

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
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## The agenda for Bend's new state representative

When Jason Kropf was running to be the state representative for Bend, he pledged to fight for the community's priorities.

Now he's in office. He's a chief sponsor of one bill, a sponsor of another and is working on much more.

The bills he sponsors are far from the only measure of what he does as a state legislator. But they are crucial steps. We spoke with him Monday about his legislative agenda.

House Bill 2593 helps plug a funding gap in Oregon for search and rescue. The answer in the bill is not: Raise more taxes. Kropf is a chief sponsor.

Sheriffs in Oregon are directed by state law to run search and rescue operations. There isn't a great funding source for it. State law puts a cap on how much any individual can be charged at \$500, anyway. Some difficult searches and rescues cost far more than that. And basically in Oregon, people aren't forced to pay. You don't want to force people to pay, because they might not call for help.

In places like Deschutes County beautiful scenery and tourists adds up to a lot of search and rescue missions. Deschutes Search and Rescue carried out 128 missions in 2019 and 106 in 2020. The Sheriff's Office runs the program. Volunteers are the backbone of its success. Working with the professionals at the sheriff's office, volunteers carry out many of the rescues. Volunteers also run a private nonprofit to raise money for Deschutes SAR. Sheriff Shane Nelson told us Deschutes SAR is actually in good shape financially. That's because of the fundraising, donations from people who are rescued and because county residents supported taxes for his office. Many counties, though, struggle, and Deschutes could always use help.

H.B. 2593 could be a smart solution. It would authorize a nonprofit representing sheriffs to sell search and rescue cards. The money raised would be used to reimburse search and recreation operations and training. Distribution of the money would take into consideration the volume and nature of rescues in a county and other factors. There's a similar program in Colorado.

People will still get rescued if they don't have a card. It's just a way for people to show their support of the efforts to keep people safe when they venture out.

Rep. Anna Williams, D-Hood River, originally introduced the bill. Kropf said he supported it, because it's a creative solution to a funding problem for an essential service. When people call for help, he said, you want our sheriffs to be able to respond fully staffed, equipped and trained.

Kropf's committee assignments are centered primarily around justice — public safety, civil law and the judiciary. "I want to make Oregon as safe as possible," he said. "Expect more ac-

tion on racial justice."

His solution is not just more laws and more law enforcement, more incarceration. He wants more addiction and mental health treatment. He wants training and support for inmates so when they get out they can live productive lives and not re-offend.

That's part of the reason he is supporting House Bill 2912. It extends and adds more funding to a pilot program at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. The program helps inmates with legal services so they understand and can overcome the barriers — legal, economic and social — they will have when they get out of prison.

We can't predict what else will come up this session. But there are two long-standing issues for Deschutes County that require legislative action: funding for Oregon State Univer-

sity-Cascades and more judges for the county. Kropf has spoken to Gov. Kate Brown about how important the funding is for the campus to build on its success and student demand.

He is also on the committee that will be reviewing the requests for new judges in the state. The simple fact is "we don't have enough judges in this community," Kropf said. The county's court system runs well and does several innovative things, such as having a specialized drug court to help people overcome addiction, not just jail. It needs enough judges to be able to specialize.

The county also needs enough judges so one judge could be assigned to one family to handle all the claims regarding divorce, custody, delinquency and other matters. The logic is obvious. The judge will be more efficient, better informed and there would be more uniformity in approach. But it's hard for Deschutes County to pull that off if there are so few judges that they must be pulled to other duties.

Additional judges for Deschutes County have been yanked before in last minute negotiations by the Legislature's Democratic leadership. Perhaps as a Democrat, Kropf will have more success. Let's hope so.

These issues are just a start. He has more bills he is working on — gun safety, clean energy, siting of shelters and the bill we wrote about recently that could help flows in the Deschutes River. Kropf believes what we believe. It doesn't matter if you are a Republican, a Democrat or something else. Bend needs excellent representation in the Legislature. He was a Deschutes County deputy district attorney before he was elected. He is now, though, working full time as a state legislator to be the best representative he can for Bend. We may disagree with him from time to time, but we can't ask for more commitment than that.



Kropf



NOT FOR ME. I'M WORRIED ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS.

WELL, I'M WORRIED ABOUT ANOTHER YEAR OF BEING STUCK INSIDE EFFECTS!

NURSING HOME COVID VACCINES

## Understanding greenhouse gases

BY SCOTT CHRISTIANSEN

For The Bulletin

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are out of sight and out of mind. This public service message reviews U.S. GHG emissions from carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) and fluorocarbons (see table below). Also presented are the carbon dioxide equivalency (CO<sub>2</sub>e) of GHGs, indicating their potential to trap more heat relative to CO<sub>2</sub>.

Note that fluorinated gases have no natural source — they are 100% man-made — and are dangerous because of their high CO<sub>2</sub>e and long atmospheric lifetimes. Two examples: perfluorocarbon, used in the manufacturing of semiconductors, has a CO<sub>2</sub>e near 10,000 and sulfur hexafluoride, used as an insulating gas in electrical transmission equipment, has a CO<sub>2</sub>e of 22,800, making it among the most potent GHGs.

Finally, carbon black and water vapor also contribute to global warming, but they are not GHGs.

Note: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data were used in the preparation of this article.

GHG	GHGs in the US atmosphere (%)	CO <sub>2</sub> e
CO <sub>2</sub>	81	1
CH <sub>4</sub>	10	25
N <sub>2</sub> O	7	300
Fluorocarbons	2	10,000+

Human activities have increased CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in Earth's atmosphere is currently 412 parts per million (ppm). This represents a 47% increase since the beginning of the Industrial Age when the concentration was near 280 ppm. CO<sub>2</sub> presents a major challenge because it stays in the atmosphere for 300-1,000 years.

CO<sub>2</sub> is generated from the combustion of fossil fuels used for transport (34%), electricity (32%), industry (15%), homes and businesses (11%), and other sources (7%). Several industrial processes also produce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that do not involve combustion such as production of cement, iron, steel, and chemicals. Many industrial processes also use electricity,

## Climate Changed

## CENTRAL OREGON CROSSROADS

By Scott Christiansen

indirectly generating CO<sub>2</sub>.

CH<sub>4</sub>: Human activities emitting CH<sub>4</sub> include leaks from natural gas systems and the raising of livestock. CH<sub>4</sub> is also emitted by natural sources such as wetlands. In the US, 38% of CH<sub>4</sub> emissions are from livestock (enteric fermentation) and manure management; 36% from natural gas, petroleum, and coal mining; 17% from landfills; and 9% from other sources.

Agriculture is the largest source of CH<sub>4</sub> emissions in the U.S. Reorganizing our waste management systems to fully separate our garbage would improve our ability to compost organic materials and generate electricity from the emitted CH<sub>4</sub>. Recycling metal, glass, plastic, paper and organic materials is an essential step in the transition to a circular economy.

Natural gas and petroleum systems are the second largest source of CH<sub>4</sub> emissions in the U.S. CH<sub>4</sub> is emitted to the atmosphere during the production, processing, storage, transmission and distribution of natural gas and the production, refinement, transportation, and storage of crude oil.

According to Science Advances, satellite sensors have revealed that fracking in the heartland of the US is releasing CH<sub>4</sub> at a record-breaking rate. The high CH<sub>4</sub> leakage rate is mostly from venting, flaring and fugitive emissions. Solutions include better wellbore sealings and CH<sub>4</sub> detection.

There is another reason to worry about CH<sub>4</sub>. The Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the planet, and the region is home to enormous stores of organic carbon locked up in permafrost soils that if thawed would liberate CH<sub>4</sub>. Water warmed by climate change is already forcing the release of CH<sub>4</sub> from beneath the sea floor. CH<sub>4</sub> emitted today lasts for only a decade in the atmosphere, so decreasing CH<sub>4</sub> emissions is a feasible place to begin

making progress in combatting climate change.

N<sub>2</sub>O accounted for about 7% of all U.S. GHG emissions. Agricultural soil management is the largest source of N<sub>2</sub>O emissions in the U.S., accounting for about 78% of total N<sub>2</sub>O emissions. N<sub>2</sub>O is also generated from treatment of domestic wastewater. N<sub>2</sub>O is the single greatest ozone-depleting substance — a gas not regulated under the Montreal Protocol. Limiting future N<sub>2</sub>O emissions would enhance the recovery of the ozone layer (protecting us from dangerous, cancer-causing levels of ultraviolet radiation).

## Recommendations to reduce GHGs

**Energy:** The burning of natural gas, and oil for electricity and heat (25%) is the largest single source of GHGs globally. In Oregon we could rapidly move to 100% clean energy using hydro, solar and geothermal sources, while also reorganizing waste management to create CH<sub>4</sub> for electricity generation.

**Agriculture:** GHG emissions (24%) from agriculture, forestry, and other land uses comes mostly from cultivation of crops and deforestation (not adjusted for CO<sub>2</sub> removed by sequestration). Oregon can focus on reforestation and management schemes to increase sequestration of CO<sub>2</sub>, rehabilitate areas burned by forest fires while improving forest health statewide.

**Transport:** Almost all transportation energy comes from petroleum-based fuels, largely gasoline and diesel. State government conversion to electric vehicles and incentives for citizens to purchase electric vehicles can help reduce dependence on fossil fuels used for transport.

**Heating:** GHG emissions from buildings (6%) arise from burning fuels for heat in buildings. Continuation or increase of government subsidies are recommended to encourage household energy efficiency improvements.

■ Scott Christiansen is an international agronomist with 35 years of experience. He worked for USDA's Agricultural Research Service and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

## GUEST COLUMN

## Recognize the value of Oregon's wild and scenic rivers

BY ALLISON HARTZ

Arbitrary river units. I learned this phrase at the outset of a six-day paddling trip on the Wild and Scenic Rogue River. It's a way to communicate and maintain minimal structure among a group: for example, "coffee will be ready in five arbitrary river units." No one's going to miss the meaning here (or the chance to get first dibs on that sweet nectar of life).

Yet, arbitrary river units are not only a way to loosely keep time in a remote wilderness with no cell service. This measurement is an acknowledgement — and understanding — that on the river, time doesn't move according to a clock.

It flows. Slow, gentle, with the first light of day shifting the world

into color and warmth. It roars with the approach of a rapid, a distant rush reverberating up the canyon. I can feel it thrumming through my entire body, depositing my nerves somewhere between anticipation and dread. It unwinds, as we pull our boats ashore, unpack lunch, and spread wet layers across rocks in the sun. And it meanders through the afternoon, kicking up its feet and taking in the view around each bend.

On the river, time is marked by rapids on a map. By a great blue heron accompanying our boats downriver. By salmon jumping in the waning evening light. By a black bear and her cub clambering along the shore on an endless hunt for late summer berries. By the smell of coffee in the morning,

The always-present sound of flowing water. The search for the perfect sleeping spot and the last call for the groover as we're packing up camp.

This is what I learned on the river.

Growing up, I did not know what a wild and scenic river was. I knew the creek that wrapped around my neighborhood, where we searched for crawdads in the shallows. I knew the river that flowed through the nearby city, how it would smell like a sewer after big storms. I knew the harbor that smelled of oil and industry and fish. The bay that filled with algae blooms that depleted oxygen and blocked sunlight from the ecosystems below.

And yet, these were the places where I learned to swing from a rope tied to a tree, trying to prove my courage and also not belly-flop. On these waters, I paddled a canoe with my dad, learned to kayak, and

raced in triathlons. Later, I began to understand the connection we all share to the water flowing through our communities.

Rivers shape us. They change our perspective, our outlook, our mood through their soothing, rhythmic flow. With their presence that is both constant and ever-changing. In the wonders they reveal around each bend.

And we shape them too — for better or for worse.

In 1968, Congress passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, aiming to preserve certain rivers for future generations while encouraging us to work together to manage them.

Currently, only 2% of Oregon's rivers and streams are protected under this act. In 2019, Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., declared his commitment to making Oregon a national leader in wild and scenic

river miles. This week, he and Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., introduced the River Democracy Act of 2021, which proposes an addition of 4,700 miles of Oregon's rivers to the National Wild & Scenic River System. Imagine how many arbitrary river units those miles will hold.

Thank you, senators, for recognizing the value of Oregon's rivers. Because healthy rivers not only create healthy wildlife habitat, support strong economies, and connect communities. They give people a place to find a new perspective. To swing from the rope, paddle toward that roar of whitewater, or to sit and watch. Rivers provide a place where time moves with the flow of the water, with life of a salmon, with the expansiveness of the night sky. In its own time, measured in arbitrary river units.

■ Allison Hartz lives in Bend.



Hartz

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.