

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the upper Nehalem River valley. Published twice monthly on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 725 Bridge Street, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk & Noni Andersen, (503) 429-9410.

Opinion

Who is serving whom?

Members of West Oregon Electric Cooperative understandably resent being treated as faceless, nameless "consumers", because they know they are member/owners of the utility. Even the letterhead stationery of WOEC emphasizes that fact with the slogan "Owned by the members we serve".

Given that situation, the board of directors is to be commended for making tentative efforts to do what the slogan says. It is helpful to courteously provide information requested by members, without having to be reminded that WOEC is neither a private utility nor a little fiefdom. Autocratic behavior has no place in a cooperative endeavor of any sort.

A similar situation exists in the administration of the Vernonia School District. Here is an important endeavor that is paid for by the people who use it, but who are seldom consulted about operations. A case in point is a letter in this issue of *The INDEPENDENT* that questions why the district office was the first place repaired after the flood. Why wasn't priority given to teaching/learning space, instead? The question is valid and a response should be forthcoming. It's time, too, for the school administration to stop acting as though it's a terrible chore to provide meeting agendas, meeting minutes, or other information requested by residents of the district.

Here, as in the case of West Oregon, people of the district are not consumers, they are, in fact, called "patrons" by the district and, as patrons, they provide most of the income that is used to operate the district.

The board of directors here, too, is working to turn things around. That's good, but here is one suggestion: Involve more of the community when you are considering important administrative procedures, hiring a principal, changing a policy or whatever.

Remember, cooperation goes two ways: to get it, you have to give it.

Minority rule is great, but only for the minority

Should every adult citizen of the United States be allowed to vote?

The validity of this hasn't been questioned since minorities and women won the right to vote. But some questions are now being raised about ballots cast in a mail election, by people who can neither make it to the polls nor request an absentee ballot when the election isn't conducted by mail. One question that comes to mind is: Who is actually casting all those mail-in ballots?

With a record low turnout for Oregon in the May primary—just over 37 percent of registered voters bothered to cast a ballot—non-voters obviously have decided that minority rule is just fine with them. And the minority who vote certainly have no reason to object to the power awarded them by default.

Instead of converting all elections to mail-in balloting, it may be wiser to require that all Americans of voting age pass a test of minimum competency. The information immigrants have to learn in order to become U.S. citizens might be a good place to start.

HEARD FROM AREA RESIDENTS



Ike Says

By Dale Webb, member
Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

By the time you read this article, the second weekend of stream trout season will have passed. I talked to some of the people that tried the Nehalem River and Rock Creek during the last two weeks and the news sounds pretty good. One friends stated "It was the best fishing in recent years." Their boat caught around 80 fish in a six mile drift. Another report, from two fishermen drifting down Rock Creek, was of about 50 fish apiece, one a 16 inch cutthroat and an unconfirmed report of a steelhead; boy, I bet that was a tussle on light trout rigging. Of course there was a lot of catch and release fishing going on since the trout limit is 5 fish. Everybody was claiming to have caught nice size fish, too, ranging from 10 to 16 inches.

Water conditions were the best in the last decade. The Nehalem looked like it might be too high and muddy for the opener but cleared just in time, thanks to a let-up in the relentless spring rains we have been experiencing. The rivers were a little high and many boaters reported having a hard time trolling large spinners with a worm trailer and that they flew through the holes too fast to cover them adequately. Some of the better fishing was done from boats that anchored and fished the side waters with smaller spinner and worm combinations. Again, anchoring in some of the better holes was hard to do because of the strong currents.

Fishing should continue to be good until the rivers drop below boating levels. After that it will be a chest wader show and should be good fishing until the rivers warm up and the fish move out of the main rivers.

Anglers need to use caution when planning a drift trip, especially if you're new to the area. There were reports of trees across Rock Creek, higher up, and there is a tree across the Nehalem at the bridge about a mile north of town (which was passable during high water, but may not be as the river drops). Check with a local in the area that you plan to fish to make sure it is passable. Most of the river below Vernonia seems to be wide open; above town is probably another matter.

Also, be careful where you park your vehicle. Many bridges are used as launching and

landing sites and if your vehicle is parked in the way, it could get dragged around by somebody's winch. The wide spot just downstream from the green steel bridge, here in town, is a launching site. To avoid problems, please do not park on the west side of the highway for it impedes boaters from winching their boats up from the river.

I haven't had any reports from fishermen in the smaller streams and would be interested in knowing what you are finding in the way of fish. Small tributaries of the Nehalem River remain good fishing throughout most of the summer, but require different tactics than the big water. Drifted worms or crawdad tails work good, as do rooster tails and assorted other small lures. Flies also are excellent choices for drift fishing, although a long fly pole can have its drawbacks in a vine maple patch. Small creek fishing is a stalking game, one must keep a low profile while approaching the holes and then gently lower his bait or lure into the head of the pool and drift it back to the waiting fish. Pay particular attention to undercut banks and roots, these tend to hold good fishing. Also use a large piece of bait, for this will usually discourage sublegal size fish from getting hooked deep, which means unnecessary fish kills. My favorite bait is a whole crawdad tail fresh from the stream and peeled from its shell. I fish this on a #8 or #6 hook with no weight, the #6 hook will reduce hooking mortality while catching mainly bigger fish. 4 to 6 pound test line is required for keen sighted cuts.

It is also wise to keep tabs on what the fish are eating by looking at the stomach contents of some of your first keeper fish, if they are eating a lot of insects maybe the fishing would be better with the fly pole.

Cutthroat trout fishing in our area may be in doubt due to concern about the sea-run species of cutthroat trout. There are proposals in front of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) commissioners to end the cutthroat fishery until the sea-runs rebuild. It would be a shame to have this happen to such a tremendous fishery, but may be unavoidable. Sea-run cutthroat trout look the same as resident fish and the juveniles stay instream until they are about 10-12 inches in length. That's where the problem is — we are probably harvesting a lot

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