

Cables: Brown expected to sign aggressive power bill

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Such ventures decimated the Columbia River's fisheries and fenced off and degraded the shrub-steppe grasslands that the Yakama and other tribes and bands ceded in an 1855 treaty with the United States.

A member of the Yakama's Kah-milt-pa, or Rock Creek, Band, Harvey lives with the legacy of dams, aluminum production, wind farms, expanding solar plants and other development. Each has infringed on her people's right to pursue traditional practices.

As Harvey and Kah-milt-pa Chief Bronco Jim Jr. wrote earlier this year in the newsletter of Columbia Riverkeeper: "Ours is a living culture, and we are being cheated by progress. An unrelenting cultural extinction in the name of energy development."

Power-system experts say the grid that sufficed in the fossil-fuel era must increase capacity if renewable electricity is to become the lifeblood of economies.

Wind blows and sunlight shines most reliably in places that are sparsely populated — areas with weak power lines. Stronger grids, in contrast, enable more power to travel between regions, so those areas can help each other out — precisely what Texas couldn't do when a deep freeze brought the state to its knees in February and when heat strained its grid last month.

To explore the role of power transmission and the tradeoffs involved in grid expansion, InvestigateWest spoke with Kupersmith, Harvey and Lauren Goldberg, the legal and program director for Columbia Riverkeeper.

A passion for diving exposed Kupersmith to coral bleaching resulting from water pollution and global warming. An engineer by training and a banker by trade, Kupersmith cofounded New York City-based Sun2o five years ago as a business venture that honors

his environmental values.

Pursuing solar energy projects in sun-soaked Eastern Oregon and Washington inspired him to propose the Cascade link project. Sun2o found plenty of landowners and rural communities eager to host solar panels. But it struggled to secure affordable space on power lines so it could send that energy to the utilities in greatest need of renewable energy.

Moving power west over the Cascades means getting access to the Bonneville Power Administration's regional network, the U.S. Northwest's transmission backbone. That network is maxing out as a wave of renewable power projects plug in. "BPA has like 28 gigawatts of solar, wind and storage requests," Kupersmith said. "That's going to be pushing systems to their limits."

And that was before Oregon passed one of North America's most aggressive grid decarbonization plans. The bill, which Gov. Kate Brown is expected to sign this month, requires Oregon's investor-owned utilities to deliver 80% carbon-free power by 2030, compared to less than 50% today. It mandates 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040 — five years ahead of deadlines set by Washington state and California.

Bonneville itself is in a tough spot. The federal entity is being financially stretched by rising costs to maintain aging dams and improve impacted salmon fisheries and decreasing revenues as customers defect to cheaper suppliers.

Hitting a transmission barrier inspired Kupersmith to propose the Cascade cables. He knew putting them in the riverbed was an option, because PowerBridge had installed two transmission lines in the Hudson River to ease power bottlenecks in New York City. And he saw a submerged cable as an end-run around opposition to



Power cables may be submerged in the Columbia River near The Dalles.

overhead lines that has scuppered previous grid expansion efforts in Cascadia and frequently ties up projects across the continent.

Kupersmith's partner at PowerBridge, Chris Hocker, calls overhead lines "hideously problematic," noting that they can take a decade or more to build. In contrast, he and Kupersmith anticipate their Columbia cables would begin pumping electricity in just five years — lightning speed for new transmission.

Of course, that depends on government and community approval. And the partners recently began conversations with the four tribes that have treaty rights in the region, including the Yakama Nation and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Kupersmith said they had hoped to meet earlier but were delayed by the pandemic and a desire to conduct consultations in person.

Historic insults

For Harvey, a power line in the Columbia would add to a pile of damaging energy developments over the decades. One of the most devastating was the 1957 completion of The Dalles Dam — one of 14 major dams on the Columbia's main stem — and decimation of the world's largest fishery.

The Dalles Dam energized the associated Big Eddy substation, where Kupersmith and his partners hope to plug into BPA's regional grid, and which has its own painful associations for local tribes.

The Dalles Dam's 200-foot-high barrier submerged the storied Celilo Falls, where daring dip netters

once caught leaping salmon and steelhead. The dam also submerged a complex of villages nearby, which had been a gathering point for traders from tribes across the Northwest. Prior to the dam, it was North America's oldest site of continuous human habitation.

Those historic insults and other losses remain fresh more than half a century later, as Indigenous communities grapple with a settler culture that often seems incapable of hearing their concerns.

Harvey sees that inability manifested in another proposed grid reinforcement project that she's fighting, just upstream from The Dalles. The Goldendale Energy Storage Project would build a pair of 60-acre reservoirs, one alongside the river and one on a bluff above. By moving Columbia River water between the reservoirs, the project would store and discharge energy like a giant battery.

The project faces vocal opposition from the Yakama Nation, to whom the site is profoundly sacred. Yakama stories recall the bluffs as a haven during great floods in millennia past, and Harvey said her band still forages there for culturally important "first foods," such as desert parsley.

They already have lost much access to foraging sites because wind farms have fenced off large areas. Only one landowner hosting a wind farm allows Harvey's people to enter and gather traditional plants, she said.

Harvey asks whether the onslaught of development in the Columbia Gorge is necessary. She questions whom the

projects are intended to benefit, noting with suspicion the express line running between BPA's Big Eddy hub and Los Angeles.

The express line and others were built in the 1960s to help power California. In the future, excess solar power could flow north when the sun is up. But today, the lines' primary use remains the shipment of hydropower from the Columbia River dams and British Columbia south to California.

Harvey wants to know where development will stop. "What is this going to lead to? Is this going to lead to wind (turbines) down the middle of the river? What's down the line?"

Climate change also worries Harvey. A biologist by training, she knows warmer water represents a growing threat to the Columbia's struggling fisheries.

Harvey thinks other solutions need to be considered. Gas-fired power plants can be equipped to capture the CO2 they produce. Smarter logging practices and coastal protections can boost the ability of inland forests and kelp forests to capture atmospheric CO2. Rooftop solar panels can generate power where it's needed most.

Bottom line, said Harvey: "We already gave up enough."

For Goldberg, projects like the Cascade cables present an acute challenge. Goldberg, a 15-year veteran at Columbia Riverkeeper, sees fossil fuels and climate change as existential threats to the river and the communities that rely on it. This is a reason Riverkeeper has been a mainstay in the "Thin Green Line" movement that has blocked many efforts to push more coal, oil and liquefied natural gas down the rail lines transiting the Gorge.

And it's why it advocates for clean energy production. "The Columbia River is already being impacted by the climate crisis, and the projections are dire," Goldberg said.

Goldberg said a lot of green energy development has happened in the Columbia basin, and she expects that will continue. But that does not mean every project that calls itself renewable and green gets a pass.

And even if submerged power cables are deemed important for energy transition, for Goldberg their carbon-cutting potential must outweigh their direct environmental impacts.

"Whether it's renewable energy or fossil energy, we need to understand how a project is going to impact people that rely on the Columbia for salmon and for clean water," Goldberg said.

Goldberg stresses that burying 100-mile-long power cables in the riverbed is a concept that Riverkeeper has yet to grapple with. Based on experience and preliminary research, Goldberg identifies several issues. One is the impact from stirring up sediment. She said that while the Columbia is "incredibly beautiful," it's by no means "pristine."

Another potential impact mentioned by Goldberg could come from the electromagnetic fields generated by power cables. Research commissioned by the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management looked at magnetic fields emanating from similar transmission cables laid across San Francisco Bay. Those cables helped reduce San Francisco's dependence on gas-fired power plants.

The study found that the cables had some effects on migratory fish like salmon, which navigate partly by sensing Earth's magnetic fields. For example, the cables increased the chance that salmon smolts would take a wrong turn that lengthened their journey to the ocean. But it detected no evidence that fish were harmed. Fish appeared to be just as successful at migrating through the bay after the cables were turned on.

Charles Scott Parker ~ October 1, 1948 - July 17, 2021

"Scotty" Parker slipped away from us and entered heaven in the early morning on Saturday July 17th. His passing is a great loss to our family, but he is now at peace and telling stories, surrounded by his family and friends in heaven. Charles Scott Parker was born on October 1, 1948, to James Fredrick Parker and Daphne "Francine" Parker. Scott grew up listening to stories about the rich history of both his father and mothers' families. The Parker's came to Astoria as pioneers in the 1850's and the Gunderson's, his mom's family, settled in Knappton, Washington. The Parker's were very involved in the early development of the Astoria area developing land, building schools, serving public office, owning businesses including mills, a waterfront hotel, mercantile and delivery services, mail delivery and ship services. Scott had a wonderful childhood and loved to share stories of what he described as a Huck Finn childhood full of adventure which always included his great neighborhood friends. A kid's paradise, the East End of Astoria was rich in places to explore, play, swim, fish and learn exactly what you were made of. Scott's tales of close calls, near misses and tricks played were a testament to a time and era when life was good and troubles few. He particularly loved the "fort" that was hidden just far enough up in the woods to keep parents from spying. Scott attended Astoria's St. Mary's Star of the Sea Catholic School and was proud to be a lifelong member of the prestigious group of "Star" kids! Scott loved sports and played them all. Scott transferred to Astoria High School during his Freshman year where he excelled in football and earned the honor of first team all-metro. Like most of his friends, Scott absolutely loved this time of his life. Playing sports, dances, parties...more parties and the secret hideout at the jetty were all part of the good times and great memories made with lifelong friends. The adventures grew as did Scott's ability to act quickly to protect others and solve problems as he always stepped up, and never back. After graduation Scott attended the University of Oregon until he was drafted. Scott joined the Army and became a member of the 101st Airborne unit. Scott was extremely proud to serve his country and said he wanted to experience what war was like as his dad, grandfather and uncles had. He trained at Fort Lewis and was sent to Vietnam and became a machine gunner. He proudly inherited the gun after a fellow machine gunner, "Kentucky" was killed in action and who Scott always had deep respect for. Scott's bond with his brothers in the 101st remained strong throughout his life. All heroes who together survived but like Scott had to deal with the aftereffects of their experiences and exposures. Scott considered himself an ordinary man, but to most that knew him he was an extraordinary man. Friends were treasures in Scott's life, and he made many of them. Once a friend always a friend. He never saw a stranger and no matter where he traveled, he always would see someone he knew. Scott lived an incredible life, and he certainly was at his very best when sharing his many life experiences with others. He was a walking encyclopedia with his knowledge of the area's history and the families living here. Scott was a fun loving, ballad singing, storytelling, ass kicking patriot that could tell tales like no other and in his words "let me tell you a story that will set your eyes to tears" was a great invitation. You just wanted to be on his side. He loved to walk through town, go out to dinner or go to the grocery, where he would see friends and catch up with their lives. Home Bakery was a favorite spot for coffee and a maple bar or two. Another favorite was an evening at the Silver Salmon for a wonderful dinner that so often grew to 3 tables pulled together for friends and family or his favorite Friday nights at the Legion, singing Karaoke and telling stories with his friends. Scott was named after his grandfather Frank Scott who immigrated from Ireland, which Scott was very proud of. Scott being a history buff, studied Irish history and Irish music his entire life. He spent years researching and collecting Irish music and knew all the old and new Irish bands, their music, and the lyrics to each song. He often wrote the lyrics out by hand to memorize the story being sung. He was Irish in his blood and soul. A visit to Ireland was gifted to Scott and son Scotty. It was a dream come

true for both with most of their time spent researching, hands on the pub life, singing, sampling a wee bit of the hard stuff, and of course making more friends. Scott shared his love of music with his children. Teaching them his favorites with stereo booming and crazy dancing all night in the living room. Road trips were perfect training sessions to learn songs too. One of Scott's favorite memories was attending a Bobby Bare concert with his children at the Astoria Armory. The kids were invited up on stage to sing with Bobby Bare and they knew all the lyrics! Oh, what a proud daddy! Scott was incredibly strong and enjoyed working out his entire life. He enjoyed a job that required physical strength and would have weights handy in every room, in the garage and in his truck. He joined gyms wherever he was working. When home he enjoyed working out, swimming laps, watching his grandson Jameson take swimming lessons and relaxing in the hot tub at the Astoria Aquatic Center. Scott worked hard and spent most of his working career on the Pacific Ocean somewhere between Mexico and Alaska, often being gone for 2-3 months at a time. He grew up on the waterfront with his dad Jim and Uncles Eben and Frank and the Astoria fishing fleet. He began fishing for his dad on the Rose Ann Hess when he was 9 years old. He continued fishing until he entered the Army. After his honorable discharge from the Army Scott worked on several adventurous and memorable trips on the Salvage Chief in California and in Alaska. Captain, Reino Mattila and crew were experts at combining work with amazingly good times and have all remained bonded by their experiences and friendship. Scott crabbed or fished for many years. He acquired his Coast Guard ABE license and began a new career working for Foss Maritime in the Oceangoing division. Scott continued increasing his licensing with the Coast Guard. He enjoyed his work and often "stayed gone" for long periods of time. Scott retired from Foss Maritime in 2018. Scott was a recognized and respected individual of the maritime industry and was invited to become a member of the Clatsop Community College Maritime Science Department Regional Advisory Committee in 1999. He gracefully accepted and volunteered to become the Chair of the committee and held that seat for six years of the twenty-two years that he continued as a member. Captain Parker's position on the committee involved partnerships with employers from business, industry and education that committed themselves to helping students become well-educated, well-rounded citizens who have the skills and competencies necessary to secure rewarding careers in the Maritime Industry. Scott was a proud member and Officer of the American Legion Clatsop Post 12 Astoria, The Veterans of Foreign War and the Elks. Scott Parker was adored by his family and to them: He was bigger than life. He was a man among men. He was a true hero. He was a man of his word. He had incredible strength. He was a man of action. He would protect with his life. He was humble. He did what was right. He was intelligent. He gave great advice. He was a legend. He was a proud patriot. He lived to tell the tale and he told it. He expected little in return. He stayed away too long but was Santa when he came home. His family came first. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and cousin. He played, teased, gave horsey rides, wrestled, and forever demonstrated his amazing strength to kids. Scott dedicated his life to providing for his family. Scott is survived by his wife Mary Vice Parker of 41 years and children Jennifer Parker Hamaker and husband Justin, Casey Parker Roscoe and husband Mike, Laura Lee Parker, Scott Patrick Parker and Haylee Dundas, Brenda Kate Esser and Jim Burnett. Grandchildren Morgan Houck, Rylan Hamaker, Jake Hamaker, Parker Roscoe, Ava Roscoe and Jameson Parker Landwehr. Sister Gayle Parker, sister Peggy Hutt and husband David, brother/cousin Jimmy Gedenberg and wife Sheri. Nephews Danny Riser, Zach Storey, Monty McCleary, Grady Parker and nieces Christina Riser, Megan Parker



and their families, numerous wonderful cousins, and Sister Rosemary Ann of Portland. Scott was preceded in death by his parents Jim and Franny and brother Little Jimmy Parker. Scott was a blessing to us all. The family would like to thank the many friends and family that reached out to Scott during these past months. The calls, visits, cards, letters, and emails meant so very much to him. The reminiscing and telling stories, sharing memories with uncontrollable laughter were the best medicine and his favorite way to spend the day. Thank you for the meals, and goodies too. We would also like to thank the Astoria Fire Department for their kind assistance and Providence Seaside Hospital staff for their loving care of Scott. Memorial contributions may be made to the Scott Parker Memorial Scholarship C/O CCC Foundation 1651 Lexington Ave. Astoria Oregon 97103 or the American Legion Post 12 in Astoria C/O Ocean View Funeral and Cremation Services 1213 Franklin Avenue Astoria Oregon 97103 Services are in care of Ocean View Funeral Home and will be held on July 31st at 11:00 AM at St. Mary's Star of the Sea, Catholic Church, 1411 Grand St. Astoria. Graveside services will follow at Ocean View Cemetery 575 18th St. Warrenton. A celebration of life will follow and be held on July 31st from 2:00-5:00 pm at Warrior Hall at Camp Rilea, 33168 Patriot Way, Warrenton Oregon. Please follow signs to designated parking areas.

