

OUR VIEW

Timber accord the best deal industry could get

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has signed legislation that makes the Private Forest Accord — a deal reached between the timber industry and environmental groups — the law in the Beaver State.

We understand why many segments of the timber industry have embraced the forest management framework spelled out in the accord. Only time will tell whether it will provide the regulatory certainty that it promises.

Representatives of timber and environmental groups struck the deal last year after a year of talks mediated by the Governor's Office. Brown convened the panel in 2020 to avoid competing ballot measures on forestry regulations.

The legislation codifying the accord expands no-harvest buffers around streams, implements stricter requirements for road-building, prioritizes non-lethal control of beavers and creates a new modeling system to avoid and mitigate the effects of landslides.

The legislation is expected to set the stage for a federal Habitat Conservation Plan for the state's private forests, which would shield landowners from liability under the Endangered Species Act when harvesting trees. That would be a huge benefit to private timber owners.

Support for the deal is not unanimous in the timber industry — critics argue that it complicates forest management, excludes excessive amounts of land from logging and was developed without sufficient transparency and public input. Some owners of smaller timber parcels could lose logging on up to half their land.

But several forest product companies and the Oregon Small Woodlands Association signed onto the Private Forest Accord with the understanding it would provide more regulatory certainty and reduce the likelihood of disruptive lawsuits and ballot initiatives.

"There are no certainties in life, but we have a negotiated agreement that's supported by all sides," said Eric Geyer, strategic business development director for Roseburg Forest Products. "I'm confident we will have regulatory certainty for the elements that were negotiated."

Detractors in the timber industry view "regulatory certainty" as unrealistically optimistic.

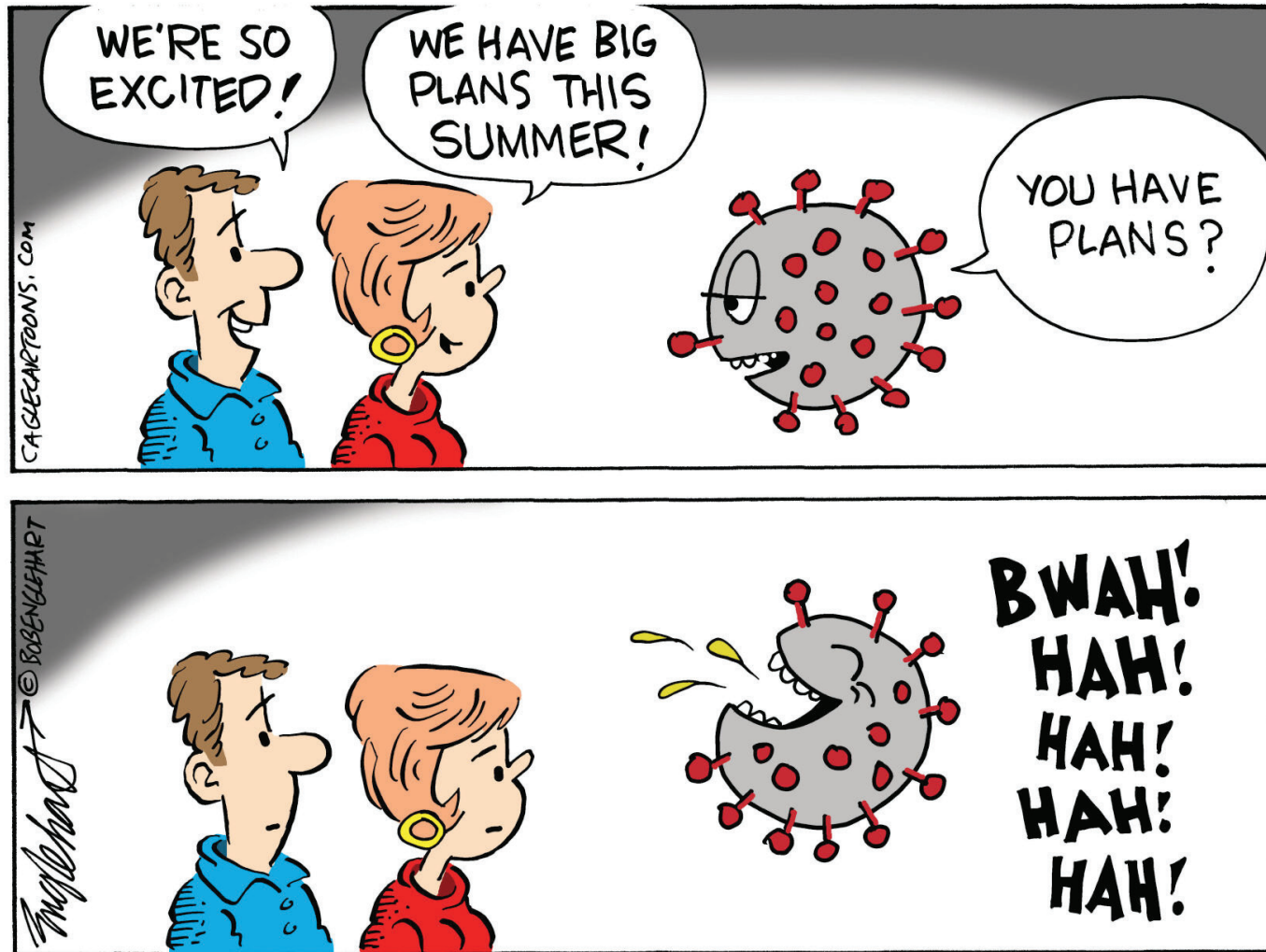
They might be right.

Certainly, the timber industry will be held to the letter of the law and the rules that are developed. We are willing to accept the environmental groups that are parties to the accord will make a good-faith effort to live up to the spirit of the deal, but they are under no legal obligation to be satisfied with the new framework.

And what of non-signatories to the accord who might try to get more restrictions on the ballot, or the next legislature that wants to further tighten the rules?

As Eric Geyer said, there are no certainties. The accord probably was the best deal the industry was going to get.

We hope that it lasts.



Memorial Day: A penny isn't much



TAMMY MALGESINI
INSIDE MY SHOES

I recently read a string of responses on a community Facebook page where a newcomer to Eastern Oregon asked what people do in the area over Memorial Day weekend. Out of the 20-plus responses, only one person mentioned Memorial Day observances that are planned specifically to honor our fallen heroes.

That disturbed me. Sure, I enjoy an opportunity to have a long weekend. And with the weather getting nicer, it's a perfect opportunity to go camping or enjoy outdoor recreational activities. And of course, retail outlets capitalize on the holiday weekend by holding Memorial Day sales. However, those aren't the reasons the holiday was established. Originally it was known as Decoration Day because of the tradition of decorating gravesites with flowers, wreaths and American flags. A federal holiday, it was created to set aside time to honor the men and women who have died in service to our country.

Over the years, I have attended a number of Memorial Day ceremonies. In addition, I take time to wander the local cemetery and leave a penny on the headstones of anywhere from 50-80 veterans.

It's not much — it's less than a dollar and it doesn't even take an hour of my time. But, for me, it's a way to commem-



Tammy Malgesini/East Oregonian
At the Hermiston Cemetery, numerous coins grace the headstone of Lance Cpl. James B. Huston Jr., on May 29, 2017. The 22-year-old died in 2004 while serving with the U.S. Marine Corps in Iraq. According to tradition, coins on the headstone signifies visitors to the veteran's grave.

orate Memorial Day. An extremely small gesture, it doesn't even compare to the sacrifices made by those who have served in our nation's military.

I became aware of the tradition of leaving coins on headstones more than a dozen years ago. Since then, each Memorial Day weekend, I grab a bag of pennies and head to the cemetery.

According to tradition, it is a way of paying respects. As the coins increase in value, so does the level of connection the person leaving it has with the deceased:

- A penny means a person visited the grave of the veteran that is buried there.
- A nickel means the person trained or was at boot camp with the deceased veteran.
- A dime represents military personnel who served together.
- A quarter indicates the person was present when the deceased was killed.

Standing at the gravesite, I read the inscribed information. I then say the veteran's name and thank them for their service while placing a penny on the headstone.

Sometimes people ask what I'm doing. Such was the case a handful of years ago when an Air Force veteran and his wife noticed the "U.S. Air Force Academy" T-shirt I was wearing.

They said they had come across a pair of headstones — a man and wife who both served in the Air Force. Dismayed that there were no flowers or flags, they returned with a pair of small bouquets. I thought that was pretty cool.

Typically, I only know relatives of a small number of the graves I visit. And for me, that makes it even more significant. Those veterans didn't know me, yet they served our country so that I may reap the benefits of the freedoms we have.

I encourage people to at least pause a moment sometime during the weekend and remember to thank our veterans.

Tammy Malgesini, the East Oregonian community writer, enjoys spending time with her husband and two German shepherds, as well as entertaining herself with random musings.

YOUR VIEWS

Maybe Navalny could be Russia's George Washington

I know it may sound awful, but President Vladimir Putin may have done the Russian people a great service.

Begin with a gigantic blunder of a military operation into Ukraine. Add an incredibly stupid assassination attempt against opposition political leader Alexei Navalny. What you create is the perfect opportunity for the people of Russia to rise up and remove the political cancer that now exists in Russia.

It would be very difficult to do but this same government that lead the then Soviet Union and failed miserably was cut far back into one single

nation in the 1980s (President Ronald Reagan's greatest achievement).

Maybe now is the time for the remnants of that failed system to be surgically removed from that one remaining nation, by the Russian people themselves. Maybe Navalny could be Russia's George Washington.

William Laffen
Umatilla

Grateful for Sen. Ron Wyden

Sen. Ron Wyden is an outstanding advocate for the people of Oregon. I once had a problem, which may have seemed trivial in the light of all the troubles in the world, but it was a serious concern for me and others who live in

this area. I sent him an email about it.

Within a few days I received a call from his Eastern Oregon office in La Grande. His representative there asked me more about the issue, and not knowing the answer, contacted their office in Washington, D.C. That same day I got a call from one of his aides in Washington. She researched the issue, informed Wyden, and took specific action to try to resolve it.

Wyden cares about Oregon, about Eastern Oregon (he actually has an office here) and about individual constituents. And although I am not a person of renown nor influence, he cares about me. I am grateful to have such a person serving as my senator.

Shelley Wilson
Hermiston

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

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