

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. Sports Editor, Caren Coté. Phone/Fax: (503) 429-9410.

Opinion

More commitment, more trust, more fun

Vernonia may be a small town...but it has learned to think big. More importantly, it has learned not just how to get grants and how to use them well, it has learned how to set an example for commitment.

The new city hall and library are good examples. Yes, there is grant money involved, but Vernonia showed its commitment to self-improvement by raising most of the money from its timberland. Commitment was also expressed by the Vernonia Area Chamber of Commerce, which added \$37,000 to the city effort in exchange for a visitor information center and office space.

In another exchange between the two, the chamber sold the city a lot at the corner of Bridge and Rose for way under the market price. Why? It was property the chamber had intended to use for an office building and no longer needed, but the city needed it.

That's mutual commitment, yes, but it's also a demonstration of trust—and trust is never given, it's earned.

There's also commitment from the volunteers who have been working so many years for improvements at Vernonia Lake. Now, with a mutual effort by the city and the volunteers, there is a real chance of obtaining funds for a handicapped fishing pier. This mutual effort also builds trust.

Another commitment? Take a look at the Scout Cabin. This project got off to a rocky start, both in fund raising and with city government. But those committed people just didn't stop. The rehab will be finished this year, it will be better than it was before, and trust is building between the volunteers and city.

Commitment, by agencies, groups or individuals, is necessary for success. When it builds trust, it's even better, because working together is more fun than fighting.

Facts, please, not fiction

The thought of a 150 unit housing development in Vernonia isn't comfortable, no matter what kind it may be.

Vernonia residents would be wise to keep their eyes open to what is happening. At the same time, they should keep their mouths shut until they find out what is happening.

People who supposedly know how the system works are spreading falsehoods about the proposed development, including saying that the city has already approved it.

The city has neither approved nor disapproved; they've had no opportunity to do so. Nothing has been presented to either the county or the city and, yes, the county is involved because most of the property is in the county.

No matter what we feel, there is a legal process that both governments and developers have to follow. That process is what keeps the system orderly.

If the process continues, there will be public notices and news items about public hearings and meetings. Those people who are truly concerned about the proposed development need to take the time to attend the meetings. It's a far more reliable way to stay informed than by listening to rumors.

ALL WANNABE

THE ELECTED

POLITICIANS

BEFORE ELECTIONS

AFTER ELECTIONS

LOWER TAXES
PROMISES
TERM LIMITS
PROGRAMS FOR ALL

MORE TAXES
CUT PROGRAMS
ABOLISH TERM LIMITS
... SAID WHAT!?



YOUR LIFE WILL BE
BETTER IF YOU ELECT
US!

LET'S GIVE OURSELVES
A RAISE!!

By Dale Webb July 99 THE INDEPENDENT

Ike Says . . .

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

Here's an update on the hair-loss syndrome that our blacktailed deer are experiencing. Two factors are thought to be the cause: The affected deer have a heavy infestation of lice, upwards of 100 lice per square inch have been observed. More recently, the affected deer have a high infestation of lung worms which can cause respiratory problems and decreased immunity. The lung worms may explain why the lice are able to overwhelm the deer, causing them severe irritation which they try to relieve by scratching until their hair falls out. Once the deer are hairless, they are susceptible to the elements and most mortality is believed to have been caused by hypothermia.

Biologists suspect that a small snail is the intermediate host for the lung worms and that the deer ingest them while foraging. The above normal precipitation of recent years is thought to have provided a good environment for the snails. Both lice and lung worms can be controlled with Ivermectin, so Washington state is trying to develop a medicated salt block that could be placed in the woods to help infected deer. Washington biologists have observed a nearly total loss of last year's fawns in some locations. Oregon biologists do not feel that deer losses have been significant, a conclusion I disagree with. People who have daily interactions with deer have reported significant losses during the winter and some movement of the hair loss into older animals. Fecal samples taken throughout the Saddle Mountain Unit suggest that around 25-percent of the deer are infected with the lung worms. The samples were collected in late spring, which I feel was after most of the mortality had already occurred. I will keep updating this subject as more information is gained.

Big game regulation was the subject of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Commission meeting June 4-5 at ODF&W headquarters. I testified on both days, with a lengthy presentation to the Commissioners on the fifth regarding antlerless deer hunting in the Saddle Mountain Unit. Going in to these meetings I still believed that reasonable people, given good data, would make an informed decision. I no longer hold such beliefs.

The ODF&W staff recommended that 800 antlerless tags be allowed in the Saddle Mountain Unit this coming fall. The Commissioners heard testimony – from the Izaak Walton League

and the Tillamook chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association – that supported continuation of the existing moratorium for five more years. A letter from the North Coast Game Association also expressed opposition to the proposed 800 tags. There was no testimony favoring the antlerless hunt from either individual hunters or from hunters' organizations.

The Commissioners, totally indifferent to four independent surveys (data they never had available before) that showed a significant decline in the deer population this last spring, adopted the staff recommendation for 800 antlerless tags. I personally felt salt being rubbed in the wound. Both the Izaak Walton League and the North Coast Game Association had been willing to support 500 antlerless tags for the upcoming season...until we observed the significant winter loss this year. We would have been willing to compromise to a limited extent while closely monitoring our deer population for any impacts. Previously, we thought that our deer population had increased and could absorb this limited harvest and probably still increase. No such compromise was extended by ODF&W staff or Commissioners.

It was interesting to observe the Commissioners as they wrestled with some of the staff recommendations. They do not adopt all staff recommendations, but those they reject deal with subjects about which the commissioners have strong personal beliefs or knowledge. The problem is that most of the Commissioners lack sufficient knowledge of the antlerless hunt in the Saddle Mountain Unit to make an informed decision on their own, so they rely on the staff to enlighten them. Unfortunately, they seem unable to understand that the people who live, work and play in this unit all year may have knowledge that is superior to that of a district biologist who spends less time than the average hunter in the unit, or the staff people in Portland who probably haven't set foot in the unit for years.

I was never so perplexed in all my life as when I left the meeting on the fifth. Wildlife science is not exact, yet most decisions the commissioners make are based on staff recommendations that are reasonably supported by data. In deciding not to continue the antlerless moratorium, the Commissioners based their decision on the belief that the data collected to provide information on whether or not the deer population had increased, was not sufficient to give a concise answer. In essence, they stated that they didn't have any faith in the numbers used to

Please see page 14