

## EDITORIAL

## Another voice on lower Snake dams

An obscure division within the Office of the President now wants to weigh in on the fate of four dams on the lower Snake River.

Another voice that appears to be leaning toward removing the dams.

In a March 28 blog post, the White House Council on Environmental Quality outlined its efforts to study breaching the dams. Those efforts included a March 21 “Nation to Nation” meeting between federal agencies and leaders of the Tribes of the Columbia River Basin.

The Council on Environmental Quality was established during the Nixon administration under the National Environmental Policy Act. According to the council’s website, it is charged with coordinating “the federal government’s efforts to improve, preserve and protect America’s public health and environment.”

According to the blog, the council last fall convened leaders from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Army Corps of Engineers and the Bonneville Power Administration.

The group will “build on existing analyses to identify a durable path forward that ensures a clean energy future, supports local and regional economies, and restores ecosystem function, while honoring longstanding commitments to Tribal Nations,” the blog states.

“We cannot continue business as usual. Doing the right thing for salmon, Tribal Nations, and communities can bring us together. It is time for effective, creative solutions,” the blog states.

The fix might be in.

“We heard calls to support breaching the four dams on the lower Snake River to restore a more natural flow, also about the need to replace the services provided by those dams, and recognition that such a step would require congressional action,” the blog post reads. “We were asked to consider the Basin holistically because of its inherent interconnectedness.”

OK. Let’s consider the farmers and other people who depend on the river.

The dams in southeast Washington generate electricity and allow farmers to move grain by barge down the Columbia River’s main tributary.

Without the dams, the river would be too shallow to barge wheat and other farm goods the roughly 100 miles between Lewiston, Idaho and the Tri-Cities. Lake Sacajawea, a reservoir created by Ice Harbor Dam, irrigates 47,000 acres. The loss of electricity generated by the dams would increase the cost of pumping groundwater.

The agriculture and shipping communities remain wary of discussions on the fate of the dams.

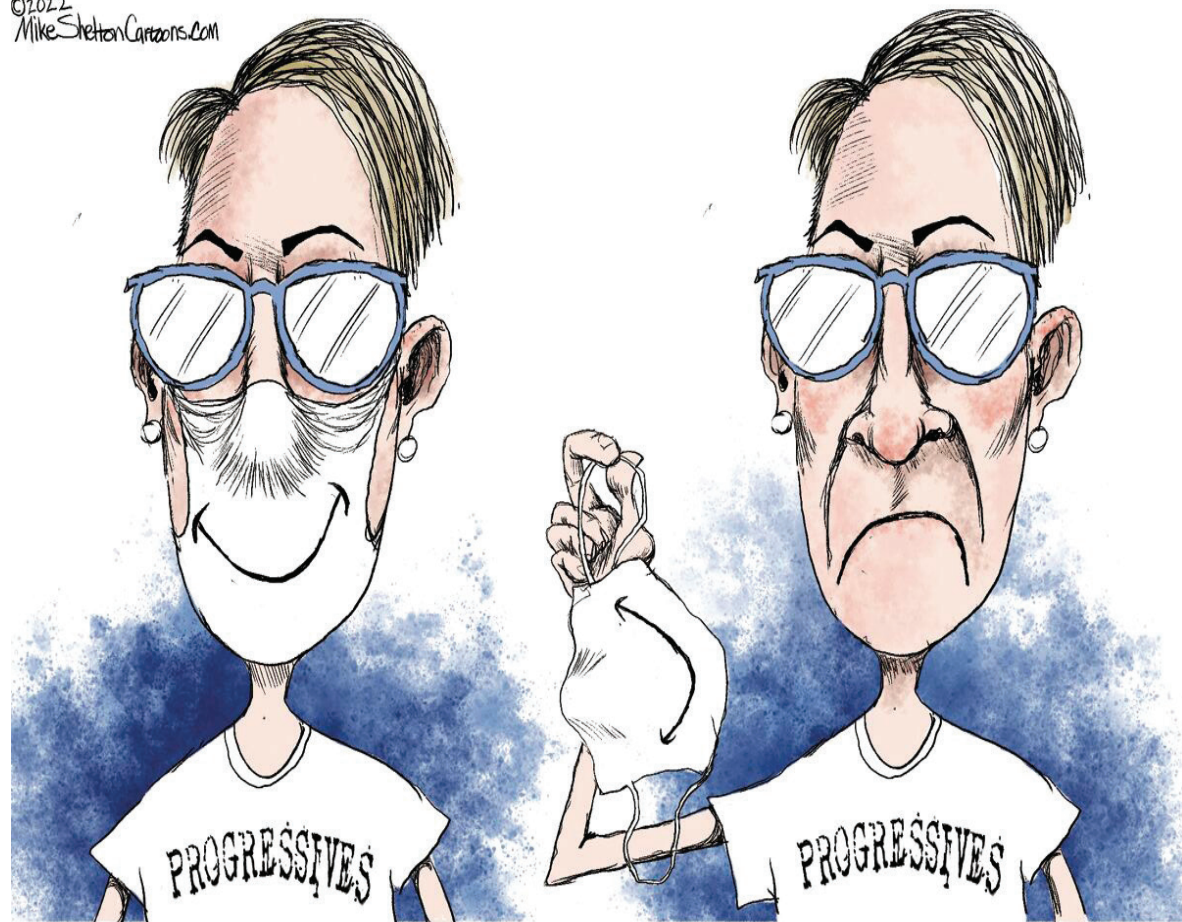
“We continue to be engaged with the administration at CEQ,” Michelle Hennings, executive director of the Washington Association of Wheat Growers, said. “Looking at the blog, we would have liked to see more focus on the impact this would have had on farmers across the country.”

Removing the dams would come at the expense of the entire region that depends on low-cost and reliable electricity the dams provide and the livelihoods of farmers, barge operators, deck hands, dock workers in the region and the vendors who support them.

It continues to be a bad idea.

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COURT OVERTURNS TRAVEL MASK MANDATE

## YOUR VIEWS

## Grateful to first responders who helped with our fire

I wish to extend mine and my wife’s heartfelt gratitude and thankfulness to all those who assisted us in a very serious lifesaving experience; from the 911 operator that morning to the following Fire Department crews under Fire Chief Shawn Lee; Baker City Fire Department, Baker Rural Fire Department, Bowen Rural Fire Department and Haines Rural Fire Department, and the city policeman who brought us very good news, as well as our blessed neighborhood/friends with such heartfelt love and support. And a very special thank you to our dear friends and neighbors, David and Karen Yeakley. So very humbling to say the least to all the outpouring of love and support we have received. We will be forever grateful. I would be amiss if I forgot to mention One Call Restoration of La Grande who showed up early in the morning to assist us with clean up and moving and continue to care for us.

All first responders respond with a heart of love for their brethren. If only we all would exhibit the same heart for one another as their example. See, imagine what a righteous and lovingkindness world we would be living in today. ... a culture of love.

For all those who are for defunding our local fire departments, law enforcement and all our first responders who are GOD’s love to save and protect us and our families: It is written, from the heart flows all the issues of life. They were as angels from heaven

saving our house and all of my clay and wax original art work. Any politician or others advocating the defunding of any of these (your) services standing between life and death situations are part of the problem today, not the solution. Votes do have consequences. For the sake of righteousness we all must now stand for righteousness for the sake of our families, brothers and sisters, and the life more abundantly that our Lord promises to those of us who obey doing His Word in the earth as it is in heaven. Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done in earth as it is in Heaven, in and through us is His Will for us.

We are so thankful for our Lord awakening us at 3:30 a.m. and directing me to my closed artist’s studio of fire and His presence throughout the whole ordeal to minimize damage until the fire crews arrived and successfully extinguishing the blaze. Some even entering the house and hauling out my art work to safe areas and tarping and protecting those that could not be removed. God said He will give us beauty for ashes.

For me it was an amazing spiritual encounter with my Lord, Him feeding me His Word and promises from the moment I got out of bed throughout the whole ordeal with such peace, surpassing all understanding. With God all things are possible; courage and strength was given me far beyond human carnal flesh prior to fire crews arriving. It was as though time stopped, I literally felt the anointing and the Father within me doing the work, as if I was watching from above. ... He shouted

“suffocate it” as I was leaving the room to go outside to hose down the flames going up the wall. Praise God! Let us Rejoice in the Lord always, for He is faithful.

Glory Be to God!  
May the Grace of God be upon us all and for our nation.

Don and Charlotte Beck  
Baker City

## County’s constitution resolution is meaningless

Pyrrhic victory. That expression perfectly describes the action taken April 20 by Commissioners Bill Harvey and Mark Bennett, who voted to pass “Resolution No. 2022-1007: Re-Affirming the Constitutional Rights of Baker County Citizens.”

Keep in mind that Baker County United also demanded Baker City Council pass its proposed resolution. Baker City Council completely ignored that demand.

The resolution was passed by one ruling body and completely ignored by another.

So, I ask Commissioners Harvey and Bennett, do Baker County citizens now have even one more protection of their rights than the citizens of Baker City?

A synonym for “Pyrrhic victory” is “meaningless,” as in not worth the effort, which perfectly describes all the attention Baker County Commission has wasted on Baker County United’s demand that the County pass its resolutions.

Gary Dielman  
Baker City

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**President Joe Biden:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1111; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov.

**U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley:** D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Baker City office, 1705 Main St., Suite 504, 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

**U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden:** D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510;

202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

**U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz (2nd District):** D.C. office: 1239 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 N. Central Avenue Suite 112, Medford, OR 97850; Phone: 541-776-4646; fax: 541-779-0204; Ontario office: 2430 S.W. Fourth Ave., No. 2, Ontario, OR 97914; Phone: 541-709-2040. bentz.house.gov.

**Oregon Gov. Kate Brown:** 254 State Capitol, Salem, OR 97310; 503-378-3111; www.governor.oregon.gov.

**Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Read:** oregon.treasurer@ost.state.or.us; 350 Winter St. NE, Suite 100, Salem OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4000.

**Oregon Attorney General Ellen F. Rosenblum:** Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

**Oregon Legislature:** Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

**State Sen. Lynn Findley (R-Ontario):** Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-403, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. Email: Sen.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov

## COLUMN

## Savoring the first day that truly feels like spring

I walked out into the sunshine and immediately felt as though gravity’s tug was a trifle gentler than usual.

This was a psychological sensation rather than a physical one, to be sure.

Even I, who was never judged competent to earn my inevitable F in an actual physics course, recognized the illusion.

But illusions can be quite convincing, as anyone knows who has ever mistaken a mirage for a lake, or stood in a building that’s far out of plumb and watched a ball seem to roll uphill. Weather can concoct some pretty confounding tricks, too.

The combination of Baker’s northerly latitude and elevation makes for winters both lengthier and more brutal than in places nearer both the sea and the equator.

And so, when winter at last begins to wane, the first day which can reasonably be described as spring-like arrives with a peculiar suddenness — as surprising, only pleasantly so, as barking your shin on a coffee table while stumbling around in the dark. Only on such a day can a modest temperature in the low 60s seem almost mi-

raculously benign, the air as soothing against the skin as a luxuriously moist balm applied by a smooth hand.

Better still to be able to venture outdoors without the constrictive swaddling layers of wool and fleece and goose down with which you’ve been laden for so many weeks.

Here is the illusion, the sense that your limbs are lighter, more dexterous, as they slip easily through the air.

This reminds me inevitably of what it is like to heave a medicine ball several times and then pick up a basketball and take a few shots. The basketball, which weighs precisely as much it did before your workout, feels as though it were filled with helium rather than ordinary air, rich with comparatively corpulent nitrogen.

This sort of day is nothing if not unpredictable in our mountain valley. Unexpectedly it barges in during the usually frigid February, convincing crocuses to show themselves only to be buried in snowdrifts soon after.

And once in a while we must wait, forlorn and freezing, until April is nearly finished before we are graced with the genuine article.

(I feel compelled to concede, con-



Jayson Jacoby

sidering what we’ve endured the past couple frequently wintry weeks, that that first springlike day is apt to be succeeded not by more of its kind but rather by its uncouth cousin, which comes bearing not gifts but snow squalls.)

Most often, though, this beloved milestone falls in March.

So it was this year.

On the afternoon of the 23rd I stepped outside for a stroll about town wearing shorts and a T-shirt, an outfit I hadn’t dared consider probably since Halloween.

The temperature was 64 when I started out. I checked later and learned that it reached 68 at the Baker City Airport, the warmest day since the previous Oct. 21.

As much as I relished the warmth of the sun, even the sheen of sweat on my forehead, I felt slightly guilty as I celebrated what was for me, and never mind the calendar, the first day of spring.

The purity of my appreciation was sullied by the drought.

I understood, as I ambled along the sidewalks and streets, that this dry and balmy day, as fine as it felt, was precisely the opposite of what is needed to vanquish the drought and its myriad problems.

Far better if rain were sluicing down in the valley and snow on the high ground, fattening the snowpack that keeps streams flowing and the valuable crops that green the valleys growing.

Concealed behind the mild breath of March was the crucible of August with its choking smoke of fires near and distant, its blood-ochre sunsets, its threat of destruction on the hot acrid afternoon gusts.

But even as I began to begrudge my own happiness at this gift of a comfortable day after such a prolonged period of chill, I came across a scene that quieted my unease.

A family was out for a walk, as I was. Tagging along at the back of this procession, with a man I took to be his dad, was a toddler. He was surely not yet two. He was wearing shorts, too, and I felt for him a cer-

tain kinship, a pair of lightly dressed pedestrians, one just beginning the greatest of journeys, the other almost certainly on the downhill side.

He bounced along with that gait that belongs solely to the very young — so endearingly clumsy, always seemingly on the verge of the sort of tumble that leads to skinned knees and tears and bandages festooned with cartoon characters.

The boy, oblivious to everything except his immediate circumstances — a trait we lose the knack for far too soon, it seems to me — was smiling and gesticulating as he made his way.

I suspect he appreciated this fine afternoon as I did. Except he wasn’t saddled with nagging concerns about droughts and depleted reservoirs and scorched forests.

I envied him in that brief moment our paths came together, envied the innocence of children as only those can who long ago succumbed to the sometimes grim realities of adulthood.

■ Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.