

# Simpson gains consensus on dam removal plan

In crafting his plan for the removal of the dams on the lower Snake River, Rep. Mike Simpson has managed to forge consensus between farm, shipping and environmental interests on his idea. They all hate it.

Blessed are the peacemakers. They may be children of God, but often find surprisingly little support at home.

Simpson, R-Idaho, has not proposed legislation, but on Feb. 7 released a \$33.5 billion concept for salmon recovery, which includes removing the Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor dams on the lower Snake River in 2030 and 2031.

It is a bold plan, a grand compromise that seeks to address the competing needs of those who want the dams removed and those who depend on the status quo for their livelihoods, electrical energy, transportation and irrigation.

In short, Simpsons plan would:

- Require that the electrical power generated by the dams be replaced, and that the new infrastructure would be operational before the dams are breached.

- Provide money for river restoration, the development of transportation infrastructure to replace barge traffic, economic development for communities impacted by the breaching, watershed projects and irrigation infrastructure.

- Require that all other dams in the Columbia Basin that generate more than 5 megawatts of electricity be granted an automatic 35-year license extension.

- Prohibit for 35 years any litigation related to anadromous fish within the Columbia River system under the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act or the Clean Water Act, and stay any ongoing litigation.

As we said, a grand compromise, but one that none of the major stakeholders will accept.

Despite promises that their concerns will be addressed, farmers and ranchers worry about whether they will get the water they need, or will be able to ship product. Electric utilities worry they won't have a reliable source of power and barge interests worry about their jobs disappearing.

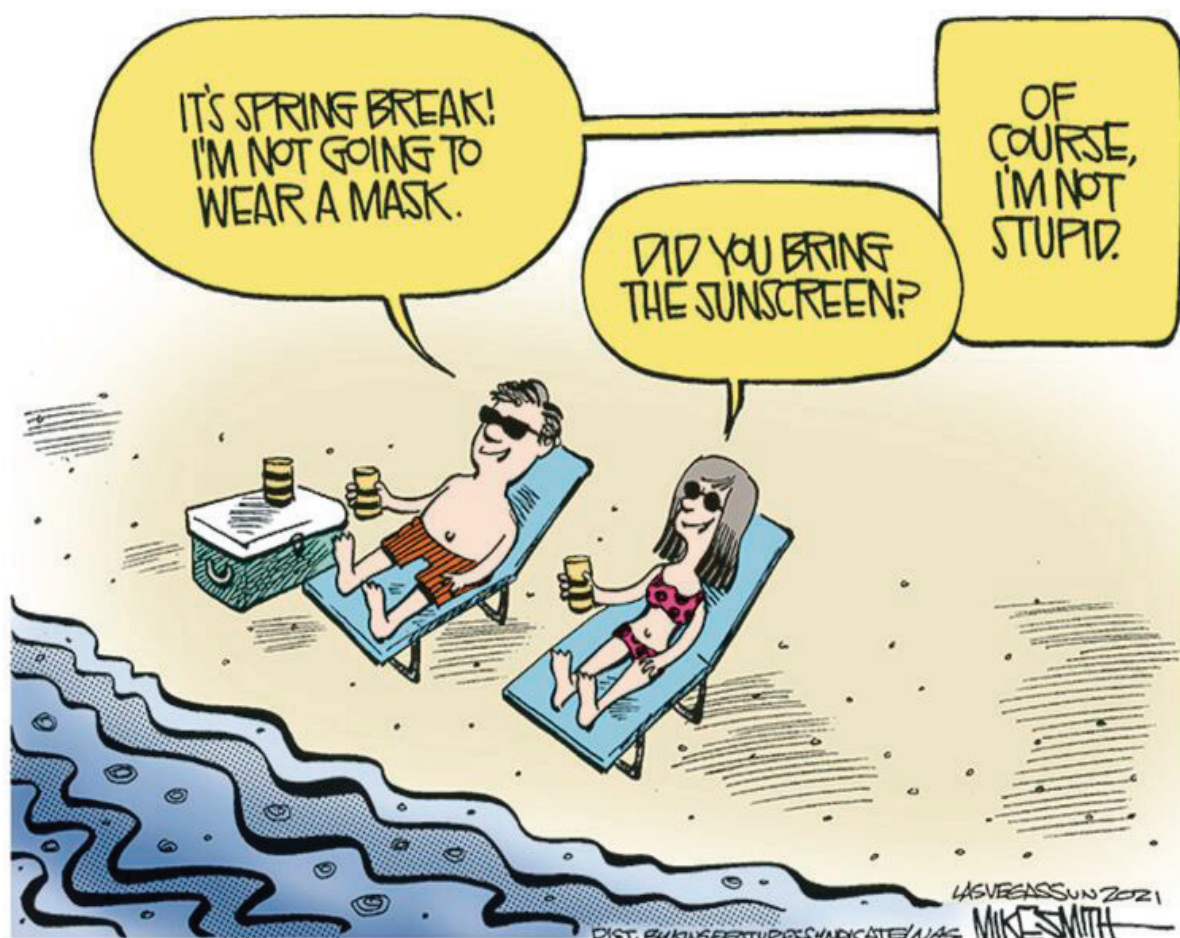
Environmental interests love the idea of breaching the dams, but leaving the others unchallenged for 35 years is crazy talk. And filing lawsuits is their *raison d'être*.

A group of 17 environmental organizations says Simpson's plan would speed up salmon extinction and harm human health, calling it "untenable."

In releasing the plan, Simpson said he didn't draft legislation because an ambitious concept such as he proposed needs to involve all the stakeholders and the states impacted.

We don't think the plan as proposed ever had a chance, but Simpson should be given credit for starting a conversation. Does anyone want to talk?

We know what everyone doesn't want and what they won't accept, but what do they want and what will they accept?



## EDUCATION CORNER

# United States history

Over the last several months we have witnessed history happening in our country that has not happened since the Civil War. It is United States history in the making. Now is a good time to reflect on our U.S. history from when we were in school. Do you remember your U.S. history classes? In Oregon, U.S. history is usually taught in fifth grade and again in high school. How well do you know the Constitution and amendments and what they stand for? Yes, there are those who do understand really well and those who think they know them, and those who really don't know. What does the First Amendment really mean?

In many schools dealing with remote learning, especially at the elementary ages, the teaching of social studies has sadly taken a back seat. Understanding the schools are doing their best in these unprecedented times, now is a great time to review for all of us what our founders felt would make us a leading country. The United States is a network of people and cultures working together for the betterment of the world and was designed 246 years ago knowing the country would grow and change. Have we taken it for granted?

This is a great time for us as



Dr. Scott Smith

adults to refresh ourselves and bring our children into the discussion of what it means to be a United States citizen. Below are some general questions along with general resources

you might consider when locating and fact-checking yourself. There are many ways of using the internet to search and locate information. Engaging with your children on this quest will help them have a stronger understanding of just how to locate and discuss information about questions that develop during their life.

Our government is built on three areas; the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the amendments. Understanding them and discussing why they were written might provide for a better understanding of just why our government operates the way that it does along with what our responsibilities are as United States citizens.

The Constitution: When was it written? Who were the authors? Where was it written? How many parts are there in the constitution? <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/constitution/352996>

The Bill of Rights: What is

the Bill of Rights? Who were the authors and why? Do they still apply today? How? [https://www.ducksters.com/history/us\\_bill\\_of\\_rights.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/us_bill_of_rights.php)

Amendments: What are amendments? Who and how can you make an amendment? How many amendments are there? You hear people say, "It's my First Amendment right." What does that mean? [https://www.ducksters.com/history/us\\_constitution\\_amendments.php](https://www.ducksters.com/history/us_constitution_amendments.php)

How do the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the amendments impact our daily lives? Do they really mean what you assumed they did? What are some ways you might be able to support our government? We are a diverse country made of multiple cultures each having its own perspective and understanding. Over the last couple of months has our government been in jeopardy? These are all questions we should reflect on as Americans, United States citizens, and how these issues could be peacefully addressed.

*Dr. Scott Smith is a Umatilla County educator with 40-plus years of experience. He taught at McNary Heights Elementary School and then for Eastern Oregon University in their teacher education program at Blue Mountain Community College. He serves on the Decoding Dyslexia — OR board as their parent-teacher liaison.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Reaching out to a Prairie City acquaintance

**To the Editor:**  
In 1971 I attended a National Science Foundation summer program at Purdue with Cathie Sanderson of Prairie City, then in high school. I was her roommate's boyfriend. I have recently been in touch with others from that program, and everyone has wondered what happened to her. If anyone knows and could give her my address so she could contact us, I would really appreciate it: 3320 Dover Drive, Boulder, CO 80305.

Paul Melanson  
Boulder, Colorado

### Police more important than projects

**To the Editor:**  
Really? The city of John Day can afford to do all these "maybe someday" projects, but they cannot afford our police department? Oh yeah — there may be a grant for that! Seems like something has got

to give — and soon.

Lou Patzer  
John Day

### 'Don't take your guns to town'

**To the Editor:**  
Recently, I went to town to get vaccinated, and I was amazed to notice some cultural messaging that was put in my face whether I wanted it or not. From Mt. Vernon to John Day there were large signs that declared far-right wacko messaging. One in particular jumped out at me — wanting to move all of Eastern Oregon to Idaho. A much simpler solution would be for these radical individuals to just move to Idaho.

On my way to the cemetery above Canyon City to visit my parents' gravesites, I passed another sign that is continuing to spread the "Big Lie" by stating that Trump did win the election.

When we returned to the fairgrounds for the vaccination, I found myself in line and being crowded by a deliberately offensive little man wearing a handgun and a face mask with an ugly message. The large letters said "IDIOT,"

and I thought, "Well, you got that one right!" But when I read the small print it was referring to our governor. He had a right to his opinion, but he didn't have the right to thrust that in everyone else's face, especially while displaying a weapon.

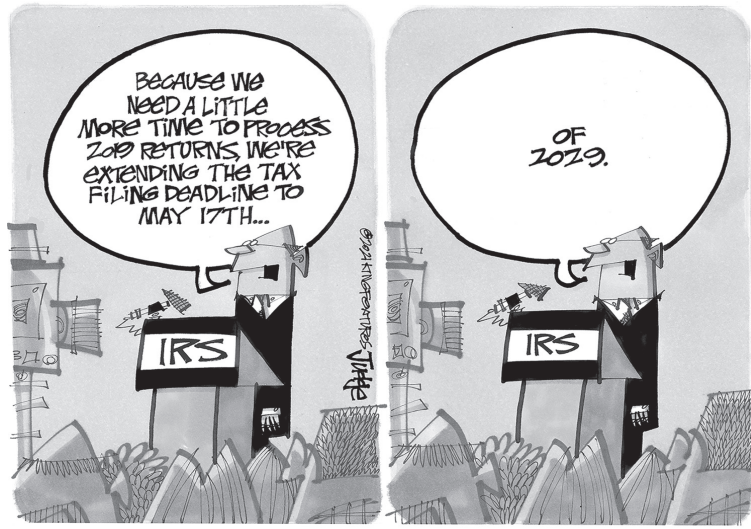
When we returned home, my wife turned on the news to another mass shooting in Colorado. It seemed like a sorrowfully fitting conclusion to the rest of the day.

I have always been and always will be supportive of the right to keep and bear arms. What has changed for me is that I am 100% against private citizens owning assault weapons that were designed only to kill other humans. You're welcome to all your hunting and home protection guns; but when packing, keep handguns out of sight where they are not intimidating others.

When I was a kid, Johnny Cash had a song titled, "Don't take your guns to town." I'm saying, "Don't display your guns in town."

Let's be less hostile and less confrontational. (My wife says, coming from me, my last statement seems pretty hypocritical.)

Terry Steele  
Ritter



## WHERE TO WRITE

### GRANT COUNTY

- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: [tocc1862@centurylink.net](mailto:tocc1862@centurylink.net).
- **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: [dville@ortelco.net](mailto:dville@ortelco.net).
- **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: [cityjd@centurytel.net](mailto:cityjd@centurytel.net).

- **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: [info@cityoflongcreek.com](mailto:info@cityoflongcreek.com).
- **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: [cityofmonument@centurytel.net](mailto:cityofmonument@centurytel.net).
- **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: [cmtv@ortelco.net](mailto:cmtv@ortelco.net).
- **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: [pchall@ortelco.net](mailto:pchall@ortelco.net).

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