

Farmer's story is cautionary tale for work near streams and wetlands

The Oregon Department of State Lands wants to fine a farmer \$6,000 for alleged violation of state fill-removal laws.

The potential fine seems excessive, particularly to the actual harm — or, more accurately, the lack thereof. But rather than a story about fines and punishment, the case serves as a cautionary tale for landowners with streams and wetlands — or anything that can be later so classified.

Kelly Sampson grows hay and nursery stock on 80 acres near Canby, Ore., on the banks of Milk Creek.

Sampson told our sister newspaper, the Capital Press, that he noticed a section of the stream bank was eroding, and he decided to plant willow trees to stabilize the soil.

He put hay bales onto rocks next to the creek to retain moisture for the young trees.

Ordinarily, landowners don't need a fill-removal permit from the Oregon Department of State Lands if they're adding or removing less than 50 cubic yards of material in a waterway or wetland.

But in this case Milk Creek — a tributary of the Molalla River — is designated as "essential salmonid habitat," so any amount of disturbance requires a permit, according to the agency.

Sampson was unaware of the designation, and says his reading of the rules on the DSL website made him believe he was in the clear.

A complaint received by DSL indicates that Sampson placed hay bales as well as "horse manure and barn cleanout" below the creek's ordinary high water mark.

Though Sampson's intentions were good, he was in apparent violation of the law.

To its credit, when DSL finds an unintentional violation it works with the landowner to work things out. If you can restore things as you found them, the fine can be waived. Or, the fine can be reduced to the extent that the effort is successful.

The best policy for a landowner is to assume a permit is needed and seek professional advice.

"Give us a call and we can advise them," said Lori Warner-Dickason, field operations manager for DSL. "If they proceed without confirmation from us, they do so at their own risk."



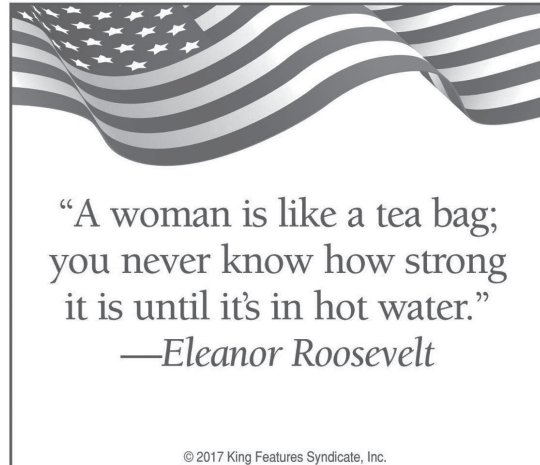
Mateusz Perkowski/EO Media Group

Farmer Kelly Sampson stands near Milk Creek, a tributary of the Molalla River, which runs through his 80-acre property near Canby, Ore. He faces a \$6,000 fine for allegedly violating state fill-removal law by planting willows into hay bales and other materials placed along the stream.

Americanisms



Americanisms



FARMER'S FATE

Pink pants, invisible clothes and truth

By Brianna Walker
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Brianna Walker

"Sitting in the pool on the sundeck, overlooking the rolling waves, sipping a cold drink — does life get better?" I asked my sister as I lazily kicked my feet through the clear water. She was spritzing tanning lotion on her already brown legs. She stopped and set the bottle down.

"Really?" she asked. I could hear the eye-roll in her voice as she lifted one eyebrow at me.

"Well?" I questioned. "What part about that statement is wrong?"

"What part about that statement is right?" she shot back.

I pushed a floating toy car away from me as I leaned back in my kids' plastic wading pool, sitting atop our boathouse on the Columbia River.

"It's all true." I argued. "I'm in a pool, overlooking the water, a cold drink in my hand."

Once more she gave me a disgusted look, like only a sister can, "A half-drunk glass of your kid's root beer slushy?"

"It's all in how you spin it," I laughed.

She shook her head, "You're crazy."

She went back to her book, and I went back to my slobbered-on slushy while soaking in the little plastic pool. It's all in how you spin it.

Maybe that's what's going on with the news today. Every place you turn you hear, "Fake news, fake news!"

It's all in how you spin it. As a kid, there was a song I remember listening to about a man who was dating a woman he thought was really rich. She was always telling her boyfriend

how her "daddy really cleaned up in Tennessee." The boyfriend was afraid of meeting her really rich father. When the time came, he was stunned to learn that her father was really a garbage truck driver — he really did clean up! The song ends when he says next time a girl says her daddy's big in Tennessee, he's just going to assume she means fat!

As a culture we claim we value honesty, but I am not so sure. Children are honest — and we try to change that from the time they can talk. Don't believe me?

A child walks up to their great-great-aunt, pushes on her polyester clad middle and says, "You have a really big belly." The child's mother blushes deep red, scoops the child up, apologizes to her great-aunt and starts scolding the child. Another time, the child sits on grandma's lap and says, "You have hair on your chin." Again, the mom apologizes and scolds the child. The child wasn't incorrect — but he learns he can't speak the truth. We curb the truth out of politeness.

As the child grows, they become less honest. First out of politeness, then out of political correctness and now, in today's society, because truth seems ugly and offensive. I'm reminded of the old fairy tale of the emperor's new clothes. A couple of hustlers conned the emperor into paying them to make the finest (and, of course, most expensive) threads that gold could buy. And the best part? Only wise people fit for

their posts would be able to see it. The swindlers pocketed the beautifully expensive wares, while they sat at empty looms, daring anyone to examine the beautiful designs they were weaving into the cloth. No person wanted to be thought a fool or unfit for their posts, so everyone admired the invisible cloth. The day of the procession came, and the swindlers dressed the emperor in his invisible clothes. His noblemen made a big show of lifting the train as they carried it down the streets.

Only a small child had the honesty to say, "But he hasn't got anything on." To which his father shushed him for his prattle. The emperor shivered, and suspected he was right, but he straightened taller than ever and walked proudly as his noblemen held high the train that wasn't there. Those swindling weavers sure knew how to spin it!

Today, right is left, up is down, night is day and purple is green. We're shushing the children that are speaking up, because the truth of sitting in three inches of water and drinking a slobbery slushy, isn't quite as beautiful as sitting in the pool, overlooking the rolling waves, sipping a cold drink. We value beauty more than honesty. Just squeeze into a pair of too-tight jeans and ask your husband how they look. I once watched a guy tell a girl she looked great in a hideous pair of hot pink leather pants — she didn't want honesty, he said, she just wanted to be told she looked great. Welcome to the pool!

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

GUEST COMMENT

Nurse shortage not a partisan issue

By Sheldon D. Fields
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

The nation is rapidly growing grayer and more ethnically diverse.

Today, about one in seven Americans is 65 or older. In less than 15 years, one in five Americans will be there, a percentage that will continue to rise. Meanwhile, the Census Bureau projects that by 2044, over half of all Americans will belong to an ethnic group other than non-Hispanic white. By 2060, nearly one in five Americans will be foreign born.

These demographic shifts will strain a healthcare system ill-prepared for it. Case in point: America's looming nurse shortage.

The largest component of the healthcare workforce, nurses play an indispensable role in the provision of health care. But in the years to come, the demand for nursing services will outstrip the supply — all the more so because of the 20-plus million people who gained access to health care under the Affordable Care Act.

In this environment, the skills of nurses — and specifically, advanced practice nurses — will be especially valuable. Averting any shortfall will require policies from Washington aimed at making the most of those who enter the nursing profession.

Advanced practice nurses possess a higher level of medical expertise, training and decision-making author-

ity than traditional registered nurses.

The quality of care these nurses provide is excellent. In one study, the health outcomes of primary care patients treated by advanced practice nurses were as good as those for patients treated by physicians. In many cases, patient satisfaction was higher for those who were treated by advanced practice nurses.

Moreover, the versatile skill set of these nurses makes them well suited to provide services to populations that would otherwise be underserved. Clinics staffed by a nurse practitioner can make a huge difference in areas where the nearest physician is far away.

Shifting demographics will also reduce the supply of nurses. The average age of a working registered nurse is over 50, and nearly half of our 2.7 million nurses will reach retirement age within the next 15 years.

Nursing schools aren't producing enough graduates to provide the 1.2 million new nurses our nation will need by 2030. A lack of resources forced nursing schools to turn away more than 64,000 qualified applicants in the 2016-17 academic year.

On this front, there's much that lawmakers can do, starting with providing healthcare and educational institutions with the resources to train more nurses.

They can allocate more funding towards Title VIII Nursing Work-

force Development programs, which support nurses practicing in underserved communities, nursing diversity grants, the National Nurse Service Corps and nurse faculty loan forgiveness.

Congress should also remove barriers that prevent advanced practice nurses from making full use of their skills.

In Alabama, a nurse practitioner must have a physician present 10 percent of the time to practice. When nurse practitioners in Missouri treat a new patient, that patient is required to see the collaborating physician within two weeks.

There's ample precedent for rolling back such regulations. Last year, the Department of Veterans Affairs amended its rules to allow advanced practice nurses to do everything their training and certification empowers them to do in any VA facility. Congress should follow the VA's lead and override onerous state restrictions, allowing advanced practice nurses full practice authority.

Not all health care reforms need to inspire partisan conflict. Common-sense reforms to avert a nursing shortage deserve the support of both parties — and are essential to cope with our coming demographic upheaval.

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