

## Opinion

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times the water rises to a point where it flows out of its banks and floods all but the 1-acre pad by the highway on which our house is sited, and a 1/2-acre pad on the opposite side which is landlocked year round. If the proposed regulations affect our property using winter flows, then all 23 acres of our land is under restricted-use. At best, using summer flows and figuring both sides of the river, a 150 foot swathe, plus the width of the Nehalem itself, will place approximately one-third of our land under restricted-use regulations. I was told at their St. Helens office that if I, as a property-owner, wish to make any additional use of my land, I would have to request (!) permission from the County's Department of Land Development Services, after paying a nominal permit fee of "...10, 20 or 50 dollars." My family's feelings are probably the same as many of your readership would have. Currently, I don't have to pay a thing or ask anyone for permission! I'm the one who's paying the property taxes on it now, and I DON'T willingly cede the right to determine what to do with my land.

In her testimony, Agnes Peterson, a prominent St. Helens attorney who has been active in the area, explicitly pointed out that the State of Oregon's Senate Measure 100, upon which Goal 5 administrative rules are based, infringes upon Constitutionally protected landowner rights. Also, since the public input process being used by the Board is legislative in nature,

the Board would have to take opinions in written or verbal modes indefinitely. A member of the audience suggested that the public keep communicating their opposition to adoption of the proposed changes. Jeffrey VanNatta, chairperson of the Board, communicated with the other Board Members Peter Brewer, Dennis Nelson, Marvin McDonald, Mona Pierce, and Guy Letourean. They agreed to take written testimony for another month, after which a revised draft will be drawn up based upon the report and the public feedback.

Chairman VanNatta estimated that the County Commissioners should receive the Land Use Board's recommendation sometime in July or August. If adopted, the regulation changes would take effect approximately 90 days later. He took further testimony from the audience, and took questions. I asked if it would be possible to include informing the public better about their recommendations by letting the local newspapers in Scappoose-St. Helens, "The Chief" in Clatskanie, and yes, "The Independent" in Vernonia. I and another audience member pointed out that "The Independent" has a large distribution area from Banks-to-Astoria-to-Rainier, and that a large number of County citizens read it.

He responded favorably, and promised he would inform the newspapers. He then requested that Columbia County citizens write, telephone, or in any other way communicate with the Columbia County Commis-

sioners to inform them of our feelings. He stated that all the Land Use Board could do was make recommendations regarding the proposed regulation changes and that only the County Commissioners could actually put any changes into effect. As there was no additional testimony, the meeting was adjourned.

### To Property Owners in the Unincorporated Areas of Columbia County:

We property owners are directly affected by these land use regulation changes, yet these changes affect each Columbia County Citizen directly or indirectly. How specific changes will affect you can be found on the Columbia County website. I know that I, as a property owner, would love for my property taxes to be lower. However, if property values are lowered, the tax-base of the County is reduced, this in a time of government complaining of too-tight budgets when service like police response or emergency service is rationed. The proposed changes affect individuals or companies with land that has water flowing as a tributary to a stream or river, especially if that body of water is fish-bearing. Some of the proposed changes directly affect landowners who have what the Oregon National Heritage Program has defined as "sensitive plant life." If a person wishes to have a home built, an extra layer of red-tape, permit costs, and time are added. For many of us, our home and the land it rests on is the single most valuable investment that

we have. The vast majority of us treat our real estate responsibly and respect our neighbor's property. Also, we treat the wildlife and plant life that grows on our land with respect and care, whether it is permanent or just passing through. Our State's quality of life is envied throughout the country, yet there is an element in our population who feel that the property rights of responsible citizens are secondary to the wishes of the State, that various bureaucratic entities in state government know more than we landowners on what and how our property should be used.

Our state currently has the highest unemployment rate in the US, and Columbia County has the highest unemployment rate in the state. Our citizens have repeatedly voted to repeal tax increases, yet here is an example of how local governments are reducing tax receipts while adding costs to bring in additional revenues. The only way we can stop this is to write, e-mail, telephone, or button-hole OUR Columbia County Commissioners and let them know that we DO NOT want more government control and costs, that "Enough Is Enough!"

### MAY 20, 2003, DISTRICT ELECTION RESULTS

#### Vernonia Rural Fire District

Position No.	No. of Votes	% of Votes
2 Don Skinner	272	52.71
2 Tim Bamberg	236	45.73
2 Write in	8	1.48
3 Joe Batty	272	52.50
3 Bill Cota	241	46.52
3 Write in	5	.93
4 Jeremy Woodall	286	56.74
4 Steve Roberts	209	41.46
4 Write in	9	1.67

#### Vernonia School District

Position No.	No. of Votes	% of Votes
1 Ed Buckner	496	81.98
1 Steve Roberts	99	16.36
1 Write in	10	1.53
2 Randall Hansen	512	95.52
2 Write in	24	3.69
3 Tim Titus	545	97.32
3 Write in	15	2.30
7 Darrell Hamblet	483	93.78
7 Write in	32	4.9

#### Mist-Birkenfeld Rural Fire Protection District (Both Clatsop & Columbia County Results)

Position No.	Columbia County			Clatsop County
	No. of Votes	% of Votes	% of Votes	
1 Stephen Butsko	70	64.81	33	
1 Raymond Kyser	38	35.18	20	
1 Write in	0	0	0	

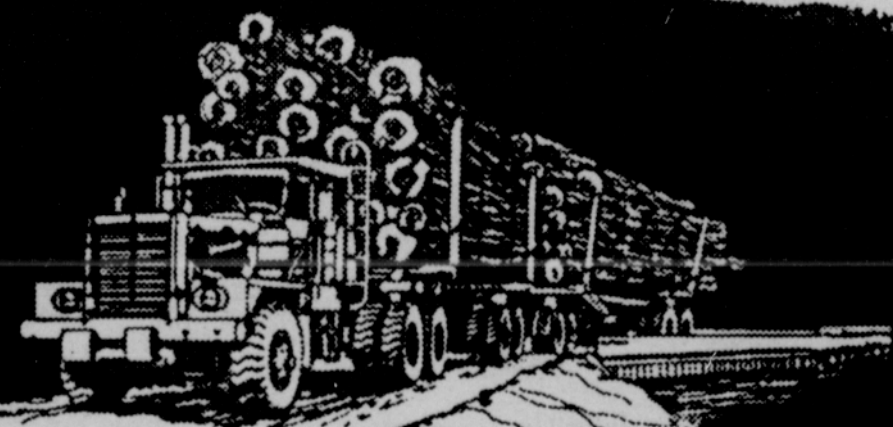
#### 2 No Declared Candidates

2 Write in	28	25.22	9
4 Trish Wright	89	97.80	39
4 Write in	2	1.80	0
5 Troy Horton	89	97.80	36
5 Write in	2	1.80	1

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