

# The Blue Mountains are important to us



**JEFF BLACKWOOD**  
UNDERSTANDING OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

These lands where we live help define us as individuals and communities. With warming temperatures there are changes happening, however, to these lands we love.

The Blue Mountain Adaption Partnership (BMAP) was developed to identify climate change issues relevant to resource management in the Blue Mountain region. It is a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service, Oregon State University, and the University of Washington. In 2017, the original findings were published by the USDA Forest Service in a report entitled “Climate Change Vulnerability and Adaptation in the Blue Mountains Region.” The 330-page report focused on hydrology, fish, upland vegetation and special habitats, chosen as areas of primary concern to our communities.

The vulnerability assessment concluded that “effects of climate change on hydrology would be especially significant.” Climate scientist predict that although overall

precipitation may not change significantly in the mountains, more rain will mix with snow, especially in the mid-elevations. Spring snowmelt and runoff is already happening earlier, resulting in low summer flows occurring sooner in the summer. Coupled with longer, drier summers, this will affect downstream water use, fish, and other aquatic environments. Infrastructure, such as roads, trails, culverts and communities, will be impacted by more intense runoff from severe storms and rain-on-snow events.

Over the next few decades species, such as Chinook salmon, red band trout, steelhead, bull trout and other aquatic life may be drastically reduced in abundance and distribution. This will depend on local conditions of reduced streamflow and warmer water and air temperatures.

Increasing air temperatures, drier soils, and longer summers are projected to cause changes in vegetation, favoring those species that are more drought tolerant, such as ponderosa pine. A warmer climate will increase natural disturbances, such as insects, disease, and wildfire. The assessment predicts that with current trends, the annual acreage burned in the Blue Mountain region could be as high as six times the current average by 2050. Grasses and

shrubs, so important for wildlife and livestock, are maturing earlier in the summer. While providing some protection from late summer drought, this seasonal change means reduced nutrition for those dependent on fall forage for winter health. Drought-tolerant invasive grasses will continue to increase in abundance in forests and rangelands.

Finally, the assessment examined “special areas,” mainly wetlands and groundwater dependent ecosystems, predicting additional stresses as temperatures rise. Although these special areas make up a small portion of the landscape, they are rich in biodiversity and are key components of healthy watersheds.

Along with assessing vulnerabilities, the BMAP process recommended a host of adaptive practices. While they will not necessarily reverse current climate trends, these practices would be helpful in buffering and potentially reducing some adverse effects of climate change. These primarily focus on managing for healthy watershed and riparian conditions. Many of the recommended practices are being applied today by the various public agencies, tribes, and landowners. Thinning small trees, reducing fuel loads, prescribed burning, and streamside protections are activities being implemented

today. It will take persistence, commitment, and funding to invest in sustaining more resilient landscapes in The Blues.

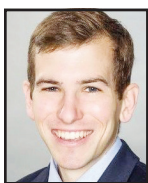
These mountains and canyonlands are so valuable to so many of us, as well as being cornerstones for our regional cultures. Many of us had our first experience in the outdoors in these mountains, creating lifelong memories. These places and experiences embody our history, culture, and who we are.

Nature is not static. Over the past several decades, however, we have accelerated the pace of change. This will impact us all, whether our interests are in First Foods, recreation, making a living, or the many more experiences yet to come. By understanding the changes, threats, and opportunities with a changing climate, and applying the best science in practices and policies, we will be more successful in sustaining what we value in these nationally treasured lands.

Copies of the report are available for free by contacting USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, 1220 S.W. Third Ave., Suite 1400, Portland, OR 97208-3890, or by contacting local Forest Service offices.

*Jeff Blackwood retired from a career with the U.S. Forest Service. He is a member of the Eastern Oregon Climate Change Coalition.*

## Constitutional debates only make the process better



**KEVIN FRAZIER**  
OTHER VIEWS

One of the best parts of law school is reading opinions, dissents and concurrences penned by the Supreme Court. They concisely and, oftentimes, creatively express some of the biggest questions facing our democracy. One that’s come up repeatedly in my Administrative Law class: Did the Constitution create an effective, efficient and energetic government or did it set out a formula for ensuring accountability, adherence to bright-line rules and clear jobs for each branch of government?

You may be inclined to say the Constitution meant to do both. And you may be right. But the questions that reach the Supreme Court often don’t allow for that kind of answer.

For example, in *Free Enterprise Fund v. Public Company Accounting Oversight Board*, the Supreme Court did not have the luxury of finding the middle ground: Either the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board within the Securities and

Exchange Commission was unconstitutionally removed from presidential oversight or it wasn’t.

Though that question may sound drier than the Alvord Desert, its answer boiled down to whether the justices thought the Constitution should be read to allow Congress to create agencies tailored to address modern issues, or if its bright lines were never meant to be crossed, regardless of how the times had changed since 1789.

Supreme Court Justice Steven Breyer came out on the side of an action-oriented Constitution. He’s known for his creative metaphors, imaginative hypotheticals and, above all, his functionalism. In Breyer’s dissent, joined by three of his colleagues, he quoted Chief Justice Marshall in *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) and argued: “Immutable rules would deprive the Government of the needed flexibility to respond to future exigencies which, if foreseen at all, must have been seen dimly.”

According to Justice Breyer, he and Chief Justice Marshall correctly realized that the Framers aimed to create a Constitution that would “endure for ages to come,” which requires granting Congress the ability to respond to the “various crises of human affairs.”

On the other side, writing for the major-

ity, Chief Justice Roberts channeled a formalist interpretation and made the case for a Constitution designed to frustrate speedy responses, if necessary to maintain bright lines between the branches. Citing Supreme Court precedent, Roberts asserted: “The fact that a given law or procedure is efficient, convenient, and useful in facilitating functions of government, standing alone, will not save it if it is contrary to the Constitution, for convenience and efficiency are not the primary objectives — or the hallmarks — of democratic government.”

The fun (and frustrating) part about law school is that these justices are all persuasive, articulate and steeped in Supreme Court precedent. They rarely make bad arguments and they force even the most fierce functionalists to see some merit in a more formalist interpretation and vice versa.

With a majority of the Supreme Court adopting a formalist interpretation, though, those who share Breyer’s view of democracy have a tough battle ahead. Count me among those that think our government ought to be guided by outcomes.

The wonderful part about our democracy is that the people are the sovereigns. Both functionalists and formalists alike agree that all power exercised by the president, Congress, and the Supreme Court is derived

from the people. That means that We the People — you and me — have the obligation and opportunity to make sure that our power is being used toward whatever objectives we view as the hallmarks of our democracy.

Outcomes-oriented governance is not easily accomplished. If some people advocate more persuasively or more persistently, their outcome might win the day. Which is why we ought to do all we can to bring more voices into the delegation of our collective power to our delegates.

Oregon has long championed finding ways to bring the people into the process of power sharing. From the initiative to automatic voter registration, the state has found ways to give people the chance to divvy out their share of power. Those innovations have paved the way for a lot of participation, but there’s still some people who find it easier than others to distribute their power.

We can achieve an outcomes-oriented democracy, if we can bring everyone into the fold. That’s why we need to lower barriers to folks simply looking to fulfill their role as sovereigns.

*Kevin Frazier was raised in Washington County. He is pursuing a law degree at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law.*

## Learning to write isn’t easy



**SCOTT SMITH**  
THE EDUCATION CORNER

Writing is a lifelong skill. Children are able to start developing skills used in writing as early as kindergarten and even preschool. Developing the skill of writing starts with language development and learning to share information orally with others.

It can begin with show and tell where children share a special thing and simply say, “This is my truck.” Or the parent asking the child to tell them about their day.

Writing is at the highest level of processing our brains are able to perform. It is also not a natural skill that comes with body development. It has to be learned according to our geographic region we live in. Eating, walking, talking, and observing are all natural things that most all of us grow equipped to do, but writing is a whole set of complex skills that must be developed.

To be able to write there must be a strong foundation built of other skills, such as language development, analyzing, and understanding the elements of reading. If a child struggles with one of these three they are apt to struggle when it comes to writing.

Language development is the ability to talk and share information. Prior to the use of any form of written texts, heritage was passed down through stories, songs or chants, and taught by elders of the group. They often used pictures to jog their memories which would be considered the first form of written texts.

Being able to understand information and apply it to one’s own life is also key in being able to express orally to others. This is a skill that needs nurturing prior to being able to put ideas into writing. Talking and discussing information with children helps them develop those skills. Asking questions, such as “What do you think? Where do you think that water goes?” or “How would you fix that?” will build their ability to understand and apply information, which will then be more likely to transfer to their writing.

The third is understanding what reading is within our language communication — understanding that symbols represent

letters and sounds and are placed together to create words is important. Words are formed into sentences that communicate a writers’ thoughts and information.

If a child or student is unable to express information orally, they will not be able to complete their writing task because on the developmental scale they have not learned enough oral language to apply it in writing.

Once children are able to talk openly about a subject or object, they are ready to begin their writing journey. If a child or student is struggling with writing, step back and allow them to process using their oral language skills. They still might not be ready to do their own writing and additional scaffolding may be needed for them to be successful, but processing orally first will help students get their thoughts in order, which is critical. Having them dictate the information is also a great scaffold, especially if you guide them with the proper phrasing.

Writing is also something that often isn’t once and done, which is sometimes difficult for children to learn and understand. When first learning to edit their own work they might not be able to identify how it needs to be changed. When we read our own writing back our brains often do an autocorrect, so the child may struggle to recognize their mistakes. Assisting and having children read both theirs and the edited sentences will help them build the ability to recognize changes they might need to make when they are editing their own work.

Most children love to make little folded books. The idea is to take paper and fold it to create pages, allowing the child to place the components of a book on each page, such as a cover, title, beginning, middle and end. Having them create these books can be a first step toward learning the writing process, just as they did centuries ago with hieroglyphics.

Writing is a process, and not an easy one, but with support and guidance we can all learn to communicate through writing.

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## The Big Lie and Native civilizations



**BETTE HUSTED**  
FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE

Sometimes reading a book can feel like having a reunion with old friends.

Maybe that’s why I settled into Katherine Schlick Noe’s middle grades novel “Something to Hold” even as graphic videos of the Jan. 6 insurrection shown at the impeachment trial of Former President Trump were replaying in my mind and the COVID-19 pandemic continued to bring grief to so many. I was seeking the comfort of the familiar.

A friend from my teaching days on the Yakama Indian Reservation had recommended Noe’s book. “I could relate to the story in a very personal way,” she wrote. I could, too — the description of the Warm Springs Reservation, where the story is set, took me back to my visits to friends there, and so much of the story reminded me of my time at White Swan High School, and then Polson Middle School, of my Native students at BMCC and family members on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

There was even a familiar connection to the writer. Though I don’t know her, I had met her mother, Mary Dodds Schlick, at Fishtrap. Mary’s memoir “Coming to Stay: A Columbia River Journey,” describes the family’s life on the Colville, Yakama and Warm Springs reservations, where Bud Schlick worked as a forest manager for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and where Mary became a master basket maker. Her book “Columbia River Basketry: Gift of the Ancestors,” is treasured for its deep understanding and appreciation of Native artists and their work. And Katherine, who also taught high school English in a small town in the Yakima Valley before she became director of the Literacy for Special Needs graduate program at Seattle University, wrote much of her story in workshops at Fishtrap.

But sometimes the familiar can be anything but comforting. In Katherine Schlick Noe’s story, non-Native Kitty runs into trouble when she recognizes the irony of her sixth grade classmates — all but two are Native — being required to sing the Oregon state song for a Columbus Day assembly. “Land of the Empire Builders, Land of the Golden West, Conquered and held by free

men,” are the opening lines of “Oregon, My Oregon.” We are all immigrants, her teacher insists. And America is the greatest country in the world because Columbus and the others who came after him “had the courage and vision to seek out this empty and savage New World, to plant their flags so civilized men could tame it, men like our country’s forefathers and the great explorers who made the Oregon Territory safe for the pioneers.”

It’s the story many of us grew up with, reinforced by countless Hollywood movies and TV shows and, sadly, by our own communities. Recently, *East Oregonian* columnist Brigit Farley remembered being bused to the Whitman Mission to hear how “violent Indians brutally murdered well-meaning whites who were only trying to treat a measles epidemic.” That exhibit has been updated to reflect a more humane and inclusive view, she said — “a clash between two civilizations” — and I’m grateful that Oregon and Pendleton schools include Native history in their curriculum now.

But it strikes me that our country’s first Big Lie was the refusal to recognize indigenous cultures as civilizations, indigenous peoples as equal humans. The Big Lie is an expression we’ve become familiar with through the former president’s second impeachment trial. “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it,” as Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels knew, “people will eventually come to believe it.”

Indigenous peoples can attest to the ongoing effects of a Big Lie. So can Blacks, Latinx and Hispanic peoples, Asians, Muslims, women — the list goes on.

Goebbels also said, “The truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State.”

I’m grateful that Katherine Schlick Noe leads readers to discover truth. And as her novel ends, Kathla (the name means grandmother) offers Kitty “something to hold” to help her remember that her roots are inside her, too, and will go with her wherever she goes. Kathla’s gift is a generous and loving gesture, one that reminds me of my own experiences in Native communities.

And that’s a familiar comfort.

*Bette Husted is a writer and a student of T’ai Chi and the natural world. She lives in Pendleton.*