

Hayes on sidelines, but damage is done

At his Friday press conference, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber said his fiancée Cylvia Hayes will have no policy role during the remainder of his fourth term.

Kitzhaber was forced into that declaration by news reports generated by Hillary Borrud in the Salem bureau of the EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

While it was useful to have the governor clarify where Hayes stands in the Kitzhaber administration, the question remains: Exactly what policies did she influence during his third term — and who exactly was she working for? The Register-Guard of Eugene has asked the “question of how many shoes were still waiting to drop.”

Especially when it comes to environmental policies, which were Hayes’ “passion,” it’s hard to look at any decision or position and not wonder who was making the wheels turn, and which wheels were getting greased. Coal exports near our corner of the state, gillnet fishing at the mouth of the Columbia, low-carbon fuel standards — the stink of ethics violations are all over them now.

And that’s exactly what it is. People are quick to judge actions by their outcome, and that’s why the outrage over the First Lady’s shady employment history has been muted. Those who are pleased with the enviro-friendly direction this administration has taken us have sort of shrugged off the \$118,000 in untaxed income Hayes took from the Clean Economy Development Center in 2011 and 2012.

And it’s true, if the governor had never met Hayes he may have made the exact same decisions. But the failure of the administration to take these violations seriously is the big problem. They point, again, to a lack of interest in serving Oregon.

The essence of Gov. Kitzhaber’s Cylvia Hayes problem was described succinctly by Brent Walth, Gov. Tom McCall’s biographer and managing editor of Willamette Week, during a talk last November to Columbia Forum in Astoria. Said Walth: “I didn’t think we’d ever see, in my life, the office put up for sale, but that’s exactly what we’ve seen.”

The tragedy of John Kitzhaber stems from a mistake as old as Shakespeare. Kitzhaber has stayed too long. All politicians and celebrities nurture their myths. The reason that John Kitzhaber is having such a hard time reckoning with the damage that Cylvia Hayes has done him is that the John Kitzhaber of myth (the first and second term Kitzhaber) was never this foolish.

EDITORIAL

The voice of the Chieftain



Forest plan needs a cornerstone

By Rocky Wilson

Life just isn't fair.

Take the United States Forest Service, for instance. They have 193 million acres of federal land to manage and it's dam tough to please everyone.

Even the measly 4.9 million acres in the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision generates problems. Why can't we stubborn folk in Wallowa County simply kowtow to the majority, give an affirmative nod, and accept their 1,400-page draft that hardly anyone's read? Sure, if affirmed, it will govern North-east Oregon forest policy for years to come and the science within might be outdated, but it took them 14 years to come up with what they've got and that has to count for something.

And it's only a forest management plan, not the Bible.

Seriously, it's just not fair.

How can any man-written document equitably meet the challenge of managing three national forests when, by applying legal rights, minuscule groups like Legal Wilderness Defenders and the Hells Canyon Preservation Council (HCPC) can thwart the desires of Boise Cascade LLC and its 4,500 employees? Which, though far fewer than Boise's total of 4,500 employees is involved, is exactly what's happening on five timber sales north of Halfway.

In that instance, under existing dictates,

JABBERWOCK II

the Forest Service is being hindered from what it knows it should do — treat timber as a manageable asset, not a haven for forest fires — because it violated its own rules, quite likely in the area of elk habitat and possibly in that of old growth timber as well.

This, of course, creates grounds for appeals that are not finalized until funds run out or the Supreme Court ends the squabble.

But where's the answer? It's becoming clear as a bell that writing a laborious, lengthy, unread 1,400-page plan isn't working.

There's a Biblical principal that, in paraphrase, says the building is no stronger than the chief cornerstone.

Aside from the irrefutable fact that the Bible and government don't mix — isn't that one of those ingrained “truths” that George Washington and John Hancock, were they around today, would say “wait a minute” to? — there might be some applicable wisdom to the cornerstone thing.

So where's the cornerstone in the Forest Service's plan to manage 193 million acres?

The USFS's mission statement says to “achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept.”

If that in any way is basis for creating a cornerstone, it's understandable why leadership of the Wallowa-Whitman, Malheur, and Umatilla National Forests would take 14 years and 1,400 pages to put such on paper.

Believe me, I'm pretty clueless about knowing how to write a forest management plan, but I do have the ability to keep my ears open and listen.

Even before the Wallowa County Natural Resources Advisory Committee was formed more than 25 years ago, knowledgeable naturalists from Wallowa County devised something called the Salmon Plan. That plan was effective because it not only had a viable cornerstone, salmon, but a simple overriding principle. If it's good for salmon, go for it. If it's not, try another route.

The usefulness of the Salmon Plan is far-reaching and, although currently it's not, could become a template for a new Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. Unlike the Forest Service which seems interested in putting down on paper what can and can't be done, the Salmon Plan is a malleable, breathing document with no regulatory teeth.

I'm a fan of the Salmon Plan and one day asked a man who's been on point throughout, Bruce Dunn, how salmon was selected. “Just lucky,” he said.

Dunn's OK, but sometimes his humor and sarcasm are interchangeable.

Jabberwock II columnist Rocky Wilson is a reporter for the Chieftain.

Informed deer beat our system

I've got a pack of Canadian whitetail deer that have taken over on my place outside of Enterprise, so I can sympathize with the residents of Joseph under siege by the deer. Driving through Joseph these days, you can't hardly swerve around the pothole craters of Little Switzerland without bumping into an ungulate. The worst part for me is the size on some of those racks. Some of us didn't fill their deer tag this year so it's an exercise in patience to drive through the petting zoo of town.

I have to admire the smarts of these deer. I already knew they could read, based on how they go to the mattresses on opening day of deer season each year. What I can't figure out is how they keep getting a copy of the regulations. Or a calendar. And now they've infiltrated Joseph City Hall somehow and got their hooves on a copy of the statutes that ban hunting within city limits. I think we've got a mole. Someone is passing the deer sensitive information and we need to tighten up security. Let's get a task force on this. Mobilize, people.

Or we embrace the situation and plant rose bushes in the Joseph potholes as a beautification project. This will draw the deer away from the front porches at least temporarily. Can we send them up to the head of the lake? The transition from ornamental plants to cigarette butts and snack food might be rough, but they seem to be survivors. I don't have an answer



AND FURTHERMORE

Jon Rombach

for how to dispose of the town deer that expire from old age and excessive rose petal consumption. Except maybe a venison chili cook-off every so often.

Does Joseph have a Sister City in Canada? If not, let's arrange one and send up a care package of town venison via livestock truck special delivery. Ah, but then the Canadians would get all worked up about smoking a pack of American deers a day and the only winner in that scenario will be the bumper sticker industry.

Waaaait just a minute. Anybody investigate the bumper sticker salespeople? Didn't think so. I'm no Columbo, but if we search the bumper sticker headquarters — which, if I had to guess, will most likely be in Canada — I wouldn't be the least bit surprised to find trace fragments of wolf fur from the little transplant operation they've been conducting. There's also a chance we might turn up old copies of ODFW regulations and city ordinances the Canadian bumper sticker people have been furnishing our deer with. Follow the money.

Speaking of ODFW, I'm not sure shoeing deer away from town should fall under their job description. Joseph City

Council might consider instead drafting a letter to local fence builders to ask about a bulk rate for putting up garden enclosures. Or is it enclosures? Never have figured that out. But then I guess we can't build deer fences because I seem to recall a dustup about how high you can build a fence in town. Man, this stuff gets complicated.

Based on my experience with the Canadian whitetail influx on my property, the only consolation I can offer regarding the deer problem is that there is no consolation. The only gardening I do is in the produce aisle, so I'm not luring them in with succulents. I do have apple trees, and after years of careful study I'm beginning to suspect deer may have a fondness for apples. So there's that. While cleaning up dog poo around my place, deer droppings outnumber the canine specimens about three to one. I'm not about to pick up all the deer doody, so that becomes a strange exercise in prioritization. What it comes down to is when I have visitors who are just thrilled to see deer up close like that. I mean, they get excited. So there you go. My approach to dealing with resident deer is to just give up and be glad when I'm reminded occasionally that I live somewhere that seeing deer gets boring, commonplace and even tiresome. I just wish it was like that out in the woods. Good luck, Joseph.

Jon Rombach is a local columnist for the Chieftain.

Twenty-nine sign in at Yuma gathering

To the Editor:

Wallowa County Snowbirds flocked to Donald Stonebrink's Yuma residence on Saturday, Jan. 31.

There was 29 county snowbirds in attendance, somewhat down from previous picnics. In the past 30 plus years we have

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

had as many as 100 show up to remember past times and renew old friendships.

Some of the surnames noted on the sign-in sheet were: Conrad, Cornwell, Fenton, Payne, Young, Dusek, Savada, Stein, Wiggins, Hays, Martin, Stone and Stanley.

James Stanley
Beaverton

Letters to the Editor are subject to editing and should be limited to 275 words. Writers should also include a phone number with their signature so we can call to verify identity. The Chief-

tain does not run anonymous letters.

You can submit a letter to the Wallowa County Chieftain in person; by mail to P.O. Box 338, Enterprise, OR 97828; by email to editor@wallowa.com; or via the submission form at the newspaper's website, located at wallowa.com. (Drop down the “Opinion” menu on the navigation bar to see the relevant link).

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Corrections

- The 2A Special District #4 wrestling tournament will be held in Enterprise on Saturday, Feb. 21. The Chieftain regrets listing the wrong date in a story we published on Jan. 28.
- A musher identified as Jackie Wepruk in a photo caption in our Jan. 28 issue is actually Jessie Royer, of Darby, Mont., who has competed in the Iditarod. The Chieftain regrets the error.

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