

OPINIONS

Critical considerations for our region's forest management

BY HALEIGH MARTIN

Many studies show that less than ten percent of mature and old-growth trees is left in the lower 48, and most of those trees are found in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) of Washington, Oregon, and northern California. The forests of the PNW, and of the Applegate Valley and southern Oregon specifically, are truly unique, and they deserve unique management to match.

As stewards and residents of these forests, we must encourage land managers to reassess forest policies to reflect the evolving needs of both our ecosystems and the communities that rely on them. The Northwest Forest Plan, a regional landmark conservation effort created in the 1990s, requires urgent revision to address crucial aspects overlooked in its initial formulation. Right now, the US Forest Service (USFS) is amending the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP) for the first time in over 30 years, so now is an excellent time for our public land managers to take into account numerous topics that were not addressed in the formulation of the NFP decades ago.

Tribal inclusion stands as a cornerstone of any land management consideration as we look toward the future. Indigenous communities possess invaluable traditional ecological knowledge and spiritual connections to the land. By integrating their perspectives into forest management decisions, we not only honor their rights to their lands but also benefit from their sustainable practices and deep understanding of local ecosystems.

The NFP must also confront the pressing issue of climate change. Rising

temperatures and altered weather patterns threaten the very foundation of our forests, exacerbating wildfire risks and jeopardizing biodiversity. Any amendment to the plan should prioritize strategies aimed at mitigating these impacts.

That is also why old-growth forest protection must be central to the NFP amendment. These ancient ecosystems harbor unparalleled biodiversity and serve as vital carbon sinks. Protecting remaining old-growth stands and promoting their regeneration is essential for maintaining ecological resilience in the face of climate uncertainty.

In addition to this, the devastating impacts of wildfires underscore the urgency of proactive forest management. Incorporating wildfire management strategies, such as controlled burns and fuel-reduction measures, can help mitigate the destructive consequences of increasingly severe fire seasons to protect our human and wildlife communities alike.

Amending the Northwest Forest Plan to prioritize tribal inclusion, address climate change, safeguard old-growth forests, and mitigate wildfire risks is not merely a matter of environmental responsibility but a necessity for the well-being of both ecosystems and communities. I urge the USFS to utilize this opportunity to amend the NFP in the most forward thinking and holistic manner to keep the local communities, wildlife, and unique biodiversity of this region safe.

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Climate is a dominant force influencing the water and fire theme

BY ALAN JOURNET

The 2024 *Applegater* summer issue theme of fire and water is extremely timely! It is interesting to note, however, that such a theme could easily be subsumed under the umbrella theme of "climate change." Those residents of the Applegate Valley who reject the scientific consensus about climate change and deny that it is happening, must also reject the abundant and well-accepted data that demonstrate the reality of climate change.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate at a Glance website, the historic temperature trend for both Jackson and Josephine counties reveals a clear warming since the late 1800s at the rate of 0.2^o F per decade. Summers are warming faster than winters. Meanwhile, NOAA also indicates that precipitation has been variable but on average unchanging (though winters are trending wetter and summers drier). Meanwhile, the snowpack, graphed by the US Geological Survey (USGS), has been declining for several decades. These trends in combination depict a region where, for these decades, summer water availability has been declining and soils and vegetation, inevitably, have been drying much more than historically was the case.

If we now consider future trends for our two counties, as depicted by USGS, we find that the same projections—that have been tested historically and revealed to be accurate—suggest a continuation of these trends into the future. A moment of reflection will reveal that this continuation will pose problems for both future agricultural water availability, especially

during summer and fall, and future fire risk.

Failing to consider what the climate projections suggest as we explore future water availability and fire-risk trends is to ignore the most profound influence driving them. It would behoove all of us to cease the traditional focus on historic averages as the basis for identifying tomorrow's temperature expectations and start comparing our future temperature to the demonstrated trends.

It's true that what we do in the Applegate Valley will not have much influence on the driving force behind these trends (i.e., global greenhouse gas emissions and their increasing atmospheric concentration), but we can be cognizant of what those trends suggest for our future and adapt our way of life to prepare for the anticipated future conditions. We should also acknowledge that the projections are not inevitable; their fruition depends on our behavior. Thus, we probably should be good national, international, and global neighbors by reducing our contribution to the problem (i.e., by reducing our emissions) as much as possible.

It's worth repeating the last thought; while the evidence suggests that these recent trends are evident today and will likely continue, they are not inevitable. Our future is collectively in our own hands.

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Love your enemies

BY JIM REILAND

I'm in a book club in the Applegate that is interested in public policy issues. Two of us identify as libertarian or conservative, and two as liberal or progressive. After reading a book or collection of articles we meet to talk about the proper role of government on a range of issues.

We relish the opportunity to talk "across the aisle." Despite ideological differences we agree far more often than we disagree, and even then disagreement is usually a matter of degree. Each topic and discussion introduces new information and perspectives that have helped me to moderate views and better understand what the "other side" values.

We recently read a book that addresses the division in America. *Love Your Enemies: How Decent People Can Save America*

from the *Culture of Contempt* is by (self-described) conservative social economist Arthur C. Brooks.

The title might suggest this is a "let's hold hands and sing Kumbaya" sort of book, but it's not. Brooks offers an explanation for today's divisiveness and, more importantly, a clear guide to disarming the contempt that feeds the downward spiral of relations between people who disagree.

He introduces readers to "motive attribution asymmetry," which is "the phenomenon of assuming that your ideology is based in love, while your opponent's ideology is based in hate." Then Brooks cites a 2014 article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that reported a study that found

"a majority of Republicans and Democrats today suffer from a level of motive attribution asymmetry that is comparable to that of the Palestinians and Israelis."

And that was before the 2020 election and today's conflict in the Gaza Strip!

In the next pages we learn what contempt looks like. According to another researcher Brooks interviewed, John Gottman at the University of Seattle, "If you want to make a lifelong enemy, show him contempt." Gottman says, "The indicators of contempt include sarcasm, sneering, hostile humor, and—worst of all—eye rolling. These little acts effectively say 'You are worthless.'"

Have you ever done that? I have.

The last chapter contains the author's "Five Rules to Subvert the Culture of Contempt." However, earlier Brooks writes what to me is the core message—the three major lessons from the science of morality that challenge

the culture of contempt and bring people together:

1. Focus your arguments on the moral values we share—compassion and fairness—rather than those held by only one part of the population.

2. Be wary of manipulative leaders in politics and media who use the moral dimensions where we disagree as a wedge to divide us and fuel contempt.

3. Divergent moral values are not a bug in the human system. They are a feature that can make us stronger.

If you're interested in having open, productive conversations with people—family, neighbors, friends, coworkers—who hold different beliefs, check out this book.

My book club gave it four thumbs up; we are recommending it to everyone!

Jim Reiland

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Volunteering at Sanctuary One is more than a job; it's a calling

Every Monday since retiring, my wife and I look forward to our four-hour shift at Sanctuary One, a place of natural beauty, amazing animals, and wonderful, caring people. A place of healing, tranquility, and service, it is truly a little gem right here in the Applegate Valley.

My wife and I spend most of our time working with the dogs. But there are other opportunities too: working in the gardens or working with cats or farm animals. And plenty more.

There are currently several goats, two horses, three pigs, and a duck residing at the farm. The animals and facilities need volunteers to aid the staff in keeping things running smoothly. Shifts are flexible, with opportunities available seven days a week. You don't need to be retired to get involved.

It is amazing, meaningful work for a happy little community of staff and volunteers of all ages. Check out the website at sanctuaryone.org. Sign up for a tour of the farm or reach out directly to janelle@sanctuaryone.org to discuss volunteer

opportunities. You'll be glad you did. "People, Animals, and the Earth. Better Together." Tom Eckert, Jacksonville, OR

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More information about Abe Lincoln votes in Oregon

I am responding to the article "Josephine County votes help Abraham Lincoln win the election" [page 19, *Applegater* spring 2024]. I have no qualms with most of the article and certainly know that southern Oregon in the 1860s was heavily Democratic. My disagreement is with the final statement that there were only three votes from Oregon for Abe Lincoln. If you are talking electoral votes, you would be correct, but not actual votes cast. Oregon had only three electoral votes in 1860, and they were cast for Lincoln.

Up in Umpqua County (now Douglas County), Jesse Applegate was the leader of the new Republican Party. When they formed in 1859 their platform avowed the strongest devotion to the union. The convention stood squarely against slavery.

See *LINCOLN VOTES*, page 23.