

Cottage Grove Sentinel
 116 N. Sixth St.
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

Opinion

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



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Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must: 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

nhickson@cg sentinel.com

LETTERS

JOB WELL DONE

I take a junket to Cottage Grove a few times a year to enjoy your sweet town, delicious eateries and shop in the delightful antique shops and book stores.

This past week, I purchased a copy of *The Cottage Grove Sentinel* to absorb more of the local flavor.

I found a very complete description of your community, local activities and guides, a de-

lightful children's page and, of course, local news.

A job well done!
 Bless all of you in Cottage Grove and stay well.

—Jane Smith
 Eugene

Industrial logging presents critical danger to our water supply

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

On July 7, a collective of concerned organizations sent a letter to the city governments of Cottage Grove, Creswell and Springfield. The letter identified a need to discuss a request for state intervention to halt harmful clear-cutting operations that threaten the public water supplies of the three cities. Forest Web cosigned each of these letters.

A recent report revealed almost 3,000 acres are planned for clear-cut in the Row River portion of the Coast Fork Willamette watershed — the source Cottage Grove's drinking water. These clear-cuts, which are already in motion, will likely reduce water supplies, degrade water quality and potentially poison local water supplies with dangerous chemicals from aerial herbicide applications.

Residents living in the hardest-hit areas already are feeling the effects of current clear-cut management in area watersheds. Even before this recent development, Forest Web received reports from many concerned Row River residents of increased logging over the past four years, asking if there was any way to make timber companies stop clear-cutting and spraying near their homes, farms and livestock.

A study conducted by U.S. Forest Service scientists found surprising effects from clear-cut logging on water chemistry, effects that persisted almost 40 years after the experimental clear-cut. The study noted one of the effects was an elevation of nitrogen in streamflow.

The study stated, "These elevated nitrogen levels can last decades or perhaps longer."

Nitrates are one of the most common groundwater contaminants in rural areas. It is regulated in drinking water primarily because excess levels can cause

GUEST VIEWPOINT By Cristina Hubbard Executive Director of Forest Web of CG

methemoglobinemia — a blood disorder in which too little oxygen is delivered to red blood cells, this can also cause "blue baby" syndrome.

Clear-cuts can cause soil erosion, which increases turbidity levels in streams, creeks and rivers. According to Cottage Grove's own Drinking Water Quality Report, "turbidity can interfere with disinfection and provide a medium for microbial growth. Turbidity may indicate the presence of disease-causing organisms. These organisms include bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause symptoms such as nausea, cramps, diarrhea and associated headaches."

Chemicals such as Atrazine, 2,4-D, and other toxic chemicals are routinely sprayed after clear-cuts throughout watersheds. Aerial herbicide spraying can 1) threaten water quality with direct spraying of small tributaries where no buffers are required, 2) result in runoff of herbicides or sediment particles with absorbed herbicides, 3) cause movement through ground water, and a disposition to drift and re-volatilize in the air.

While timber-industry-backed organizations like the Oregon Forest Resources Institute continue to minimize or even deny

the impacts of clear-cut management on our communities and our freshwater resources, the science is clear.

Ongoing industrial logging practices can degrade local water quality and deplete water quantity. Against a backdrop of climate change which can perpetuate drought conditions and further challenge forestlands, continuing to clear-cut in public drinking water supplies is irresponsible and a threat to the future of our communities.

The State of Oregon and its designates, including the State Forester and the City of Cottage Grove, have a statutory and constitutional duty to safeguard drinking water supplies for existing and future generations.

Public water system managers must step in and take an active role in monitoring the sources of the worst pollution currently happening — and planned — in our watersheds. They need to engage the public in the management of land critical to drinking water sources and reach out to land managers currently clear-cutting in our drinking water supply to discuss community-supported alternatives.

Oregon's public trust doctrine recognizes our right to water and requires the state to hold this valuable resource in trust for the benefit of the people. In light of scientific evidence, and upon challenges from impacted stakeholders, practices considered normal are found to be in violation of what is legal and what is right.

The right to clean drinking water for the community of Cottage Grove should not be overshadowed by increased profit margins for industrial timber.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPS

Oregon state representatives

• **Sen. Floyd Prozanski**
 District 4 State Senator
 PO Box 11511
 Eugene, Ore. 97440
 Phone: 541-342-2447
 Email: sen.floydprozanski@state.or.us

• **Rep. Cedric Hayden**
 Republican District 7 State Representative
 900 Court St. NE
 Salem, Ore. 97301
 Phone: 503-986-1407
 Website: www.leg.state.or.us/hayden
 Email: rep.cedrichayden@state.or.us

Oregon federal representatives

• **Rep. Peter DeFazio**
 (House of Representatives)
 405 East 8th Ave.
 #2030
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: defazio.house.gov/contact/email-peter
 Phone: 541-465-6732

• **Sen. Ron Wyden**
 405 East 8th Ave., Suite 2020
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: wyden.senate.gov
 Phone: (541) 431-0229

• **Sen. Jeff Merkley**
 Email: merkley.senate.gov
 Phone: 541-465-6750

Cottage Grove Sentinel

541-942-3325

Administration

Jenna Bartlett, Group Publisher

Gary Manly, General Manager... Ext. 1207
 gmanly@cg sentinel.com

Gerald Santana, Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1216
 gsantana@cg sentinel.com

Carla Skeel, Inside Multi-Media Sales Consultant... Ext. 1203
 csummers@cg sentinel.com

Editorial

Ned Hickson, Managing Editor... 541-902-3520
 nhickson@cg sentinel.com

Damien Sherwood, Lead Reporter... Ext. 1212
 dsherwood@cg sentinel.com

Nick Snyder, Sports/Community News Reporter... Ext. 1204
 nsnyder@cg sentinel.com

Customer Service

Meg Fringer, Office Manager, Legals, Classifieds... Ext. 1200
 mfringer@cg sentinel.com

Production

Ron Annis, Production Supervisor... Ext.1215
 graphics@cg sentinel.com

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