

OPINION

Response to "Time to tone down the rhetoric"

BY ED KUPILLAS

Laurel Sutherlin's opinion piece in the Winter 2010 issue of the *Applegater* was totally off base. And while decrying violent rhetoric, also uses some.

Actions speak louder than words (rhetoric), everyone needs to be reminded of numerous "actions" perpetrated by some members of the so-called environmental community over many years. Some have been violent and resulted in damage and destruction to private property. Some people have been injured. Remember tree spiking? Other actions have been "legal," but have resulted in harm to the livelihoods of good people.

In the category of damage to private property, we have the incendiary destruction of the U. S. Forest Industries office on Whittle Avenue in Medford. The same action occurred against Superior Lumber Company's office in Glendale. These are just two examples. There are many others. The one on Whittle Ave. is particularly poignant for me, because I retired shortly before the fire and what had been my office

was burned up.

In the "legal" category are the constant protests and lawsuits that many "environmental" organizations bring against mostly government agencies. These result in harm to people who rely on the utilization of natural resources for their livelihoods. "Environmental" groups also propose restrictions on natural resource use by supporting things like the Northwest Forest Plan which has set aside about 80% of the 24,500,000 acres in the Plan from timber management,

ostensibly to keep the spotted owl from going extinct. Spotted Owl numbers are still declining after 15 years and so are the forest products companies. Environmental groups propose large increases in wilderness areas and new monuments where timber harvest and cattle grazing don't occur.

In Arizona the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) does lawsuits on steroids.

A few years back they libeled a rancher when they tried to kick him off his range allotment. He sued the CBD and won \$600,000 in actual and punitive damages. The rancher included some of the perpetrators of the libel as well as the organization in the libel suit. One of them is now working for a local "environmental" group. The jury said CBD's press release contained "false statements" and "misleading photographs" and CBD had published it "with an evil mind." (Information supplied by Range Magazine).

Then there are the land grabs. The federal government owns about 1/3 of all the land in the U.S. In the western states it's around 67%. Yet our merry band of "environmental" groups wants the government to own even more.

Here cometh the proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument. With what

I have chronicled above (space does not permit a full display of outrages), is it any wonder that people affected by this have now had it "up to here"?

We are advised by Laurel Sutherlin "to take a deep breath." Many of us have been breathing deeply for decades and have always come up short. Now more people not directly affected before, are finally coming to the realization that extreme "environmental" organizations are not their friends. So, when one frustrated person at a recent meeting shouted a passionate statement, Laurel wrote "This kind of bombastic overstatement would be humorous if there were not a long history of violent threats from these same elements of our community." What? The long history, some little of which I have chronicled above, is not from whence Laurel alleges, it's the "environmental" community that has the long history of actual violence.

Come on folks, let's drive a stake through the heart of this monument proposal. Uh, oh, bombastic language.

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Bigleaf tapping

BY LAIRD FUNK

There's syrup in them thar trees!! Well, actually there's sap in those trees, the Bigleaf Maples which are our biggest west coast native maple. Besides providing wood for lumber and firewood, and pollen and nectar for spring bees our Bigleaf Maples provide another gift the sap to make real maple syrup!

Like east coast syrup, our syrup is made by boiling off most of the water in the sap, which has about 2% sugar, until the sugar level is 66.5%. A rough average of the amount of sap one needs to boil off to make syrup is 43:1 so a lot of sap is needed. Fortunately it is easy to get.

The process of tapping the trees is the same as for Sugar maples. While most are familiar with the old metal spile (spout) and bucket system for sap gathering, the modern tapper most often uses a plastic one and tubing to channel the sap to a sealed collection jug, keeping the sap clean and bug free. Using a portable drill a 7/16" hole is drilled 2.5" deep, slanted slightly upward to assist sap flow. The spile is inserted and tapped lightly into the hole and the tubing connected and routed to the jug. Sap will almost immediately flow out the hole into the jug. I had 18 taps which averaged 1/2 gallon during the afternoon flow periods. For

the sap to flow temperatures need to vary between freezing in the morning to warm in the afternoon (January and February). Without the freeze nothing happens.

I used a turkey roasting pan on an outdoor propane stove as an evaporator and boiled the sap down each day to just a couple gallons, adding it to the sap from the day before. There is a tremendous amount of steam so the process should be done outdoors (it has been known to peel wallpaper off kitchen walls!) The steam immediately has a maple odor which strengthens as the sugar increases and the color begins to change to yellow then dark gold to the final amber hue.

The method is not complex, but it takes time to reduce the sap properly. Happily it doesn't need a lot of company so other things can get done at the same time as long as one checks in often enough to keep the evaporator topped off. On the other hand, some folks are happy to just sit and watch steam all day. It's best to add sap at the rate it evaporates so that the temperature does not rise and fall.

A device called a hydrometer is used to check the sugar level although a refractometer makes the testing faster. As the sugar increases to 60%, calcium, magnesium and potassium in the sap coagulate

and precipitate out as "sugar sand" or niter, which clouds the syrup as it forms. It is easily filtered out using common milk filters, and then the syrup can be finished off over a lower heat and checked often so that the sugar does exceed the desired 66.5%. Above that level sugar crystals form and precipitate to the bottom of the bottle.

The result of all this is a classically sweet, dark amber liquid with a stronger maple flavor than Sugar Maple syrup. It is wonderful on your waffles and pancakes and a little drizzled over vanilla ice cream really allows the flavor of the syrup to come through.

While all this seems experimental here, on Vancouver Island, British Columbia an entire cottage industry has been growing for a couple decades and now has become a genuine source of added income for the owners of the woodlots and managed forests on the island. The value added to those forests by syrup making is a welcome addition to the traditional income from lumber and firewood and of course everyone loves the syrup! There is even a Bigleaf Maple Syrup festival in February!



For those interested, there is wealth of information available on the internet including a very useful book written by Gary Backlund and his daughter Katherine. "Bigleaf Sugaring, Tapping the Western Maple," covers the entire subject of Bigleaf syrup making based on their experience operating a 76 acre managed forest in Ladysmith,

British Columbia. I recommend it for a crash course in syrup making and a good source of info about where one gets sugaring equipment. Contact Gary at blmaple@telus.net.

I will be traveling to British Columbia to visit Gary this June and will buy a good supply of spiles, tubing and other things needed for tapping and will have it available at cost for people to get started tapping. In the meantime, go count your maple trees!

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