

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Ballot measures are not well thought-out

The idea of a small levy to maintain historical artifacts in Columbia County is not distressing. What is distressing is an approach so muddled that it's impossible to tell how much the levy will be. If it is \$750,000 in five years, that can only be viewed as exorbitant for a county with a population of under 50,000 people. It's doubtful that a professional director, traveling exhibits and expanded quarters in St. Helens are priorities for most of this county's residents.

If it is \$150,000 in five years, it should say so in the order and resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners. But that is *not* what it says.

The overt threat by members of the Historical Society to fold their tent and send this county's artifacts to the state organization is nothing more or less than coercion. If the BoC fails to see that, they aren't looking.

The County's second ballot measure asks voters to approve an amendment to the natural resources (surface mining) depletion fee ordinance. The ordinance imposes a 15 cent per ton fee on rock, gravel, dirt, sand, dredge spoils, etc., that is dug up, taken out of, or brought into the county if they are used to reclaim other surface mines or in agricultural operations. If amended, the fee would no longer apply to materials used in reclamation and agricultural applications.

Stuck in the measure are a few other words that say "minor housekeeping" amendments would also be adopted if voters approve it.

The reason for voting no on the five-year local option levy for an historic fund is obvious.

The depletion fee changes aren't so obvious, but county voters should remember something from last year, when the county had an ordinance amendment on the ballot that would have increased the depletion fee for road maintenance, by a few cents per ton. Some members of the industry got together and sent a last-minute mailer that made it sound like everyone in the surface mining industry in Columbia County would immediately be out of work. It would be nice to say that it was just the usual political shenanigans, but that wouldn't be true.

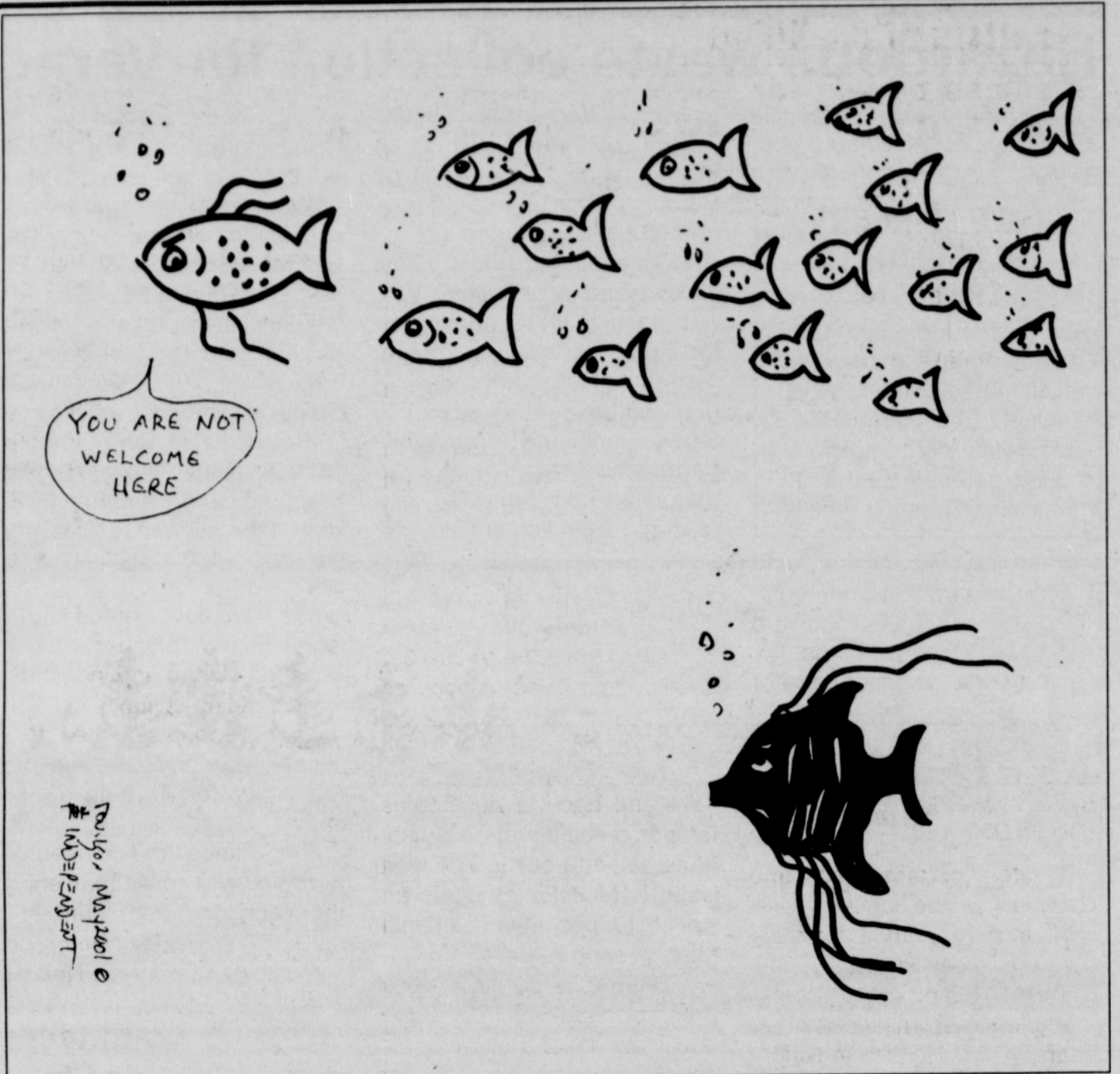
The perpetrators were actually fined for violating election law. The fine wasn't large but there wouldn't have been any fine at all if the industry hadn't so blatantly thumbed their collective nose at the voters.

If they hadn't interfered with a legitimate ballot measure, it would be easy to support this amendment as a quid pro quo. However, if there is no more depletion fee for roads, the existing depletion fee for reclamation and agricultural applications should not be eliminated.

Moreover, those "minor housekeeping" amendments weren't spelled out.

The historical fund measure stinks to high heaven. The depletion fee amendment just doesn't smell good.

**Whatever your
point of view may be,
Please Vote!**



Ike Says...

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

It was nice to see all the people who came out to help make Vernonia Shine on April 21. The Izaak Walton League seized on the work that Bill Sword and others did last year around the east end of Lake Vernonia and made major headway in developing a primitive campground. A trail down to the grassy flat between Lake Vernonia and the Nehalem River was completed and future camp sites were leveled. This project could have never happened without the help of Holce Logging and The Yard Doctor. Jerry Budge and Donny Normand from Holce Logging donated their time to run the Cat supplied by Holce Logging, to create the access trail and level the camp sites. Allen Reinsch, the owner of The Yard Doctor, donated his time and use of his tractor to rock the access trail. We also must thank SOLV for the grant with which we purchased the materials to build the trail. The City of Vernonia donated the rock for the trail. Don Tiffney, Dennis Nelson, Allen Boettcher, Don and Michael Webb built the trail. Kathy Gillette of Portland ventured out to our town to help out and we put her to work on the camp sites. The campground is not yet open, because a large portion of it needed to be grass seeded. Hopefully, within a month or so, we will be able to open the campground.

Once again, I have been spending a lot of time in my kayak in our local streams and have noticed a few river hazards that trout fishermen should be aware of when the season opens in late May. The river has been running fairly low and boating may be difficult above Vernonia if we do not receive a fair amount of rain before trout season. Trees have fallen across the Nehalem below Sunnyside and will present a difficult portage for anybody thinking of putting in upstream of the Highway 47 bridge south of town. Farther down the Nehalem, the same river hazard that was there last year still exists just upstream of the bridge before the Olympic Resource Management office at Pittsburg. This would be a bad place to get a boat sideways in the current and against the tree that is blocking the river. There is also a tree across the river, just below Archie Dass's house, that will interfere with those souls drifting from Pittsburg to Big Eddy Park. Anybody thinking of drifting Rock Creek from Flack Road down to town will have to contend with a large log jam just behind the old Ellison Cedar mill. A portage of this jam will be difficult.

Trout fishing should be good this year and I

would be interested in receiving catch rates and size of fish from local fishermen. Remember, the fishing is CATCH AND RELEASE and no bait for cutthroat trout. I don't think I've been on a trip recently when I haven't seen somebody fishing. Remember, the season for cutthroat trout does not open until May 26.

Hunters need to be aware of the May 15 deadline for applying for controlled big game hunts. Don't forget! Saddle Mountain hunters will notice that the last weekend of the season has been eliminated. You will have only four days to hunt in the first season and seven in the second season. This may cause a shift in the percentage of hunters applying for second season tags and some hunters may not get tags if they don't apply for this hunt as their first choice. Last year, the tag numbers were cut to 1,500 for each season, which has caused some displacement of hunters.

The reason for these changes is the awareness by ODF&W that bull elk numbers are in decline. This is not only true, but has been predicted by many of us because of the excessive cow harvests that continue each year. ODF&W does not recognize the overall herd decline, just the bull decline. It will be interesting to see if the shortened season and reduced hunter numbers will bring the bull numbers up. It is my opinion that until the cow herd is allowed to rebuild, the short term gains will be short lived and the decline will continue after a brief respite.

I am sure a lot of you in our area have seen deer without all of their hair. I thought we were going to get by this year, since the weather was so dry and mild, but such is not the case. I have observed numerous animals with the hair loss syndrome. I have observed very few fawns from last year surviving to become yearlings. One of our chapter members observed a yearling buck die on his property less than a month ago. The animal simply bedded down and would not get up. Within hours, it had died. This is a very serious problem and is having a dramatic effect on local deer populations. Despite this problem, I have heard that ODF&W is going to pursue continuing the antlerless deer hunt in the local area. It will only be a matter of time until ODF&W will run out of tricks and even the most creative spotlight surveys will not produce the results needed to sustain this abhorrent harvest.

Izaak Walton League meetings are on the third Thursday of each month, 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome. For meeting location, call (503) 429-7193.