moment to ensure our forested waters are resilient and protected for future generations.

Kate Crump is a fishing guide who lives in Rockaway Beach. Micha Elizabeth Gross runs Myrtle Glen Farm in Coos County. Vik Anantha is an Oregon State University graduate who lives in Sellwood.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hard work

The Norriston Heights state forests timber sale has been in the news lately, with the topic of concern being logging vs. water quality.

I can assure you that no one in natural resource management wants to damage or pollute drinking water. The foundation of the Oregon Forest Practices Act and state forest management rules are to protect water quality.

The protection of the watershed not only assures clean drinking water for people, but also clean water for the various aquatic species and wildlife that live in the streams and forests. Planning a timber harvest includes review from a long list of biologists, experts, specialists and the public.

Long before any harvest occurs, review is done for many resources, which includes water rights and water intake locations. Hundreds of hours get put into planning and reviewing a sale before it gets sold. All of these efforts and investment by department staff will be put on hold now.

I assume the residents concerned about their water source don't have their water intake registered with the state of Oregon? Are they required to register their water source? How far away do these residents live from the harvest, and where is their water intake in relation to where they live?

Please remember that forest management in Oregon is centered around water protection. Let's give the Oregon Department of Forestry some credit for all the hard work that they do.

JENNIFER JOHNSON
Forester
Astoria

Disappointed

I am disappointed the Oregon Department of Forestry felt forced to shelve a timber sale that would have provided \$600,000 for our community because of pressure from a handful of homeowners, many of whom are vacation homeowners, and unlikely to utilize services funded by timber sales.

I understand why people want to move here, however it's unfortunate they haven't invested time to understand the benefits forest management provides economically, and through production of renewable products, wildlife habitat and clean water.

I grew up in Astoria, and am raising my

family here. I see the cycle of stewardship ODF provides through sustainable management of forests in Clatsop and Tillamook counties: harvests from my childhood are now thriving forests today. ODF foresters are professionals who live among us, and have a decadeslong track record of conducting harvests and protecting water quality.

It is my understanding that ODF listened to concerns of Norriston Heights residents, and modified their harvest accordingly. Unfortunately, the homeowners refused to settle for anything but abandonment of the sale, costing our county money, and lost opportunities for jobs and income derived from logging, transportation, millwork and reforestation services.

I am proud of the people who work every day in the woods, dedicating their professional lives to stewardship of our natural resources. It's a shame they abandoned a good project.

ODF has a responsibility to keep our state forests working for everyone. I truly hope shelving crucial sales like this one does not set a precedent in our county.

MAGGIE READ
Astoria

Shoreside power

The Astoria City Council plans to approve a lease to grant American Cruise Lines the use of the east portion of the 17th Street Dock ("Astoria reaches deal with river cruise lines on 17th Street Dock," The Astorian, Oct. 10). American Cruise Lines proposes extending the dock to accommodate two cruise ships simultaneously.

The city is moving too fast on this lease, allowing just two weeks for citizens to express opinions about a proposal made public only a few weeks ago.

While berthed at the 17th Street Dock, these ships continuously operate their main engines in order to provide electrical power, producing not only air pollution, but also considerable noise pollution, particularly noticeable in the neighborhoods to the south, such as my neighborhood on Irving Avenue.

This air and noise pollution occurs near the heart of the city, alongside the Riverwalk. While the noise of one ship is annoying, especially while trying to sleep, doubling that noise may well be intolerable.

Many cities on the West Coast require



cruise ships to plug into what is called "shoreside power." The Coast Guard currently uses shoreside power at the 17th Street Dock, but there are no power terminals for cruise ships at the dock.

I have urged the City Council to not allow two cruise ships at the 17th Street Dock at the same time until there is infrastructure that allows cruise ships to plug into shoreside power. I hope others will join me in opposing an open-ended lease.

FRED WHITE
Astoria

Miracle

I am writing about your recent article about Astoria Police Chief Geoff Spalding convening a meeting of local political leaders in regard to the creation of a county-level position to coordinate the patchwork of efforts addressing the various aspects of the "homelessness problem" ("Homeless liaison could coordinate county's approach," The Astorian, Oct. 12).

I hesitate to use this word, but to my mind, Chief Spalding's — and others' — insight about the need for this type of coordination is nothing short of a "miracle," which is a term used to describe a "highly improbable or extraordinary event, development, or accomplishment that brings very welcome consequences."

Two years ago, then-Mayor Arline LaMear formed the mayor's Homelessness Solutions Task Force, with Chief Spalding as its chairman. Many of us interested in the issues of homelessness viewed HOST with skepticism, and in its first year our

pessimism seemed to be borne out.

However, somehow in its second year of existence, HOST has been transformed under Chief Spalding's leadership into a potential catalyst for genuine progress, with this suggestion about a county-level coordinator appearing to me as a "game-changing" opportunity.

I know this transformation in HOST is due to the work, cooperation and input of many people, but I want especially to single out Chief Spalding for what I know must be his singular contribution.

My previous admiration for him as an effective and congenial administrator has now become awe at what a single, committed individual can accomplish with patience, dedication and good will.

BARRY PLOTKIN
Astoria

Cruel

I would imagine that in Clatsop County quite a few men and women served in Iraq. Those who did will remember the help and support given by the Kurds. Ten thousand of them died for us.

Now President Donald Trump, in his brilliance and humanity, has ordered our troops home, and the Kurds and their families, men, women and children are being murdered by the Turks.

This move is un-American and cruel. It is not the America I love. We are losing our souls.

Write to the president.
MARY TANGUAY WEBB
Astoria