

# A voice for fairness

In an era of bare-knuckled politics, it is instructive to reflect on the career of William Ruckelshaus, the first administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

He died in Seattle in late November at age 87, leaving behind an unblemished career as a voice for environmental reason.

Ruckelshaus was no stranger to pitched political battles. His career in President Richard Nixon's administration abruptly ended when Ruckelshaus resigned his job at the U.S. Department of Justice instead of firing the Watergate special prosecutor.

But after two turns as EPA administrator — as the agency's first chief under Nixon and again under President Ronald Reagan — Ruckelshaus probably knew more about how the EPA and statutes such as the Endangered Species Act work than anyone else.

In 2011, EO Media Group interviewed Ruckelshaus about the EPA, the Endangered Species Act and issues related to the protection of species. Edited for space, here are some of his thoughts:

On the Endangered Species Act: If the law is working properly, the "how to" is an agreement by the people who will be impacted by the necessary changes. It doesn't work as well as it ought to, because a lot of time the government comes in and imposes habitat requirements that the manager of the land doesn't find completely reasonable.

On the Clean Air Act: After a couple of years of administering it, I knew it needed change. ... What has proven really hard is to get these laws changed, and the reason is, I think, the people who lobbied the laws through were primarily outside the government, and the government agencies that administered these laws and the staffs on committees remain in place for a long time — they get a vested interest in the law and they fight furiously against any changes.

The scope of the Endangered Species Act: (Congress) wrote the law broadly enough, and of course it's been interpreted broadly enough, it encompasses a lot more than they probably originally intended.

Changes needed in the

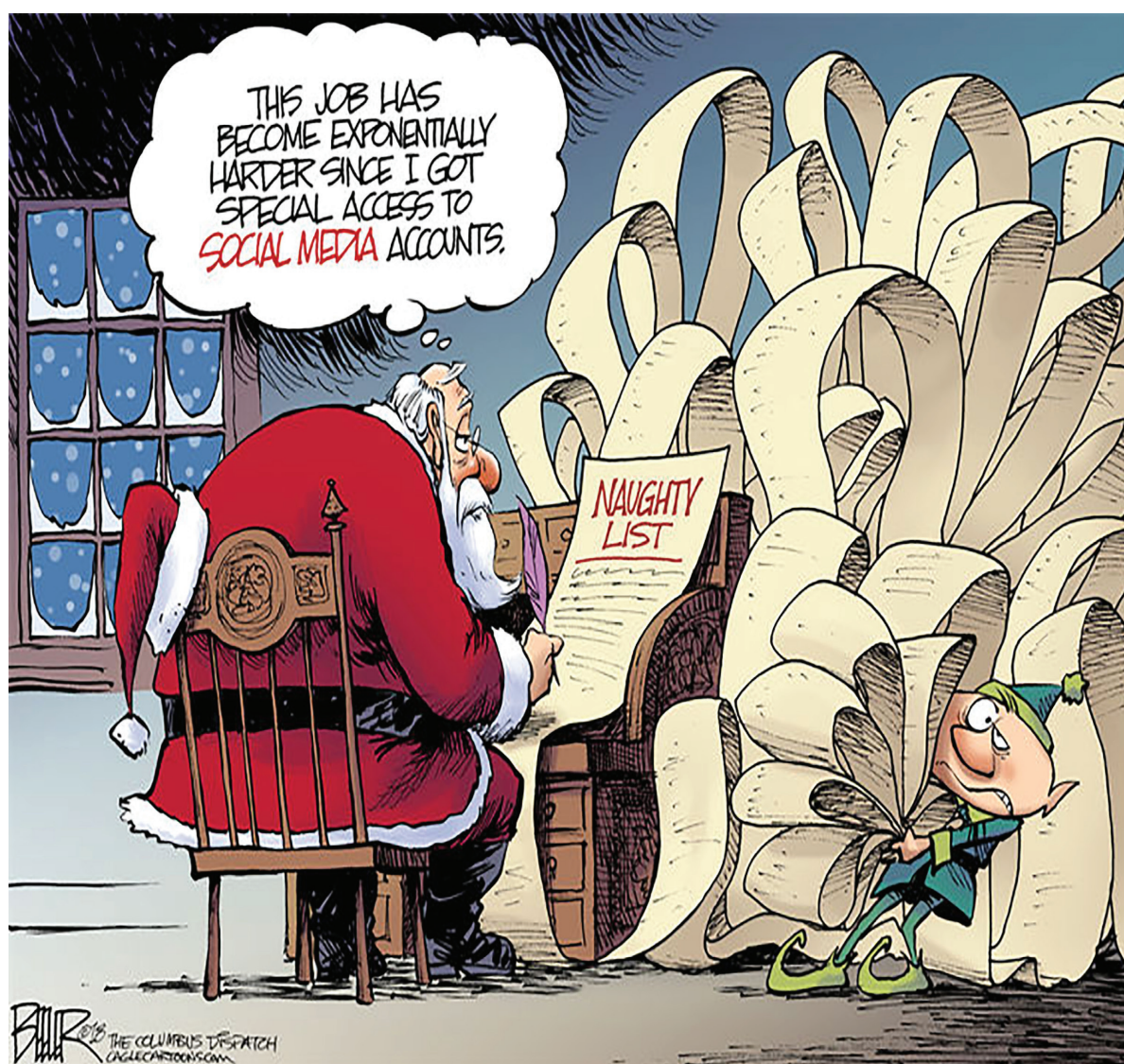
Endangered Species Act: If I'm a landowner and someone is running a highway through my land, I may not like it, but at least I'm being compensated for it. If I'm forced to put buffers alongside streams that run through my land in order to protect salmon, sometimes those buffers take a significant amount of my land, and I think they should be compensated for that. ... If that's a public good and it's being asserted against a private property owner, then why shouldn't the public pay for it the same way they do with a highway?

On environmental regulations: In the first place, some guy writing the regulation down in Olympia or in Salem, and not being on the actual land itself, can't possibly draft a regulation that makes sense on every piece of land. So the landowner has the regulator from the government coming on their land, starting to tell him how to manage it. He's been managing for five generations and this guy's maybe six months out of school. Well, they're not going to be very pleased with what they're told to do. ... (Let) the individual landowner have a lot more authority about what he should do to manage the land in such a way that it doesn't adversely impact the environment. And compensating them where there are significant costs involved.

On collaboration: If they'd see themselves as part of a family, they'd begin to make progress. But if they see themselves as adversaries, as enemies, then you don't make any progress. ... My experience of listening to farmers and environmentalists when they finally let their guard down, they are not nearly as far apart as they think they are. I've heard farmers say, "Well, if that's what you want us to do, that's not so hard." And here the environmentalists would say, "Well, I guess that's not really the problem, is it?" ... Once you see those interests come together, it really is remarkable.

These words, spoken from experience, offer wisdom to all sides of many issues, whether they involve the environment or other topics.

Maybe, just maybe, the world needs more voices for reason like William Ruckelshaus. We've seen plenty of the alternative.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Donate to the arts

#### To the Editor:

Each year the Juniper Arts Council/Grant County Oregon Cultural Trust Coalition offers grant opportunities to local arts and heritage organizations.

Last year the Grant County Historical Museum, Grant County Piecemakers, the Humboldt PTA, the John Day Fossil Beds, the Prairie City Fiber Fest and the Youth Arts Program each received grants for projects related to culture or heritage.

Where does the money come from that the JAC distributes? Each year the JAC (along with 35 other county cultural coalitions and nine tribal coalitions) receives grant funding from the Oregon Cultural Trust. For fiscal year 2020, the JAC will receive almost \$7,000 for distribution in Grant County.

Why donate to the Oregon Cultural Trust? Donors to the Oregon Cultural Trust not only donate to arts and culture, they also qualify for Oregon's cultural tax credit.

Here's how to get your state tax credit:

Donate to one or more of Oregon's 1,400+ cultural nonprofits.

Donate to the Oregon Cultural Trust online or by mail before Dec. 31. You will get this money back when you file your state taxes.

On your state tax form, enter the amount you gave to the Cultural Trust as a refundable credit. Your maximum tax credit eligibility is the total you gave to Oregon cultural nonprofits, up to \$500 per person (\$1,000 for joint filers).

If you have questions or are ready to donate, visit [culturalttrust.org](http://culturalttrust.org) or call the OCT at 503-986-0088.

#### Kris Beal

President, Juniper Arts Council Chair, Grant County Cultural Coalition

### Blood drive a great success

#### To the Editor:

Grant Union High School students did a great job orga-

nizing and staffing the Community Blood Drive Dec. 9-10. The community was super supportive, and Red Cross was pleased to exceed the donor goal both days. Grant County is the best.

#### Susan Sintay

Community Blood Drive coordinator

### Walden works hard for agriculture

#### To the Editor:

As someone who owns and operates a cattle ranch, I take pride in saying Congressman Walden is working harder than anyone in D.C. to cut through the red tape that we farmers and ranchers live with every day.

Greg has supported the Trump Administration as they work hard to renegotiate trade deals and expand access for our farmers and ranchers to foreign markets — like the newly negotiated USMCA and the U.S. trade deal with Japan — a great win for Oregon agriculture!

In Congress, Greg has passed legislation that would improve forest management and decrease the risk of wildfire by utilizing tools like grazing and thinning to reduce fuel loads on public lands.

Greg has fought hard to ensure farmers and ranchers can continue to rely on the protections provided in the Farm Bill.

He has worked tirelessly to advance legislation time and again that would federally delist the gray wolf and give the states the ability to better manage wolf populations.

I've watched Greg as he has spoken with leaders in the agriculture industries from Eastern Oregon throughout his career in Congress.

His passion for the industries is clear in those meetings, and he has always carried the message he receives in those discussions back to D.C. I have had the pleasure of working with him in Oregon and in Washington, D.C.

The farmers and ranchers of Oregon are going to miss having Congressman Walden

around.

Thankfully we still have one more year!

#### Matt McElligott

North Powder

### Lower prescription drug prices

#### To the Editor:

As someone with a long career in nursing, I know how important it is that my patients have access to the prescriptions they need to live healthy lives.

I appreciate the good work that Congressman Greg Walden is doing to lower prescription drug costs and increase access for patients. Greg's work to help import FDA-approved drugs into the U.S. would help lower the price of critical drugs like insulin, while providing Americans with greater choice in the marketplace. Walden has also used his post on the Energy and Commerce Committee to get legislation passed that goes after high prescription drug prices.

In 2018, he helped pass legislation to increase price transparency and allow pharmacists to inform patients that their drug would be cheaper if they paid for it out of pocket rather than through insurance.

This year, he doubled down on that by introducing the "Lower Costs, More Cures Act of 2019."

The bill would lower out-of-pocket spending for patients and ensure that the U.S. will continue to lead the world in developing new cures.

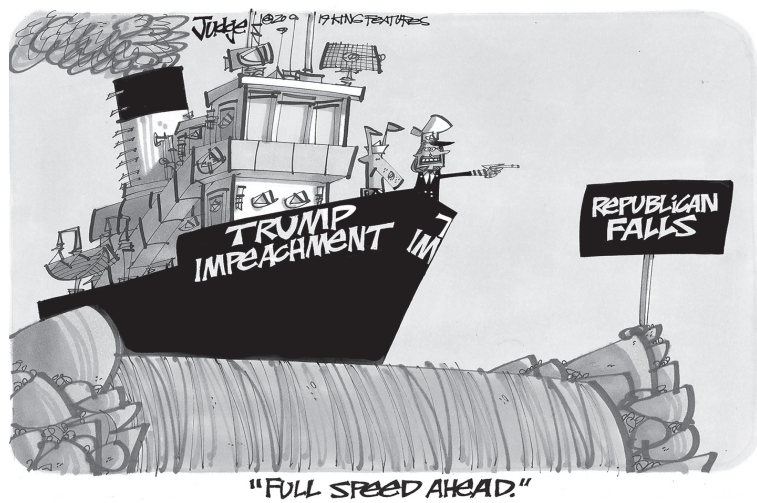
I have personally taken part in meetings Greg has held with constituents in his district as well as health care professionals that deal with pharmaceutical drugs every day.

The message is always the same — lower prescription drug prices.

He has worked hard to carry that message back to D.C. and get results.

#### Sam Palmer

John Day



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