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OUR VIEW

Hunters spark local economy, but could do more

We often praise hunting for its cultural value, but not as often for its value in dollars and cents.

Hunting Works for Oregon is trying to change that. The newly created organization is based off similar ones in the Midwest, which gather local partners to spread the gospel of hunting's economic impact on rural areas.

According to a study by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, \$248 million is spent annually by hunters in Oregon — about \$1,200 by each of the 196,000 men, women and children who tote a rifle or bow into our mountains and meadows.

That's a lot of money, and money mostly funneled to the rural parts of the state, where local economies have struggled for decades. That includes places like John Day, Wallowa County, Malheur County. And yes, here in our neck of the woods, too.

Richard Stapleman, a custom boot maker, has had just one local customer since he opened his shop off Main Street in Pendleton. Every other client has been an out-of-towner, he said, many of whom were brought to the area because of nearby hunting.

Stapleman is not alone. Tradespeople, small business owners, retail and service industries all benefit from travelers. Hunters just travel to different places than your average tourist and do it during what is often the slowest time of the year. Yet that economic shot in the arm for rural Oregon is in danger. Hunter participation is in steep decline, down more than 15 percent in the last decade alone.

Gary Lewis, a member of Hunting Works for Oregon and a high profile outdoors writer and television show host, said myriad factors are to blame. Hunting has gotten much more expensive, as everything from purchasing tags to buying the gas to get to a trailhead has increased in cost.

And since the state went to controlled hunts in the mid-1990s, hunters often have to plan ahead more than six months in advance to secure a tag. No longer can you look out on a bright fall morning and just go hunting.

But even with advance planning, the tag and lottery system means hunters many not be able to hunt the places they know best. That decreases their success rate, and later their rate of returning to the sport. The tag system has greatly increased game management, but it has greatly reduced the flexibility of hunters — reducing participants and days spent

in the woods.

Rules and regulations and paperwork have only grown, too, and rather than fight the fuzzy bureaucracy or take the chance of making a costly mistake, hunters are just packing up and going home.

There are also access issues. Some of the best private hunting land, which used to require just a handshake and maybe a little gift of whiskey to secure access to, is now being sold at top dollar to guides and their richest clients.

The requirement to take hunter education classes, a necessity in modern times, may have cut down on the bonding experience of learning hunting in the field from a parent or mentor.

The increase in predators is certainly another factor, but one we feel often overshadows the root causes.

Because the main culprit is habitat degradation, and the urban sprawl that has put more space between us and the wild places where animals live.

Internet and video games and fewer young people familiar with the outdoors hasn't helped.

But neither have hunters in some respects. Lewis said many believe roughly 50 percent of big game animals killed in Oregon are poached — an awful statistic that shows the ethical hunters are paying for the misdeeds of those who don't follow the rules.

Then there is the conservative political bent that has seeped into hunting — alienating half the country. Many of us know that hunters and anglers are among the most devout conservationists, yet they have pitted themselves against the green movement in many battles. If these two groups can't put aside political animosity for the greater good, they have no one to blame but themselves.

The simplest explanation is that hunting has just gotten harder. Lewis said success rates in some parts of Oregon have been cut in half or worse, from near 40 percent down into the teens. Hunting isn't the supermarket — there are no guarantees — but the more successful hunters are the more they want to return.

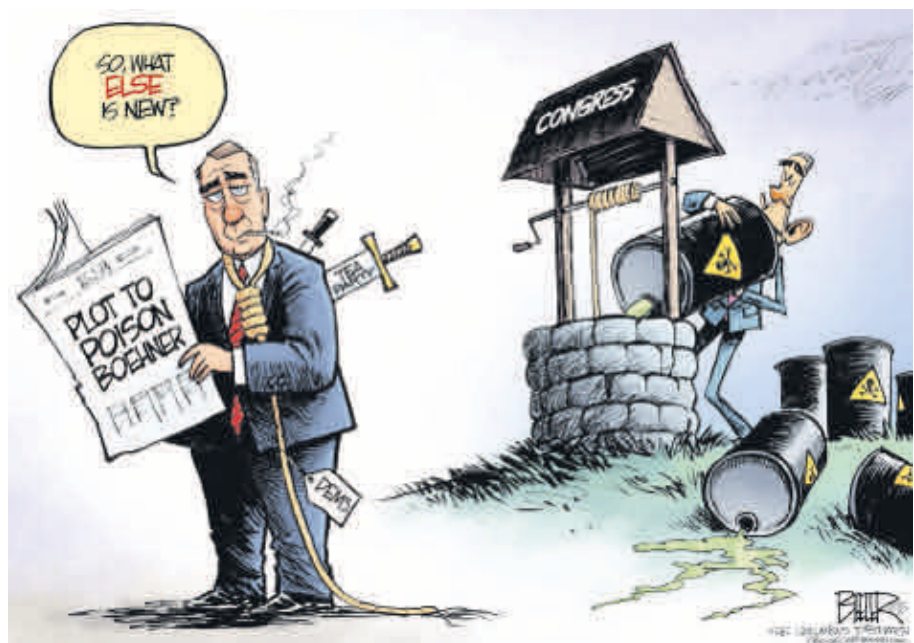
Hunting Works for Oregon has plenty of challenges ahead of it in order to stem the tide and see hunter participation go back on the upswing.

We hope they stay out of the political morass and keep their eye on the real prize: reducing costs and expanding opportunities for hunters.

Because right now hunting means a lot to the Eastern Oregon economy, but it could mean much more.

Hunters spend \$248 million a year in Oregon, much of it in the rural parts of the state.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.



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OTHER VIEWS



We need another giant protest

President Barack Obama was criticized for failing to attend, or send a proper surrogate to, the giant anti-terrorism march in Paris on Sunday. That criticism was right. But it is typical of American politics today that we focus on this and not what would have really made the world feel the jihadist threat was finally being seriously confronted. And that would not be a march that our president helps to lead, but one in which he's not involved at all. That would be a million-person march against the jihadists across the Arab-Muslim world, organized by Arabs and Muslims for Arabs and Muslims, without anyone in the West asking for it — not just because of what happened in Paris but because of the scores of Muslims recently murdered by jihadists in Pakistan, Yemen, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria and Syria.

Abdul Rahman al-Rashed, one of the most respected Arab journalists, wrote Monday in his column in *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*: "Protests against the recent terrorist attacks in France should have been held in Muslim capitals, rather than Paris, because, in this case, it is Muslims who are involved in this crisis and stand accused. ... The story of extremism begins in Muslim societies, and it is with their support and silence that extremism has grown into terrorism that is harming people. It is of no value that the French people, who are the victims here, take to the streets. ... What is required here is for Muslim communities to disown the Paris crime and Islamic extremism in general." (Translation by Memri.org.)

The truth is there is a huge amount of ambivalence toward this whole jihadist phenomenon — more than any of us would like to believe — in the Arab-Muslim world, Europe and America. This ambivalence starts in the Muslim community, where there is a deep cleavage over what constitutes authentic Islam today. We fool ourselves when we tell Muslims what "real Islam" is. Because Islam has no Vatican, no single source of religious authority, there are many Islams today. The puritanical Wahhabi/Salafi/jihadist strain is one of them, and it has more support than we want to believe.

Ambivalence runs through Europe today on the question of what a country should demand of new Muslim immigrants by way of adopting its values. Is Stratfor's George Friedman right when he argues that Europeans adopted multiculturalism precisely because they didn't really want to absorb their Muslim immigrants, and many of those Muslim immigrants, who went to Europe to find a job, not a new identity, didn't want to be absorbed? If so, that spells trouble.

Ambivalence runs through Washington's ties with Saudi Arabia. Ever since jihadists took over Islam's holiest shrine in Mecca in



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

1979, proclaiming that Saudi Arabia's rulers were not pious enough, Saudi Arabia has redoubled its commitment to Wahhabi or Salafist Islam — the most puritanical, anti-pluralistic and anti-women version of that faith. This Saudi right turn — combined with oil revenues used to build Wahhabi-inspired mosques, websites and madrassas across the Muslim world — has tilted the entire Sunni community to the right.

Look at a picture of female graduates of Cairo University in 1950. Few are wearing veils. Look at them today. Many are wearing veils. The open, soft, embracing Islam that defined Egypt for centuries — pray five times a day but wash it down with a beer at night — has been hardened by this Wahhabi wind from Arabia.

But U.S. presidents never confront Saudi Arabia about this because of our oil addiction. As I've said, addicts never tell the truth to their pushers. The Saudi government opposes the jihadists. Unfortunately, though, it's a very short step from Wahhabi Islam to the violent jihadism practiced by the Islamic State. The French terrorists were born in France but were marinated in Wahhabi-Salafi thought through the Web and local mosques — not Voltaire.

Also, the other civil war in Islam — between Sunnis and Shiites — has led many mainstream Sunni charities, mosques and regimes to support jihadist groups

because they're ferocious fighters against Shiites. Finally — yet more ambivalence — for 60 years there was a tacit alliance between Arab dictators and their Sunni religious clergy. The regimes funded these uninspired Muslim clerics, and these clerics blessed the uninspired dictators — and both stifled the emergence of any authentic, inspired, reformist Islam that could take on Wahhabism-Salafism, even though many Muslims wanted it. An authentic reformation requires a free space in the Arab-Muslim world.

"Muslims need to 'upgrade their software,' which is programmed mainly by our schools, television and mosques — especially small mosques that trade in what is forbidden," Egyptian intellectual Mamoun Fandy wrote in *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*. (Also translated by Memri.org.) "There is no choice but to dismantle this system and rebuild it in a way that is compatible with human culture and values."

In short, jihadist zeal is easy to condemn, but will require multiple revolutions to stem — revolutions that will require a lot of people in the Arab-Muslim world and West to shed their ambivalence and stop playing double games.

Thomas L. Friedman won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, his third Pulitzer for *The New York Times*. He became the paper's foreign-affairs Op-Ed columnist in 1995.

YOUR VIEWS

More money won't fix Oregon's systemic problems

This governor raised the general fund for Oregon (2013-2015) 13.6 percent. When was the last time anyone received that large a pay raise? We are 42nd in education and he thinks we need more money. Funny thing, Oregon seems to believe that more money will fix the problem. It never happens here.

Remember last year when the news was how education was in Oregon? We acquire from the mouthpieces in the valley that all is well and we have improved. Pendleton spends approximately \$8,600 per student. There are approximately 3,600 students enrolled in School District 16R. Pendleton is in the average of spending. Schools range from \$4,500 to \$15,000.

The state of Oregon has one state worker for every 42 citizens. How can anyone think we need that many? The federal government only has 12 and they are top-heavy. Also, Oregon gets 36 percent of its money from the federal government. That makes it 12th in the nation for receiving federal dollars.

From the Tax Federation of America,

income tax collection per capita in 2011: New York \$1,864 per person, \$1,808 per person in Connecticut, \$1,765 per person in Massachusetts, \$1,425 per person in Oregon, and Minnesota is \$1,404 per person. Oregon's tax rate is 9 percent under \$250,000. Oregon's top tax is 9.9 percent when over \$250,000.

When combined with county, local taxes, and federal taxes Oregonians can expect to pay 52.3 percent of their income to the government. Extraordinary to say the least.

Yes, I know we get a tax refund; however, that gets taxed the next year, and any tax return was free money because there is no interest paid. So Oregon is fifth in the nation in taxes. The middle income tax rate, though, is third in nation.

This whole tax sham is a Ponzi scheme. Sooner or later, even with state workers paying taxes, it will implode.

There are just too many on the government payroll to sustain that kind of expense. All the above states will also implode — does Detroit ring a bell?

What we need is better managing.
Roesch Kishpaugh
Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY