

OPINIONS

River Right: Where flows collide

BY TOM CARSTENS

The other day I was kayaking on the California Salmon River near Somes Bar where it joins the Klamath River. When two rivers collide, lots of interesting stuff happens. The water clarity and temperature can change dramatically, for example. Water currents also become jumbled up in unpredictable ways. Kayaks are inherently unstable so these swirling waters can be a problem. I have to complete a turn into the main stem current of the Klamath while the tributary flow is pushing me in a different direction. Conflicting surface waves and underwater currents join in the jostling. Confusing? It's rough and tumble, and I have to be careful as I edge into the turn. Eventually, though, the mighty Klamath overpowers the smaller Salmon, and I go where it shoves me.

This is a bit how I feel when I take a look at another one of our ballot initiatives coming up in November. This one would legalize recreational marijuana use in Oregon. On the surface, this doesn't seem like such a bad idea. A recent poll shows that a slim majority of Oregonians supports this next step in the decriminalization of pot. But not so fast—doesn't this fly in the face of federal law? The US Controlled Substances Act still lists marijuana as a "Schedule I Drug" with some pretty significant penalties. Article VI of the Constitution still says US law predominates over state law. To me, this resembles the big daddy river overpowering the teeny tributary.

What about our sister state, Washington—they've legalized pot, haven't they? Yes. But. There are a number of federal cases pending against growers there. Just last May, for example, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) raided ten rural pot growers near Kettle Falls. The eastern Washington district prosecuting attorney is charging each of them with six felony counts. A federal judge overseeing the case has ruled that they *cannot* use state law as a defense. The Department of Justice has already spent \$3 million on this case, which is expected to top \$13 million. Whoa!

Confused? In an attempt to clarify federal policy, the US Deputy Attorney General issued a memo a year ago to all federal prosecutors, which included the following: "Marijuana is a dangerous drug and...the illegal distribution and sale of marijuana is a serious crime. The Department of Justice is committed to enforcement of [federal

law]. Jurisdictions that have enacted laws legalizing marijuana...and that have also implemented strong and effective regulatory and enforcement systems... [are] less likely to threaten the federal [enforcement] priorities."

The memo lays out a baffling set of criteria that federal prosecutors should use in prosecuting marijuana cases, especially where the state government has legalized it. It's tough to follow, but it basically leaves the decision to prosecute up to the local district attorney. You can read it yourself: Google "DAG Memo 8-29-13." If you understand it, give me a ring.

The DEA isn't buying any of it. In April, the head of the DEA vowed to Congress that she would fight back against lax marijuana enforcement. The DEA's chief of operations has called states' legalization efforts "reckless and irresponsible." And, as we know here in the Applegate Valley, the DEA is more than willing to team up with the sheriff to run a raid or two.

But wait, there's more! Did you know that the US Securities and Exchange Commission has suspended trading with marijuana-related companies? And just this past May, the US Supreme Court unanimously declined to make an exception for even medical marijuana. Many local jurisdictions in Oregon are resisting medical marijuana dispensaries even though they're legal by state law. Local officials question the propriety of issuing a business license that violates federal law. In an attempt to clarify, the Oregon Legislative Counsel issued this guidance last November: "We conclude that while a municipality may not be required to violate federal law to comply with a conflicting state law, a municipality may not act contrary to state law merely because the municipality believes that the action will better carry out the purposes and objectives of federal law."

Say what?

To me, the whole thing looks a lot like the colliding flows of the dominant Klamath and the little Salmon: federal law overpowers state law and we end up getting jostled around.

And guess what? The next change in administration could be like a big storm brewing upstream, plunging us into a flood of federal prosecutions. I don't want to paddle in *those* waters!

See you on the river.

Tom Carstens • 541-846-1025

Government and climate change issues

BY ALAN VOETSCH

I was rather surprised by some articles I read in the Spring issue. Apparently, the agenda (resent the wealthy, but expect them to support us anyway) of the national media has landed locally and we're supposed to reap the benefits of what other Americans have earned. This is not the America I grew up in, and if that attitude continues this country will continue to fade away. If *you* want something, *you* need to work to achieve it. Don't expect Uncle Sam to hand it to you; that attitude sets all of us up for failure down the road.

Ask yourselves this: what does government produce? The answer: folks with their hands out.

Smaller and leaner is better than fat and bloated. My opinion: less revenue to Washington, DC; more revenue locally and regionally. We know better where it's needed than the career politicians 3,000 miles away. In fact, let's vote them out and install term limits. Actually, to be fair, I prefer a 12-year limit: two terms for senators, six terms for representatives.

I attended Senator Wyden's town hall meeting in Medford several months ago with one of my daughters and was shocked at the large representation of folks who attended as organized groups to protest against any kind of energy development and of course wanting to present their agenda of stopping climate change. If that showed who we are as a community then apparently 75 percent of us are environmental activists. I am deeply concerned by what I see and hear nowadays on this subject. Much climate "information" is just plain crap and presented entirely out of context with the intent of scaring us. The lies and manipulations by the climate alarmists are legendary. Any side that tries to tell me that "the science is over" or "the debate is over"

obviously has no real clue what science is. Science is a method of inquiry. It uses experiments that should have repeatable results when the same parameters are used within the experiment itself, no matter who performs the experiment. I've been an amateur astronomer most of my life and have always loved science. I want and expect truthful, rational discourse on this and all subjects of interest to my country. Scare tactics and refusal to hear opposing points of view are not science. Attacking anyone who disagrees with your message is not scientific.

Please read *The Greatest Hoax* by US Senator Jim Inhofe. He has worked on this issue for a long time and explains why the Little Ice Age and Medieval Warming Period are *very* important to this conversation. If you don't know what the UN's IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] is and what its agenda is, you need to read this book. If you don't know how big the tax increases will be to combat climate change, who the revenues will go to, and how little would be accomplished by those trillions of our tax dollars, read this book. If you don't know what the "Summary for Policymakers" is, read this book. If you are not aware that China is putting hundreds of new coal-fired power plants on line *every* year but would not be subject to the UN's climate agreement, you need to read this book. I guarantee that, finally, you will hear a rational, intelligent discussion of what we are up against.

Left Turn by Tim Groseclose is a book that details why the media is out of control. I think you'll be surprised with the amazing detail he uses to document his findings. Starts boring, but hang in there.

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