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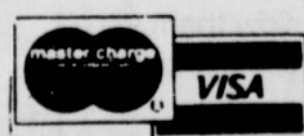
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More Letters

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joy living in the county. We want to protect the quality of our air (nothing like a forest for countering the effects of Portland smog). And maybe we'd like to be able to share with our children something of the character of Columbia County as we have known it, and which is dying as vast acreages of our forest are submitted to clearcut-and-run operations.

Knowing that short-sightedness is a problem in a democratically elected board of commissioners, it is time for us to fulfill our duty as responsible citizens and remind them of our long-term goals.

Consider this alternative:

Let's keep Carcus Creek Park—and turn it into a living museum that both celebrates our county's history as a logging county and generates a continuing flow of revenue for the county.

There are talented foresters in our county who are willing and able to create a plan for sustained-yield logging of Carcus Creek Park.

Furthermore, in our living museum, we would be able to introduce our children to a forest and a way of life (logging) that sustained our county's families in years gone by.

We would all be able to enjoy bearing witness to the magnificent process of forest growth, harvest, and continued growth.

Recently, I toured Carcus Creek Park. In places, the journey was a slog through downed timber and deep undergrowth. But on the many overgrown old logging trails and abandoned narrow-gauge railway grades I began to sense what a beautiful park this could be, what a resource for our county, and a source of pride for us all.

The forester who guided me through the park pointed out which trees might be logged now for current revenue, and he explained how their removal would enhance

the growth of younger neighboring trees. Furthermore, he reminded me that removal of mature trees would open up the forest to easier strolling, allowing visitors to appreciate individual groves and other features of the forest—such as a selection of young giants which we could choose to retain for their beauty and our enjoyment. The thinning and general clean-up process would also open access to the pretty creek and stunning waterfall that pours down a faceted rock face into a dark pool at the farthest edge of the property.

The forester pointed out the remains of old logging operations (log culverts, giant stumps with the marks of springboards 4 feet off the ground, old skid roads) that are part of local history and our children's heritage.

There was all the refreshing diversity of forest life to enjoy—the trees themselves (hemlock, fir, alder, and the occasional cedar): the varied understory of vine maple, huckleberries, wild roses, and ferns; ground cover of mosses, and wildflowers, with the occasional trove of mushrooms. Huge ravens soared above the few open spaces. Squirrel and bird chatter were our constant companions. We breathed the freshest, sweetest air on earth. (Old timers say that loggers suffering from heart attack or exhaustion in the forest were tucked up against one of the big trees to partake of the greater concentration of oxygen beneath their boughs.)

Later we visited a section of private land that had been selectively (and profitably) logged for scores of years. It had sustained a family for generations. The most startling thing about it was that it looked like a park.

Think about that alternative, Mr. Commissioners. Think about that, my friends.

Madelynne Diness Sheehan Scappoose

(Sheehan is the author of the book *Fishing In Oregon*)



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