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OUR VIEW



Following a rain storm, the Umatilla Marina reflects a November sunset. The Umatilla Marina received federal dollars from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which is up for reauthorization in September.

Conserve the conservation fund

For 50 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been used to protect natural areas, water and cultural heritage sites for conservation and recreation. Except that it hasn't — totally. It was created way back in 1965, funded by a portion of the royalties paid for offshore drilling on the outer continental shelf, and used those dollars to create and improve national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, city parks and outdoor recreation opportunities.

But the Land & Water Conservation Fund, like most things Congress can get their grubby little hands on, doesn't work the way it was intended. Because just about every year, Congress funnels part of those \$900 million or so away from their intended use to fill budget deficits and fund pet projects.

For the good of the country it must stop. Fifty years of robbing the future to pay off the present are too many. But now the fund — which has seen more than \$18 billion already taken out of it — is facing an even greater threat, as it must be reauthorized by Congress by September or risk disappearing altogether.

Congress, as narrow-minded and short-term thinking as they come over those decades, continues to kick the important can down the road as it wins and loses political points by the hour.

The annual hand in the LWCF cookie jar has left more than \$27 billion in conservation and

recreation projects unfunded. And that backlog has harmed critical areas such as the Everglades in Florida or, closer to home, in the Grande Ronde Valley to the Columbia Gorge. Back in the 1960s and '70s funds were used to purchase land along McKay Creek, build tennis courts in Athena, develop a city park and marina in Umatilla and develop Roy Raley Park in Pendleton. More recently they have been used at Orchard Park and the Hermiston Butte, Pendleton River Parkway and numerous parks in the city, the Umatilla fishing dock and more.

Since its inception, the LWCF has provided more than \$260 million to the state. That's a chunk of change, but it's also piddling compared to what it could be — what big projects could be done, what beautiful and valuable land could be saved, and what gosh darn fun it would be to have a new tennis court in Athena. Conservation and recreation aren't the best immediate investment, which is what Congress is interested in. But if we want our country to remain sustainable and livable, we have to set aside a little bit for the long haul. Every investor knows that is a good strategy for future wealth.

The Land & Water Conservation Fund has always been popular because it doesn't rely on taxpayer dollars and goes to pay for projects and places Americans enjoy. Tell your representative to reauthorize it and then leave it alone.

The fund, which doesn't rely on taxpayer dollars, could disappear in September.

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.

OTHER VIEW

The Frohnmayer legacy

(Medford) Mail Tribune

Medford native Dave Frohnmayer, who died last week after what his family described as a "quiet battle" with prostate cancer, will be remembered for that characteristic as much as any. Although he rose to the highest levels of public life, he didn't trumpet his accomplishments from the rooftops as he worked diligently in the interest of his fellow Oregonians. Frohnmayer was the son of Medford attorney and civic leader Otto Frohnmayer and his wife, MarAbel, a patron of the arts whose name adorns the music building at the University of Oregon. He attended Harvard University and earned his law degree at the University of California, Berkeley. Frohnmayer taught at the University of Oregon law school, and as a private citizen he advocated for Oregon's public records and meetings laws, which were adopted in 1973. In 1974 he was elected to the Oregon House from Lane County. He was elected attorney general in

1980 and was re-elected twice, running the second and third times as the nominee of both the Democratic and Republican parties. He ran for governor in 1990 but lost to Gov. Barbara Roberts in a three-way race. He never ran for office again, but continued his career of public service as dean of the U of O law school and then as the university's president, retiring in 2009. Frohnmayer was a Republican in the Oregon tradition of moderate leadership exemplified by Gov. Tom McCall and Sen. Mark Hatfield. He was less interested in scoring partisan victories than in doing what he thought was best for the people of the state. The tributes that flowed from all corners of the political spectrum testify to the respect Frohnmayer earned, even from adversaries, throughout his long and distinguished career. Former Medford mayor and legislator Al Densmore summed it up well: "He was just a class act in everything he did and the way he treated everyone." We would all do well to honor Dave Frohnmayer by emulating him.

He was less interested in partisan victories.



OTHER VIEWS

Skills in flux

Several years ago, Doug Lemov began studying videos of excellent teachers. He focused not on their big strategies but on their microgestures: How long they waited before calling on students to answer a question (to give the less confident students time to get their hands up); when they paced about the classroom and when they stood still (while issuing instructions, to emphasize the importance of what's being said); how they moved around the room toward a student whose mind might be wandering.

In an excellent piece on Lemov for *The Guardian*, Ian Leslie emphasizes that these subtle skills are often not recognized or even discussed by those who talk about education policy, or even by those who evaluate teachers.

Leslie notes that the Los Angeles school system tabulated the performance of roughly 6,000 teachers, using measures of student achievement. The best performing teacher in the whole system was a woman named Zenaida Tan. Up until that report, she was completely unheralded. The skills she possessed were invisible. Meanwhile, less important traits were measured on her evaluations (three times she was late to pick up students from recess).

In part, Lemov is talking about the skill of herding cats. The master of cat herding senses when attention is about to wander, knows how fast to move a diverse group, senses the rhythm between lecturing and class participation, varies the emotional tone. This is a performance skill that surely is relevant beyond education.

This raises an important point. As the economy changes, the skills required to thrive in it change, too, and it takes a while before these new skills are defined and acknowledged.

For example, in today's loosely networked world, people with social courage have amazing value. Everyone goes to conferences and meets people, but some people invite six people to lunch afterward and follow up with four carefully tended friendships forevermore. Then they spend their lives connecting people across networks.

People with social courage are extroverted in issuing invitations but introverted in conversation — willing to listen 70 percent of the time. They build not just contacts but actual friendships by engaging people on multiple levels. If you're interested in a new field, they can reel off the names of 10 people you should know. They develop large informal networks of contacts that transcend their organization and give them an independent power base. They are discriminating in their personal recommendations since character



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

judgment is their primary currency. Similarly, people who can capture amorphous trends with a clarifying label also have enormous worth. Karl Popper observed that there are clock problems and cloud problems. Clock problems can be divided into parts, but cloud problems are indivisible emergent systems. A culture problem is a cloud, so is a personality, an era and a social environment.

Since it is easier to think deductively, most people try to turn cloud problems into clock problems, but a few people are able to look at a complex situation, grasp the gist and clarify it by naming what is going on.

Such people tend to possess negative capacity, the ability to live with ambiguity and not leap to premature conclusions. They can absorb a stream of disparate data and rest in it until they can synthesize it into one trend, pattern or generalization.

Such people can create a mental model that helps you think about a phenomenon. As Oswald Chambers put it, "The author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been dumbly struggling in you for utterance."

We can all think of many other skills that are especially valuable right now: Making nonhuman things intuitive to humans: This is what Steve Jobs did. Purpose provision:

Many people go through life overwhelmed by options, afraid of closing off opportunities. But a few have fully cultivated moral passions and can help others choose the one thing they should dedicate themselves to.

Opposability: F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." For some reason I am continually running across people who believe this is the ability their employees and bosses need right now.

Cross-class expertise: In a world dividing along class, ethic and economic grounds some people are culturally multilingual. They can operate in an insular social niche while seeing it from the vantage point of an outsider.

One gets the impression we're confronted by a giant cultural lag. The economy emphasizes a new generation of skills, but our vocabulary describes the set required 30 years ago. Lord, if somebody could just identify the skills it takes to give a good briefing these days, that feat alone would deserve the Nobel Prize.

David Brooks became a New York Times Op-Ed columnist in September 2003.

YOUR VIEWS

BMCC bond reasonable cost, and a great deal for citizens

This coming May, Blue Mountain Community College will be presenting a bond to their regional service area for consideration. I strongly encourage you to read and learn more about what they are offering. Given what it will do for students, for expanding needed educational opportunities and for our region's economic development, I would strongly support a YES vote.

The bond will do many things. First, it will provide for much-needed repairs and maintenance for all of its facilities in the region at Boardman, Hermiston, Pendleton and Milton-Freewater campuses. Much of these renovation updates and repairs have been deferred for years. BMCC is over 50 years old. Think about it: How many of us are driving a 50-year-old car as our daily driver and living in a house over fifty years old? And if you are, I guarantee you would have been making repairs on those items to keep them operating. Much is the case with BMCC. Consider that they have over 10,000 enrolled students, staff and visitors in and out of their

facilities throughout the year. Next, BMCC, in order to keep pace with technology and new job skill requirements, must update programs and provide new programs that simply did not exist five to 10 years ago. This bond will implement a precision irrigated agriculture program; an Agriculture Center of Excellence; and industrial equipment for diesel, dental and nursing programs. Lastly, the bond with its new programs will provide workers for our regional employment needs and fill jobs, thus promoting sound economic development for our whole region (Heppner, Boardman, Umatilla, Hermiston, Pendleton and Milton-Freewater) as well as keeping some of our best and brightest people in our area. The bond cost is reasonable and is lower than the previously retired BMCC bond as well as the last bond request with a cost of only \$36.25 for the median home in Umatilla County. This bond is not just a good deal, it's a great deal. Vote yes.

Jer Pratton
Hermiston

LETTERS POLICY

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