

## EDITORIALS &amp; OPINIONS

The Bulletin  
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERHeidi Wright Publisher  
Gerry O'Brien Editor  
Richard Coe Editorial Page Editor

# Make Bend Police's bodycams a success

Bend Police Chief Mike Krantz outlined at Wednesday night's Bend City Council meeting the nine rules that will guide his officers in when they need to switch on bodycams. Briefly, they are:

1. When there is reasonable suspicion or probable cause of a crime or violation.
2. All enforcement and investigative contacts, including stops and field interviews.
3. Contacts with individuals believed to be suicidal.
4. All calls when an officer believes there is a mental illness or mental health crisis.
5. Traffic contacts.
6. Officer-initiated investigation or enforcement.
7. Forced entry.
8. Situations that become adversarial.
9. Searches, consensual or warrantless.

Some are mandated under state law. And there may be other times when officers will switch them on. The Bend City Council approved the purchase of bodycams, software, training and storage on Wednesday night.

We don't have a copy of the entire policy. It apparently runs some 20 pages. The department does post its policies online. That's important. This one will be up as soon as it is finalized, the department assured us Thursday.

An issue that has come up in other communities is how swiftly police release bodycam videos, particularly when it may present police officers or their department in an unfavorable light. There are wrenching examples. For instance, it took police 13 months to release video of a police shooting in Chicago. A judge had to order the release. The dashcam recording showed a white

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officer shooting Laquan McDonald, a Black teenager, 16 times. The officer was later convicted of murder. We aren't bringing that up because we believe that sort of delay will happen here. Let's ensure it doesn't.

Bend Police will not be able to release videos as soon as they get a request. Oregon law has prohibitions about releasing medical information and other privacy considerations. Videos must be reviewed and some portions may be redacted.

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# Incoming superintendent in Bend does a bit extra

The incoming superintendent for Bend-La Pine Schools, Steve Cook, has a podcast: The Sup is on.

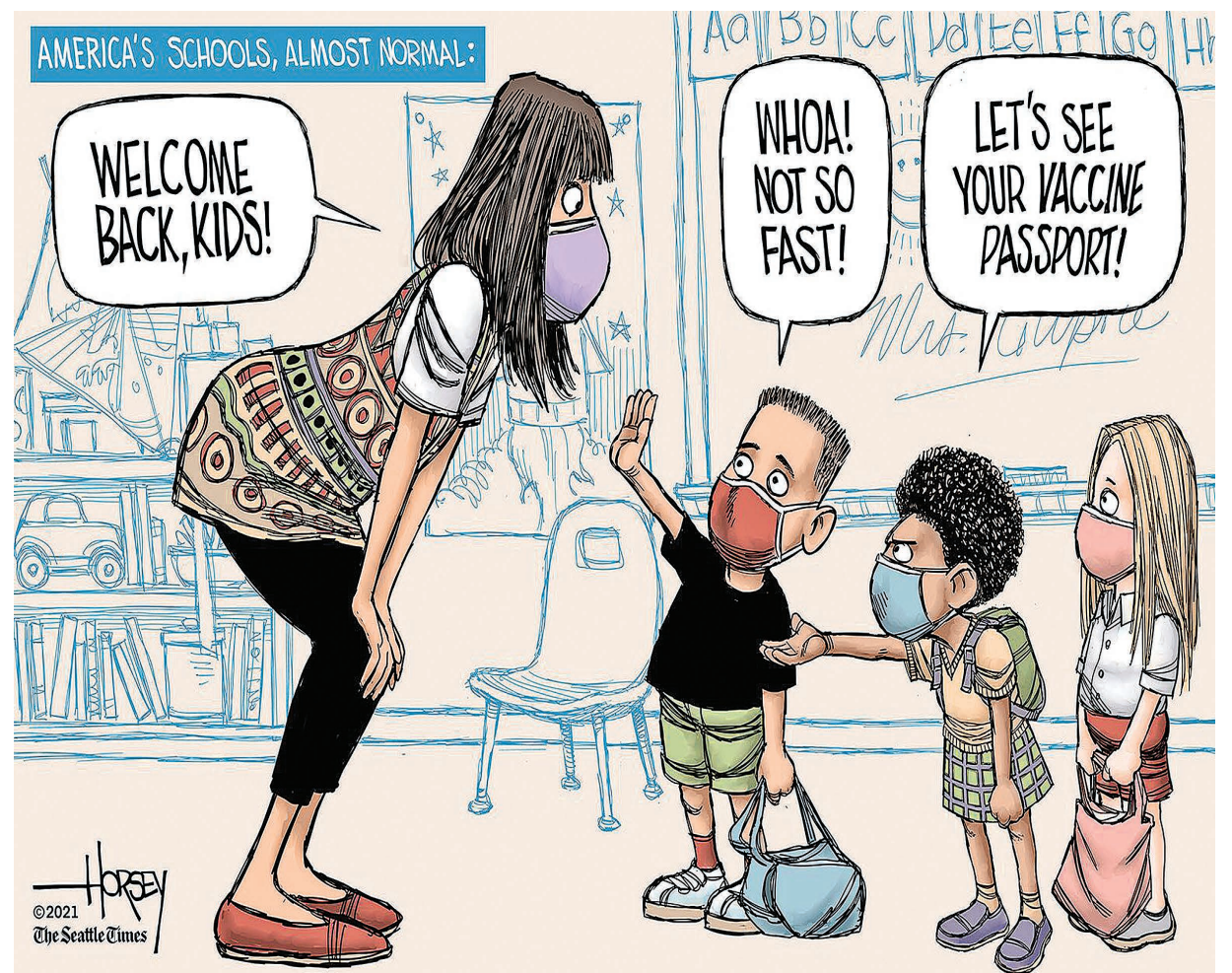
Clever title. He's the superintendent of the Coeur d'Alene Public Schools in Northern Idaho. We listened to some snippets of several and found one intriguing from 2020 on drawing new boundaries for the district about magnet schools. The Bend district and Bend parents have faced similar concerns about the challenge of finding the right balance for who can attend. Should students who live near get a better chance? How about students with a sibling already in the school? What sort of disparities does the selection process create or reinforce?

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be important to the community — or should be — and tries to create more understanding by interviewing teachers and staff members.

We don't know if he will be able to continue it here. But it is a good signal that he is willing to go above and beyond to ensure parents and community members know what's going on in the school district.



# Every year is a drought year for the Deschutes River

BY TOD HEISLER

Saturday's Bulletin article titled "Deschutes River level to rise as irrigation season begins" was misleading on many fronts. It may be true that the river upstream of Bend begins to transform from a dewatered river to one of modest flows in early April.

However, the opposite occurs in the Deschutes River downstream of Bend. Flows in this reach drop precipitously each spring when irrigation districts begin diverting 90% of the river into their canals. The river upstream of Bend suffers a similar fate in November each year when flows below Wickiup Dam are reduced by 93%. Every year is a drought year for the Deschutes River below the dam and irrigation diversions.

The river rises in April when irrigation season begins, and water in Wickiup Reservoir is released, but the flow of 375 cubic feet per second (identified in Saturday's article) is well below what is needed for our wildlife to survive. For example, the Oregon spotted frog during breeding season needs a minimum of 800 cfs in the reach below Wickiup Dam. The 375 cfs flow seems to be motivated more by irrigation demands and the fact that Wickiup is at an historic low level than it is for the health of the wetland habitat.

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Heisler

Oregon Water Resources Department suggested that "pushing too much water down the river at once can damage spotted frog breeding habitat," which is misleading and

counter to the biological opinion completed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) last December. It says this about the river's current state. "In the spring prior to irrigation season flow releases, spotted frogs breed in shallow water that is unvegetated. Egg masses are exposed to wind and high water temperatures in the shallow water. Adult breeding frogs are at risk of predation by herons and raccoons. The water's edge does not reach the vegetation (where the frogs want to breed) until approximately 800 cfs." This means that the 375 cfs has no chance to create suitable breeding habitat for frogs because it is too low, not too high.

Again, the USFWS biological opinion concurs. "Flow releases from Wickiup Dam in early April have the potential to improve breeding habitat but the flows are often not sufficient to provide for shallow water areas in

contact with emergent vegetation. However, when the timing of flow releases is too late, weeks after the hatching of spotted frog eggs, emerging tadpoles are not likely to be within emergent vegetation and are at a high risk of predation."

It is clear that in many parts of the Deschutes River, the Oregon spotted frog needs flows of 800 cfs to reach suitable breeding habitat.

The recently approved Habitat Conservation Plan limits flows to 600 cfs in March when breeding season starts and allows for flows as low as 400 cfs in an adaptive management arrangement. Only in April are flows allowed to reach 800 cfs, the minimum flow needed to reach wetland vegetation.

As Saturday's article suggests, the river is rising but not fast enough or with the right timing to assure suitable breeding habitat for the Oregon spotted frog. We have waited for over a decade for the Habitat Conservation Plan to address the most urgent problems facing our river caused by irrigation management. The plan was approved late last year, but it is already showing its incapability to restore flows in the river to support the fish, wildlife and aquatic species of our wild and scenic river.

■ Tod Heisler is director of the rivers program at Central Oregon LandWatch.

## Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

## Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

## How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

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P.O. Box 6020  
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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.

# Removing parking requirements is a solution, not a problem

BY DAVID WELTON

Bend faces many difficulties, from increasing homelessness driven by unattainable housing prices, to climate change, which threatens the forests and wild lands that surround our town. The proposal to remove government regulation for the precise number of car storage units that each home and business must provide is not, however, an actual problem. Indeed, it's part of the solution.

Let's be clear: no one is going to take your parking away. You can still purchase a house with a three-car garage and a big driveway if you want. Walmart and Costco aren't going to get rid of their parking lots. Markets aren't the solution to all our problems — we would not leave food safety purely to the market for instance —

but they work well for deciding things like how many Mexican restaurants Bend should have vs. how many Thai or Italian places. Just because there are no parking minimums does not mean new housing will not have any parking. People purchasing homes will still want it in many cases, and will seek out those housing situations that meet their needs. Those who prefer lower housing costs or closer amenities in a more walkable neighborhood with less parking would be free to choose that, something the city of Bend currently prevents.

Bend is very diverse: What works well for one building or area may not work elsewhere. The "right" amount of parking for a condo or town home close to downtown is different than what's right for a large family living further out to the southeast. Trying

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to manage a city as diverse as Bend with blanket policies is a recipe for failure and inefficiency. Allowing people to make their own decisions about the amount of parking is a better approach. Some people want to park an RV and several trucks on their land — others just need room for one Prius. Some 5% of people in the city have no car and would benefit from not being forced to pay for a spot to keep something they don't own. With the cost of a spot running potentially north of \$10,000 (land in Bend is expensive), that could make or break some budgets.

Historically, Bend had no parking minimums, and those pre-WWII parts of town are quite desirable. Look

at the price of housing there: it's not cheap. If it were such a terrible area because it's "underparked" compared to the rest of Bend, the prices would be lower. It turns out that people are willing to pay a premium to live in a walkable, human-scale area that's very central.

The biggest concern with getting the city out of the parking business is that, sans government mandates, people will park along the public roads — but that's a minor problem. Many in Bend face weighty decisions like whether they can afford to live here at all, and where they might move. The roads where "excess" cars might be parked are public roads that belong to all of us; they are not guaranteed free parking for the adjacent homeowner. And most already have cars parked along them. If there are too

many cars along a road to navigate safely, the city can target that specific road for changes. Local solutions for local problems, rather than citywide. In many cases the reality is that having cars parked along streets has been shown to calm traffic, keeping speeds in residential neighborhoods lower and safer.

Eliminating parking minimums will not mean much change for most people. They'll be able to keep buying housing with parking if that's what they prefer. This policy won't make Bend suddenly affordable. But it will help some people, and it's the right policy for a more flexible city in the future. It puts Bend in a position to deal with a changing world and adapt on an individual level as best we see fit.

■ David Welton lives in Bend.