

# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Let's give fish a better future

I grew up fishing in Oregon. Too young to fish in the ocean, I was mesmerized by the salmon my dad and grandpa caught fishing out of Astoria. I knew salmon fishing was in my future, but at the time, didn't know how far this passion would take me.

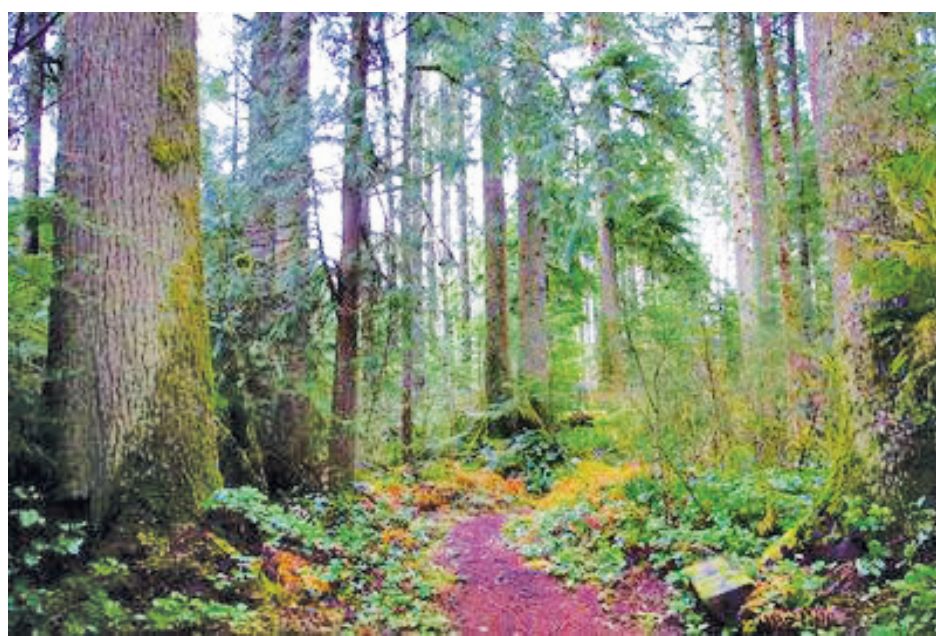
My early days of fishing set me on a course to provide this experience to others. I've been working as a professional fishing guide for 31 years.



**BOB REES**

I've seen good years and bad with the available catch of salmon and steelhead. These wild fish are the lifeblood of an \$80 million a year sport fishery on the North Coast. Depressed wild populations of coho, Chinook, steelhead and chum salmon, as well as steelhead and cutthroat trout, have eroded away the incredible transfer of wealth from urban communities, for prospective anglers who come to fish on the coast and the rural communities who benefit from that economic activity. Degraded habitat is at the very center of less abundance in fish populations and economic opportunity.

I've learned, along with other guides and fishing industry members, the importance of protecting our forests to provide habitat for spawning and rearing salmon like coho, which spend 12 to 18 months rearing in the watershed before they enter the ocean. Cold, clean water is vital for salmon and steelhead to complete their life cycle, and forests serve to keep salmon waters cool. Protecting the salmon streams from landslides is also important. That's why we need to have a proactive and balanced approach to managing our forests in Oregon.



Public comments are open for the Western Oregon Habitat Conservation Plan.

## I ENCOURAGE EVERYONE READING THIS TO SPEAK UP FOR SALMON STRONGHOLDS IN THE TILLAMOOK AND CLATSOP STATE FORESTS.

Fish are forest products too!

Unfortunately, Oregon forests haven't always been managed in a way that is beneficial for wildlife, water supply or recreation. These lands, at the heart of the Tillamook and Clatsop rainforest, host six salmon strongholds and stand as an oasis for fish, wildlife and recreation in Northwest Oregon.

That's why I've become an advocate for habitat conservation plans to protect what's left of our best salmon rivers in Oregon. The goal of the plans is to

authorize legal activities, like logging, while mitigating or minimizing harm to endangered species like salmon.

Currently, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is reviewing the Western Oregon Habitat Conservation Plan, advanced by the Oregon Board of Forestry. This plan would provide protections for 17 federally listed endangered species, including Oregon Coast coho. The plan would protect roughly half of state lands in the Tillamook and Clatsop rainforest, or 250,000 acres, for

70 years. This will help ensure a future founded on fish and wildlife conservation that sustains not just sportfishing but also timber communities, as well as the businesses, jobs, revenue and a tax base tied to both of these industries.

NOAA Fisheries is considering several alternatives in its draft environmental impact statement, and the soundest for salmon is Alternative 3 that strengthens conservation for the fish. This alternative would designate important aquatic and terrestrial habitats. It would also improve steep slope logging protections and consider the impacts from excessive road networks.

Unfortunately, some of the other proposed alternatives would reduce the proposed conservation areas in favor of increased logging and pesticide spraying. We can't go backwards to the activities that have threatened the public, fish and wildlife in the past. Instead, we must go forward with a balanced approach that considers fish, wildlife, recreation and clean water as forest products, just like timber. As an Oregon industry ourselves, with members who have affinity for fish, wildlife and habitat as well as appreciation for timber, this is our view: each plays a vital role in the success of rural Oregon.

The public comment period for this habitat conservation plan opened on March 18 and runs for 60 days through May 17. I encourage everyone reading this to speak up for salmon strongholds in the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests. Written comments can be submitted on the NOAA website.

Bob Rees is the founder and executive director of the Northwest Guides and Anglers Association, representing about 60 guides and charters in the Pacific Northwest. He lives in Oregon City.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Drive and desire

I am writing today in support of Pamela Wev for Clatsop County commissioner. Pam is an intelligent, approachable and engaging woman, with both drive and desire enough to make a difference.

Pam cares about North Coast residents, businesses, as well as our issues; and she possesses sufficient courage and good judgment to both assist the board and lead our county in the direction of solutions.

Having worked, previously, in all levels of government — local, state and federal — she is well-acquainted with how governments and board dynamics work, how to recognize when they don't, and how to work collaboratively with staff, planners and petitioners while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

And, Pam is a land use consultant, by profession, whose familiarity with the approval process and best practices will make even difficult and contentious construction and zoning recommendations manageable for her.

Finally, especially in this program and policy-sensitive time on the commission, I am impressed that Pam is a good listener, chooses her words wisely and will be a true team player.

Join me in reelecting Wev for District 3.  
**BILL VAN NOSTRAN**  
Astoria

### Under attack

A happy, caring neighborhood is made up of a melting pot of neighbors who look out for each other, talk to each other, help each other, but most importantly, know each other.

Neighbors are families, retirees and singles. They are people of all ages, but most importantly, their home is in the neighborhood. The neighbors contribute to their community, some work keeping the businesses open, their children attend schools, they volunteer at events and they attend community activities. They are the backbone of a city.

Our neighborhoods are under attack. The fabric of our neighborhoods have Swiss cheese holes in them, created by day rentals every third or fourth house. Add to that, second homes, vacant much of the year, owned by those who don't live here.

Now, this homeless camping ordinance will start tearing the fragile fabric of the neighborhoods apart. It will bring in overnight camping into the public spaces, like parks, that were never designed or intended to provide overnight camping. They were a place designed to bring neighbors together, to provide a safe place for children to play and to walk the dog.

The city needs to provide a location for homeless overnight camping at a loca-



tion that is designed for that purpose. Yes, that involves a financial commitment from the community to create this place. Throw out this camping ordinance and address the real problem of providing a livable neighborhood for the housed, and a safe, humane place for the unhoused.

**GLENDA PHILLIPS**  
Seaside

### 'Experts'

As political pundits rushed to either praise or criticize Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson for her refusal to define "woman," they totally missed the implication behind her answer. Judge Jackson claimed she could not answer because, "I'm not a biologist."

The implication is that Americans should rely on "experts" for everything. They should no longer rely on experience gained from living. They should no longer rely on their own eyes, ears, brains, et al. as they maneuver through life. Americans should replace their own knowledge with opinions of "experts." Government, of course, will choose the "experts."

So, as the pregnant doe wanders across

my yard I must call a wildlife "expert" to determine what it is. As hail falls, check with a weather "expert" before naming it.

Judge Jackson's remarks came as more evidence emerges about public health experts' COVID errors, we could be entering a new age where common sense takes over.

**DIANE GRUBER**  
Oysterville, Washington

### Know-how

We sometimes describe elected officials as "career politicians" as if that's a bad thing. Politics and policy making is the only sphere of work where I have seen experience considered to be "bad."

You might hire someone new to the field to work on your roof. You could roll the dice and decide that the price is right, and they seem like a nice person who cares about doing the job well. Perhaps you know them personally.

Or, you could choose the contractor with 4.5 stars and 50 reviews with pictures of their work from happy customers. When it's your own roof, you can choose

to roll those dice.

Given the opportunity, I think we should choose those who have proven they can do the complex job of governing — those who have the educational and career experience to do the job well.

Please vote to reelect Pamela Wev for Clatsop County commissioner. She has the experience, connections and know-how to get the job done!

**MARY HUNTER**  
Astoria

### Just a thought

Has any thought been given to turning the old Seaside High School site into a public-private funded affordable housing community? It sits at a site of public transportation, and could house lower-income workers from Warrenton to Cannon Beach.

There is a similar project on the east end of Sandy that could serve as a planning model for a similar much-needed facility serving the North Coast.

Just a thought from a past North Coast resident, and now visitor.

**MARK OHLSON**  
Lake Oswego