

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

Primary election may be cancelled, lack of voter interest cited

In an appalling disclosure that leaked from the halls of the capitol building in Salem, a distressed public employee revealed that a bipartisan effort by the state's most influential figures may result in the loss of representative government for Oregon citizens.

Governor Ted Kulongoski was quoted by an undisclosed source as asking, "Why should we hold any more elections when it's obvious that Oregonians don't want to vote?"

Another well-placed source confirmed that a meeting was held in February to discuss potential methods to replace existing systems that require voter participation.

According to the source, who would speak only on condition of anonymity, state GOP leader Kevin Mannix felt that voters had been given too many opportunities to act in a responsible fashion. "They've had more than a century to learn how to cast a ballot," he reportedly said. "It's time to say 'No more!' to irresponsible citizens."

Former Governors Neil Goldschmidt and Vic Atiyeh presented different views, with Goldschmidt suggesting a more "oblique" approach in order to maintain a satisfactory relationship with potential voters. Atiyeh was citing better uses for the revenues that have been wasted on invalid elections.

Portland Mayor Vera Katz had a different take on things, suggesting that patience was needed. She added that perhaps there should be a series of town hall meetings in order to seek public input.

Former Senators Mark Hatfield and Bob Packwood both felt that continuing to ask the public what they think is a waste of time, because the public isn't answering.

Though no one will speak for attribution, whispers in the capitol corridors indicate that negotiations are continuing on ways to eliminate voting and raise revenues by selling government to the highest bidder.

So, who is the April fool?



Ike Says . . .

By Dale E. Webb, Member
Nehalem Valley Chapter, Izaak Walton League



Wow, what beautiful weather we have been having! I took advantage of the sunshine and did some paddling on our local river. Down stream from Mist my paddling partners and I were treated to a mature Bald Eagle that sits in a large cottonwood tree along the river.

We are seeing more and more eagles in our area and I've heard that some people have seen up to five eagles at one time in the Fishhawk Lake area. I hear that having America's symbol living on their land distresses some people. I would think that they would feel privileged; it's not everybody who can claim that they can watch bald eagles from their front window.

The good weather we have been having has certainly provided a break for the Blacktailed deer in our area. The early spring gives rise to early plant growth, which is sorely needed by deer with Hair Loss Syndrome. It's hard to get a handle on how bad the HLS is this year. I have seen several deer with the syndrome, but I have seen fewer deer, altogether, and most have been older deer that are less affected by HLS.

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is still working through the process of gathering public input and refining its recommendations to the commissioners. I have heard, unofficially, that the inclusion of spike bucks as legal game during general season may be off the table. This is

good, in my opinion. Regardless of what regulations ODF&W adopts, the bottom line is that Blacktailed deer hunting will probably never be what a lot of us grew up with. What a shame!

While Oregon has been battling new wildlife diseases, we were not alone. Recently the state of Wyoming has discovered a mysterious killer of elk. Wildlife officials were alarmed when a coyote hunter returned from a trip near Rawlins and reported elk lying as if bedded, but unable to get up. The elk were starving, dehydrated and unable to move, except for their head, which they swung from side to side eating everything in reach. Officials discovered up to 300 elk that were either dead or in need of being euthanized.

Wildlife officials were really baffled by this sudden development. They had never seen anything like it and they scrambled in testing all possible ideas of what was killing the elk. Elk are a very hardy animal and it was baffling why some elk were dying and others in the same area were fine. Finally an answer was discovered after wildlife veterinarians noticed certain lichens in the stomachs of the dead elk. To confirm their suspicions, three elk in a research center were fed some field gathered lichens and they soon started succumbing to paralysis. The ground-dwelling lichen, known as *Parmelia molliuscula*, produces an acid that may break down muscle tissue.

But the question of the day was, why did some elk seem to be unaffected by the lichen? The answer was that the elk that were dying were not native to the area. They were from Colorado, some 50 miles to the south, and they

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