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OUR VIEW

Crying wolf on bad science

Wolves have recovered dramatically in Oregon, their numbers growing into the triple digits and their populations expanding west and south across a large swath of the state.

The Oregon Wolf Plan shepherded the success of that re-introduction. And because the next step in the plan called for taking gray wolves off the state's endangered species list, that's exactly what happened.

In a staff report released in October 2015, scientists from ODFW recommended the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission delist gray wolves. In November, OFWC agreed with that assessment. And just last month both houses of the state legislature voted to affirm the OFWC's decision. That affirmation now sits at the desk of Governor Kate Brown.

If Brown vetoes the bill, it would be just another slap in the face of rural Oregon.

Out here in wolf country, we've lived by the rules of the Oregon Wolf Plan since the wily animals swam across the Snake River and made this country their home. And many of us are happy about that. Wolves belong in Oregon, and their existence must be protected.

But with existence now reasonably secured, species management is needed. And we should make those management decisions using unbiased science, not science paid for by special interests. And we should definitely not make those decisions by discarding science altogether and substituting emotion, or the highest paid lawyer.

But that's what environmental groups such as Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands and the Center

for Wildlife Diversity are trying to do. These litigants are undercutting the work that ODFW has done to revive wolf numbers and the science that has fueled it.

"The place where (the delisting decision) needs to be determined is in a court of law," Amaroq Weiss, Center of Biological Diversity, told Oregon Public Broadcasting.

But a courtroom is not where science happens, and it is the wrong place for management decisions to be made.

The place where wolf management decisions should be made is in the field. It's in the laboratory. It's in the reams of data in the hands of a wolf biologist.

It's by the decisions of an apolitical, informed commission who studies the science.

That work has been done, yet it has been disregarded by environmental groups who don't agree with the conclusion.

That's not the way science works. It's a shame that some of the state's most well-funded and powerful environmental groups don't believe in science that is not their own.

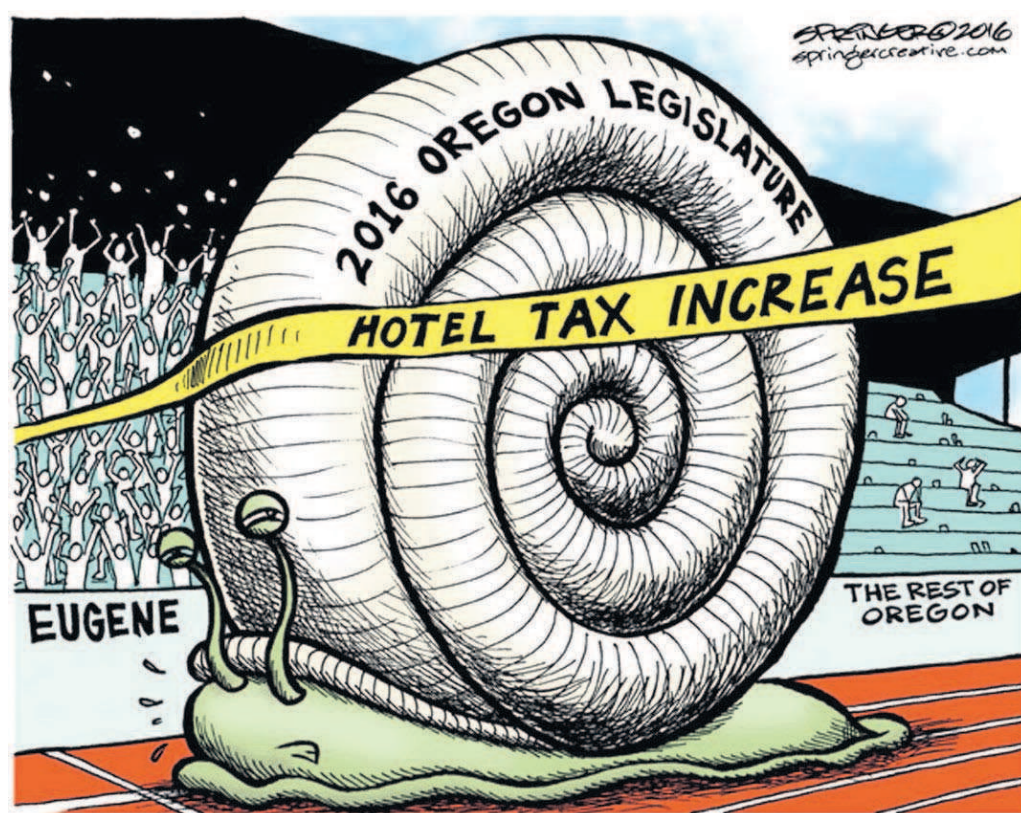
Those groups are putting pressure on the governor to veto a bill that passed, somewhat miraculously, through a Democratically controlled Legislature to land on her desk.

It's not a one-sided trick, either. There are many who point to the scientist they paid for who has found the climate isn't changing, smoking doesn't cause cancer, that coal is clean and Arctic drilling is good for the polar bear.

It's a disreputable group to be part of, and one that hurts your credibility in the eyes of people who just want what is best for our state and its wildlife. You cry wolf too many times and there might not be any wolves left to hear you.

Wolf management decisions should be made in the field and the laboratory, not the courtroom.

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 VIEWS

Dogs, cats and leadership

When he was in the middle of his Syrian peace deal negotiations, Secretary of State John Kerry would go to President Barack Obama with a request: Could the U.S. quietly send a few cruise missiles to hit Assad regime targets, just to send a message and maybe move the Syrian president toward a deal.

"Kerry's looking like a chump with the Russians, because he has no leverage," a senior administration official told Jeffrey Goldberg of The Atlantic.

Obama continually said no and eventually grew impatient. Goldberg asked Kerry if he thought he had more of a bias toward action than Obama. "I do probably," Kerry responded. "I'd say that I think we've had a very symbiotic, synergistic, whatever you call it, relationship which works very effectively. Because I'll come in with a bias toward 'Let's try to do this, let's try to do that, let's get this done.'"

The new Goldberg essay is a profound and comprehensive look at Obama's foreign policy thinking, and especially his steadfast desire to reduce U.S. involvement in the Middle East.

But it's also fascinating to read in the midst of a presidential campaign. It shows how insanely far removed campaign bloviation is from the reality of actually governing.

It also reveals that the performance of presidents, especially on foreign policy, is shaped by how leaders attach to problems. Some leaders are like dogs: They want to dig right in and make things happen. Some are more like cats: They want to detach and maybe look for a pressure point here or there.

If we want to understand the dog or catlike qualities in candidates, we should be asking them a different set of questions:

How much do you think a president can change the flow of world events?

Obama, for example, has a limited or, if you want to put it that way, realistic view of the extent of U.S. influence. He subscribes to a series of propositions that frequently push him toward nonintervention: The world "is a tough, complicated, messy, mean place and full of hardship and tragedy," he told Goldberg. You can't fix everything. Sometimes you can only shine a spotlight.

Furthermore, Obama argues, because of our history, U.S. military efforts are looked at with suspicion. Allies are unreliable. Ukraine is always going to be in Russia's sphere of influence, so its efforts there will always trump ours. The Middle East is a morass and no longer that important to U.S. interests.

Even the Iran nuclear deal is seen as a limited endeavor — not to reshape the Middle



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

East but simply to make a dangerous country less dangerous.

Do you think out loud in tandem with a community, or do you process internally?

Throughout the Goldberg article, Obama is seen thinking deeply and subtly, but apart from the group around him. In catlike fashion, he is a man who knows his own mind and trusts his own judgment. His decision not to bomb Syria after it crossed the chemical weapons red line was made almost

entirely alone. His senior advisers were shocked when he announced it. The secretaries of state and defense were not in the room.

More generally, Obama expresses disdain with the foreign policy community. He is critical of most of his fellow world leaders — impatient with most European ones, fed up with most Middle Eastern ones.

When seeking a description of a situation, does your mind leap for the clarifying single truth or do you step back to see the complex web of factors?

Ronald Reagan typified the single clarifying truth habit of mind, both when he was

describing an enemy (Evil Empire) and when he was calling for change (tear down this wall). In his interviews with Goldberg, Obama leans to the other side of the spectrum. He is continually stepping back, starting with analyses of human nature, how people behave when social order

breaks down, the roots and nature of tribalism.

Do you see international affairs as a passionate struggle or a conversation and negotiation?

Obama shows a continual distrust of passion. He doesn't see much value in macho bluffing or chest-thumping, or in lofty Churchillian rhetoric, or in bombings done in the name of "credibility." He may be critical, but he is not a hater. He doesn't even let anger interfere with his appraisal of Vladimir Putin, praising him for being courteous and businesslike. Because fear distorts judgment, he seeks to place the threat of terrorism in its proper perspective: More Americans die from falling in bathtubs.

Personally, I don't think there is one correct answer to whether we want a dog or a cat as leader. Depends on the situation; there are successful examples of both types. But I'm struck by how catlike Obama is. And it's striking how many Americans have responded by going for Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders, who are bad versions of the bounding in/we-can-change-everything doggy type.

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

YOUR VIEWS

Pendleton needs jobs, not more housing

I am responding to Betty Brunette's letter to the editor and the city of Pendleton's spending \$10,000 on yet another un-needed housing study. I agree with Betty.

My husband and I own 128 apartment units in Pendleton. We have never had much vacancy in the approximately 11 years that we have operated in Pendleton, until this last year. The population of Pendleton is declining. People are moving out of Pendleton to jobs elsewhere.

Pendleton needs more jobs, not more housing. There is no shortage of housing in Pendleton. There is currently plenty of housing for rent in Pendleton. There are numerous houses available as foreclosures in Pendleton right now. There are numerous houses for sale in Pendleton right now.

The tax assessor increases our taxes every year; the water, sewer, power and insurance goes up and the garbage keeps asking for more increases; wages are headed up, thanks to the governor; supplies and materials, carpet, appliances, flooring, paint, are all up significantly; and yet rents are stagnant in Pendleton. Who is supposed to pay for all of the

increase in operating expenses if no new good jobs are coming to Pendleton? We desperately need higher rents to keep up with higher operating costs, but it is difficult to raise rents when people don't have higher paying jobs.

The city of Pendleton needs to do a better job attracting employers and the city needs to spend money attracting jobs to Pendleton, and not spend money on yet another silly housing study. I can tell you as one of the largest landlords in Pendleton that is losing money as a landlord in Pendleton, because of rising costs and stagnant rents, we have no housing shortage — we have a declining population and we have a lack of jobs.

Kristy Neubo
Pendleton

Parks help make Pendleton a great city

Pendleton has amazing parks, and a great parks department that oversees and manages these wonderful assets. Some recent letters to the *East Oregonian* have thrown a few stones at these places, and I am sure I am in complete disagreement with their sentiments.

First of all, one detractor says we spend more on our parks and manage more acreage than

most towns of similar size. If his fanciful accounting is true, I think it is in fact a tremendous bragging point and recruitment piece for Pendleton. I see it as a huge positive and leaves little to enjoy for someone who would rather see a fresh coat of asphalt around town. And even if you are a fan of new blacktop, that budget needs to be addressed separately. Cutting our parks budget would not solve the infrastructure crisis, but would do a great deal in killing the livability of Pendleton.

In a town that has lost numerous local physicians and professional workers as well as business interests across the board, we need to offer as many family-friendly and attractive city assets as we can to bring them back. The curb appeal of a city is a major factor in the relocation of tax-paying citizens, especially those planning to raise young families here. And yes, statues on Main Street do improve the aesthetics of our downtown area. Buses full of tourists love to park on Main and visit our restaurants and take pictures of our statues, like it or not. And the statue grants would not have fixed the many years of ignoring our bridges, roads and cement stairways either.

In a town where businesses are

closing their doors at an alarming rate and our new commerce involves mostly marijuana pipes and glassware, I would love to support the parks that I have enjoyed in every neighborhood here since I was a child growing up on the North Hill. If you haven't been to a dog park, check out the ones on the banks of the Deschutes in Bend or in the Dry Canyon in Redmond. Just excellent examples of people enjoying the outdoors with their animal friends.

Pendleton is great. Make it a point to set foot on as many parks as you can this spring and you will be a believer too.

Scott McClendon
Pendleton

Country has maxed out its debt limit

Congress four years ago passed a \$2.4 trillion debt ceiling increase. It was the largest in history at the time, with the promise of future spending cuts in the coming years.

The national debt since then has increased by \$4 trillion, rising from \$15 trillion to over \$19 trillion today. The national debt credit card is nearly maxed out.

This current budget cycle affords the House with an opportunity to fulfill their promise to spend within the previously agreed budget caps passed in the Budget Control Act of 2011. A truly responsible budget should stay within those caps, plan for the repeal of Obamacare and balance within the next ten years.

At the present time, it looks like the House Republicans are preparing to cave in without even trying to pass a responsible budget.

As taxpayers, we need to demand Congress to pass a responsible budget continually and not kick the can down the road. Call your representatives and encourage them to stop the spending, balance the budget, and repeal Obamacare.

Donald Crawford
Klamath Falls

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.