

Governors need help in building water storage

As many member states wrestle with the impacts of multi-year droughts, the Western Governors' Association has written a letter to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee recommending policies that could help remedy the situation.

The nature of the Western water woes is a bit of mystery to much of the country. East of the Rockies, water is no less important but is far more abundant. It reliably falls as rain in the spring and summer to water crops in the field, and as snow in the winter to recharge soil moisture. The biggest water problem most farmers there face is how to move water off their land, not pump it onto their land.

Not so in the West. Without adequate water storage and the infrastructure to move it, many of the crops American consumers have grown to depend on could be in short supply. The stakes are huge. Some \$51 billion in crops are grown across the West. That provides milk, vegetables, grains, berries, fruits — more than 300 different crops in all — to Americans and much of the world.

What's needed is a comprehensive plan to increase water storage with dams,

reservoirs and aquifer recharge. Only a few storage projects are in the works around the West.

And the governors know why. Storage and infrastructure costs money — a lot of money. The governors have asked for access to money available in already established programs, and have suggested some private-public partnership initiatives.

While money is a formidable hurdle, a greater obstacle in getting projects built is often regulatory paralysis and legal challenges from the environmental lobby.

The governors say federal water policy needs to coordinate, streamline and provide flexibility to infrastructure planning and permitting guidelines, rules and regulations.

And something needs to be done to stop environmentalists from running to the courts to resist any and all efforts to build more storage capacity. These challenges all but block any effort and drive up the costs.

With more winter precipitation coming in the form of rain instead of mountain snows, common sense dictates that it should be stored. Western governors need all the financial and regulatory tools to get that done.



FARMER'S FATE

Tupperware and socks

By Brianna Walker
For the Blue Mountain Eagle



Brianna Walker

Getting ready for the upcoming holidays and friends and festivities has prompted our annual fall closet cleaning. And with each cupboard and shelf that is cleaned out, I am both pleased and puzzled. Pleased because it always feels good to minimize, puzzled because I never am quite sure how all the junk got there in the first place. Those two feelings followed me throughout the house.

In the living room, there were books I've never seen, written by authors I don't read; magazines I don't subscribe to, nor have ever bought; and a few ugly knick-knacks I don't remember collecting. In the bedroom, I found a box in the back of the closet filled with unmatched socks. Why did I keep them? I have no idea. Why they ended up in a box in my closet? Just as good a question, with just as bad an answer. I have no idea.

The closet was filled with clothes that no longer fit anyone, shoes no one wore even when they were new and sheets that fit a bed we haven't had in three years.

It was easy to fill a garbage can in the bathroom. Half empty (or often completely empty) bottles of hair and skin care products lined the shelves in the cupboard. Why do we keep these things? Or put them back

in the cupboard? I asked myself this over and over as I tied my second bag of trash.

The kitchen was no less full of random things we didn't need. I found spices I don't know how to use, boxes of crackers no one has ever liked and home-canned jars filled with "goodies" I can't identify — in jars that are not mine. Under the sink, I found more almost empty bottles of dish soap and cleanser and other cleaning supplies. Is there some kind of subconscious thing that prevents us from using something all up before opening a new bottle?

I kept going through the cupboards, dishes I didn't know where came from, spoons that didn't match any utensils I own, even a tablecloth I've never seen before was tucked away in the back of a drawer. I must say, though, that even though each cupboard brought its own puzzlement over the contents, I was still feeling mighty pleased with myself for all I'd accomplished. The living room was full of boxes marked "Goodwill," "Basement," "Junk" and one marked "Husband" — just because I figured he should at least double check his junk before I tossed it. The last cupboard in the

kitchen I went through was home to all my Ziploc, Tupperware and Rubbermaid containers.

By the time I was done, I had found a couple of dishes without lids, but I had a whole stack of lids without dishes. How does one end up with so many extra lids — especially since I seem to clean them out every few years?

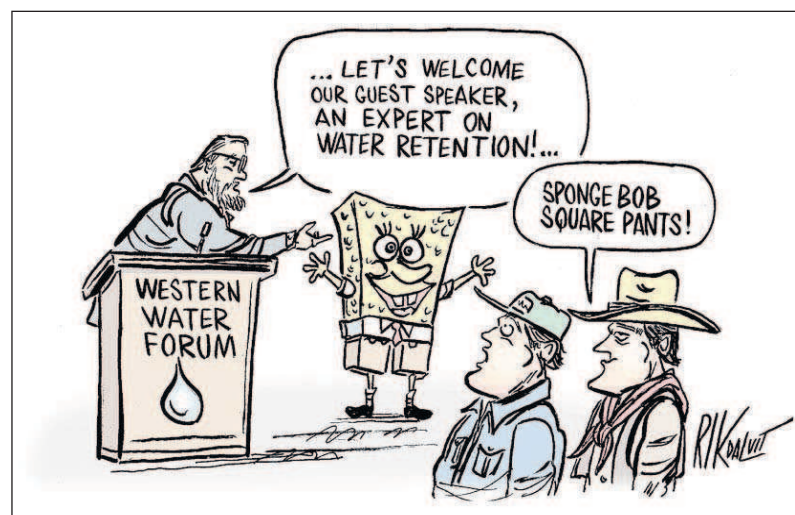
My first reaction was to make a neat stack and put them back in (on the off chance I found them later), but then I remember my husband's advice about putting things in the fridge just to let them "finish dying." Still not quite able to just toss them in the trash, I put them in a box and hauled them out to the Junk pile in the living room. I'd let my husband haul them out, so I wouldn't feel quite so bad about tossing perfectly good lids. I set it right next to the box of single socks.

Chatting with my mom later about these oddities, she laughed.

"I am pretty sure that unmatched socks die and come back as mismatched Tupperware lids," she said.

From now on, I will have a less difficult time throwing away unmatched socks and lids. As long as I toss them out together I can think of it less as "junking" them and more like reuniting lost loves.

Brianna Walker writes about the Farmer's Fate occasionally for the Blue Mountain Eagle.



Rik Dalvit/For the Blue Mountain Eagle

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

County Court should have attended Nov. 28 meeting

To the Editor:

The Grant County Court Wednesday, Nov. 25, sent a letter to the Forest Service invoking coordination. In August, when citizens informed the court about coordination after attending a three-day workshop in Baker City, the court showed no interest. Only after the sheriff introduced a natural resource plan and invoked coordination did the court respond.

On Nov. 28, Fred Kelly Grant, a preeminent attorney on coordination, was in John Day to speak on the issue. Although the County Court members were invited to attend, not one of the men representing Grant County were present at the informative meeting.

Is it arrogance from the court that they know more than anyone else or simply disdain for the citizens they are supposed to represent? The tragedy of the Canyon Creek Complex fire destroying homes and shattering lives is

more than enough to bear. Now the threat of flooding to Canyon City and John Day should have prompted the court in learning anything that will be beneficial in protecting the county now and in the future.

The credibility of the County Court was further tarnished by their absence at an important meeting that over 75 citizens from around the county saw fit to attend.

Frances Preston
Prairie City

Volunteers make Thanksgiving dinner successful

To the Editor:

I am expressing my gratitude and appreciation for all the volunteer help during the Elks Community Thanksgiving dinner. This dinner was provided at no charge by the John Day Elks Lodge, thanks to a grant from the Elks National Foundation. This is one of three grants we receive to share our benevolent work with the community, the

others helping with the Halloween children and teen parties and the high school proms.

Prep work started at the beginning of the week, including setting up the dining room with assistance from Bob Van Voorhis. Thanksgiving Day started at 5 a.m. with Charlie Caughlin and Calvin Clark firing up the Traeger to smoke and then cook the 16 turkeys. Other helpers during the day included Chris Bare, Lance Barker, the Comer family — Russ, Sheila, Andrea and Leah — Dale Finley, Vern Flanary, Ron Hanson, Alan and Roni Hickerson, Greg Irwin, Garrett Jennings, Steve Summers and Mark and Aileen Womer. Over 80 meals were delivered to homes from Mt. Vernon to Prairie City by Chris Bare, Charlie Caughlin, Garrett Jennings, Sharon Kimberling and Steve Summers. Only 100 meals were served at the Lodge; the low number was probably due to bad road conditions.

This team effort made the day a great success.

Tom Winters
Exalted ruler, John Day Elks Lodge

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