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**OUR VIEW**

# Leading by lawsuit is blunt instrument

A pending lawsuit by an environmental group is the latest challenge to federal salmon and steelhead hatcheries on the Columbia River, a decades-old system that has also faced some congressional scrutiny in recent years. Although salmon propagation practices do merit ongoing re-examination, defunding these Mitchell Act hatcheries would be a serious mistake.

**Hatcheries are a vital lifeline for the economies of many communities.**

The Wild Fish Conservancy, a small advocacy group based in Duvall, Washington, argues the federal agencies that provide money for hatcheries haven't coordinated their actions and aren't in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. According to the WFC, federal hatcheries harm "ESA-listed species and their critical habits through a variety of mechanisms, including facility effects, fish removal activities, genetic and ecological interactions, harvest and monitoring and evaluation."

The federal hatcheries, along with others operated by states and tribes, are mainly responsible for maintaining salmon runs now that the river system is dammed. The result of compromises hammered out between many parties, including Columbia River treaty tribes, hatcheries are a vital lifeline for the economies of many communities, as well as the fish runs they propagate and support.

"Carefully managed hatcheries

play a critical role in Columbia Basin salmon recovery by rebuilding salmon populations while supporting fisheries," said Paul Lumley,

executive director of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. "Lawsuits like these could hurt salmon recovery efforts and distract us from the bigger picture of working together to reform hatchery practices."

Liz Hamilton, executive director of the Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association, pointed out that killing hatchery funding would also mean loss of tens of millions of funding dollars for conservation and recovery.

The state of Washington's separate move to designate some Columbia tributaries for wild steelhead also generates some concern in river communities, but is a far more deliberative plan than the wholesale withdrawal of funding WFC advocates for federal hatcheries.

Refinements in federal and state hatchery practices should be encouraged. However, fisheries management by lawsuit is never a good idea.

In case you hadn't heard, similar "lawsuit by management" issues exist across Eastern Oregon, even above the waterline. Our forests, our wildlife, and our communities should demand science and consensus-driven management decisions.

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.

**YOUR VIEWS**

## Vocational education making a local comeback

The Jan. 13 *East Oregonian* article titled "Forging a strong future," gave me encouragement that vocational education is, again, becoming a priority in Pendleton and Umatilla/Morrow counties.

I have shared my feelings a number of times about the need to provide courses at the high school level which will meet the educational needs of all students. CTE classes like this, for both young men and women, accomplish several things which benefit society.

Experience shows industrial technology and career education classes encourage students to stay in school and to see the benefit of high school education. If the student has just one class they excel in, it will help them see and feel a purpose to attend and finish high school. Career and technology education classes enable students to come out of high school with marketable skills that helps them enter the trade industry at an entry-level position, and encourages them to go on for further training/education. The nation is at an all-time low in skilled, vocationally-trained men and women.

Side benefits to CTE classes are that students learn to enjoy working with their hands, and to work safely within the various trades. Even if students choose not to further their education in this area, they have a basic, everyday knowledge of handling tools and around the house problem-solving skills.

I say, keep up the good work Umatilla and Morrow school districts: Add more and more career and technology classes to high school curriculum. Continue to meet the needs of all students and America.

Al Olson, Harris Junior Academy

## City of Pendleton needs transportation plan input

On Wednesday from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center, the city of Pendleton and our consultant are holding an open house to allow for

public review and input on our efforts thus far of our transportation plan update.

The areas we are focusing on are future pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements to make for a better Pendleton. We recognize that we have funding issues related to our street system and will continue to work on that important issue. We also recognize that we have to plan for our future. We must identify and prioritize projects that benefit the community so when funding is available, we can secure it and implement the projects.

The goal of the open house is for the public to help us prioritize changes that can be made to the city's pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure. Whether we focus on strengthening our local and regional transportation network (think Kayak and Let'er Bus) or add sidewalks to areas that are currently lacking — such as near schools, so children can walk in safe and protected paths. We are also defining future off-system pathways for bikes and pedestrians using the existing levee system as a backbone, with connectivity to Grecian Heights Park, Community Park and along the Umatilla River to the mouth of Birch Creek.

This plan update is meant to identify improvements and the open house will give people an opportunity to learn more about what this update is about, the changes that may occur, the areas we're focusing on and prioritizing these potential future projects.

I ask that you come, show your support, voice your concerns, ask questions, and, most importantly, be involved in this process to help create the vision for making Pendleton a more livable place for all members of our community. The more public involvement we get in this process, the better the outcome will be. That's because we are working on behalf of our citizens and the improvements we make should benefit the community as whole, identified by the city and prioritized with help from citizens.

Haley Meisenholder  
RARE intern, Pendleton



**OTHER VIEWS**

## Two questions for Bernie Sanders

When Bernie Sanders won election as mayor of Burlington, Vermont, in 1981, I called his office to see if there was a story there about a socialist elected official. I was interning at *The Washington Post* (I didn't mention the intern part!) and spoke at length to some assistant who answered the phone in the mayor's office.

I asked about Sanders' plans, and the aide kept answering with "we" — which I thought a nice glimpse of contagious office socialism. After half an hour, I had enough to check with my editor, so I asked the aide's name. "Oh," he said a bit sheepishly, "actually, I'm Bernie Sanders."

Sanders' lack of political airs has helped catapult him forward in the presidential race, overcoming a 50-point deficit to just about tie Hillary Clinton in Iowa. He comes across as winningly uncalculated: Other candidates kiss babies; Sanders seems to fumble for a baby's "off" switch, so he can tell you more about inequality in America. Most politicians sweet-talk voters; he bellows at them.

I admire Sanders' passion, his relentless focus on inequality and his consistency. When he was sworn in as mayor of Burlington, he declared: "The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer and the millions of families in the middle are gradually sliding out of the middle class and into poverty." That has remained his mantra across 35 years. And yet, I still have two fundamental questions for Sanders:

**Can you translate your bold vision into reality?**

On that, frankly, I'm skeptical. I'm for Medicare for All, but it won't happen. And if it did, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a bipartisan group, found that Sanders' sums come up short by \$3 trillion over a decade.

Likewise, Sanders says he would prod America's allies in the Middle East to lead the charge to defeat the Islamic State. Yes, but how? The United States has already been trying unsuccessfully to get these allies to do more against ISIS. What new leverage does he bring?

*The Washington Post* last month published a scathing editorial headlined "Bernie Sanders's Fiction-Filled Campaign." It derided his "fantastical claims" and added: "Sanders is not a brave truth-teller. He is a politician selling his own brand of fiction."

I think that's too harsh, for Sanders panders less than other politicians (a very low bar), and he has often staked out lonely positions that turned out to be correct — such as his opposition to the Iraq War. But there remains this open question of how he could achieve his ambitious agenda.



**NICHOLAS KRISTOF**  
Comment

I also wonder if his age may be relevant here: Sanders would be 75 when he took office, by far the oldest person to become president (Reagan was 69; Clinton would be a slightly younger 69). Sanders now is indefatigable, but people often slow down in their late 70s and their 80s.

Another reason for skepticism is his congressional record. In 25 years in Congress, Sanders has been primary sponsor of just three bills that became law, and two were simply to rename

post offices in Vermont; he did better with amendments. Clinton wasn't particularly effective as a legislator, either, but to me Sanders' record suggests that his strength is as a passionate advocate, not as a dealmaker who gets results.

**Can you get elected? Or would your nomination make a President Cruz more likely?**

When voters are polled today about how they would vote in a general election, Sanders does pretty well. For example, he beats Ted Cruz in the RealClearPolitics average, while Clinton loses to Cruz. But at this stage that's almost meaningless: Republicans are blasting Clinton while ignoring Sanders. If he were the nominee, he would be savaged.

One particularly sobering item for Sanders supporters: A Gallup poll last year asking voters what kind of person they would be unwilling to consider voting for. Six percent of Americans say they wouldn't vote for a Catholic, and 7 percent wouldn't support a black or a Jew. Some 24 percent wouldn't vote for a gay candidate, and more than a third would refuse to vote for a Muslim or an atheist.

However, the most objectionable kind of person by far was a socialist. Fifty percent of Americans said they would be unwilling to consider voting for a socialist.

Maybe Sanders could convince them that a "democratic socialist" isn't exactly a socialist, or maybe he could charm some voters into rethinking their beliefs. He has done just that very successfully in Vermont, a state where he now wins elections by overwhelming margins, and skeptics have been underestimating him for 35 years. But if a Democratic nominee starts off with half the voters unwilling to consider someone like him, that's a huge advantage for the Republican nominee.

So can he accomplish his goals, and is he electable? Lots of us admire Sanders and we would like reassurance.

*Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. Kristof, a columnist for The New York Times since 2001, won the Pulitzer Prize two times.*



**LETTERS POLICY**

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