

SOS Success !!!

On September 4th, the Klamath Falls City Council voted 5-0 to include Conger Heights in the City's park system. This outcome is in great part due to the work of the Save Open Spaces (SOS) ad hoc committee. SOS members spent many hours in meetings amongst themselves and with various City officials and staff. Jeff Ball, City Manager, was instrumental with background activities which led to the positive vote.

This is a great example of citizens and government working together at problem solving. The problem was a lack of funds for parks operation and maintenance. The City proposed the sale of Conger Heights and other properties to provide O&M funds. Selling Conger would have been a short term fix and not a solution to the problem.

Todd Kepple ferreted out the plan shortly after the first of the year and told Dwight Long what was going on. Dwight has been organizing one thing or another since 1962 and immediately recognized this was a hot button issue which would bring people crawling out of the woodwork.

He wrote up a quick note about what was happening and sent it out via Klamath Sustainable Communities email list. The rest, as they say, is history.

On February 1st the first "official" SOS meeting was held, and about 25 people came. On February 3rd a protest march on Conger Heights drew about 40 people.

On February 5th about 100 people attended the Council meeting in protest of the sale. The Council agreed to table the proposal for six months with the stipulation for the community to come up with alternative funding. During the next few weeks City and SOS folks listed and evaluated funding options. On April 10th the Council discussed funding options and wanted to move forward with a surcharge on City water. This allows non-city residents to participate in funding City parks. On June 6th the Council discusses a 6% surcharge on water service and agrees to pass an ordinance at their next meeting. On June 18th the Council passes the surcharge dedicated to funding parks. It took effect October 1st.

A great piece of work by all who were involved. Who says you can't take on City Hall? Cooperation and communication allowed this to successfully unfold. About 30 people celebrated our success at Conger Heights "park" on September 26th.

Electronics Recycling in Klamath

Unbeknownst to most Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) members, Klamath County is accepting electronics at transfer stations and the County landfill. Charges to drop off major items are listed below. What is included in miscellaneous was not discussed at the last SWAC meeting but likely includes answering machines, game stations and other obsolete electronics. Call the County Solid Waste Division at 883-5121 for more information. Be prepared to deal with one of those confounded automated phone answering systems. Good luck!

Computers:	\$10.00 ea Complete System
	\$5.00 ea Tower
	\$5.00 ea Monitor
TV:	\$5.00 ea Small (0-13")

Stereo: \$10.00 ea (Console)
Misc: To be determined on site.
Bottle glass is still being accepted at the landfill and all transfer stations.

Did You Know?

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month stresses the importance of early diagnosis of breast cancer. But what about preventing the causes of cancer? Are chemicals in our environment linked to breast cancer?

Four recent studies demonstrated that pesticide exposure can be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer.

In these studies, seven insecticides and one herbicide were linked to breast cancer. While five of the insecticides are now banned, two are still in wide use - malathion and lindane. The herbicide 2, 4-D, which is used in lawn products and agriculture, was also linked to breast cancer.

Most breast cancer research focuses on treatment. In order to reduce breast cancer, research should also look for underlying causes.

If this concerns you, tell our top health officials that more money and more research should be directed towards understanding the connection between breast cancer and the many chemicals in our environment, including pesticides. Information about sending a message to top health officials is also included. NW Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides 10-06

www.pesticide.org/hhg/breastcancer.html

Things You Didn't Know

- Dawn of the dump: The oldest trash heaps, called middens, are in South Africa and contain shells about 140,000 years old.
- In 500 BCE Athens created the first municipal dump, requiring trash to be disposed of at least a mile from city walls.
- Today, Americans generate 472 billion pounds of trash every year; including 96 billion #'s of food — more than 300 pounds per person. And that's about 2 % of the total waste stream. The rest is industrial refuse including mine tailings, agricultural waste, construction debris and exotics like "pickle liquor" which is used to clean steel.
- One quart of oil improperly disposed of can pollute 250,000 gallons of drinking water.
- Each year, consumers in the U.S. spread 300 million pounds of chemical insecticides, including ones the EPA says may impair the nervous system, disrupt hormones in the body and cause cancer.
- Americans throw away about 50 billion aluminum cans each year; about 140 cans per person. If you dug up all of the cans discarded in the last 30 years, they'd be worth nearly twenty billion dollars!
- Americans receive roughly 100 billion pieces of junk mail each year. They don't have to: call 888 5 OPTOUT to get your name removed from some junk mail lists.
- In 2002 marine researcher Charles Moore surveyed 500 square miles of the North Pacific and

- We are not the only ones making a mess. Pack rats generate mounds made of sticks, plant fragments, dung and rocks cemented together with their own urine. These trash heaps can last up to 40,000 years.
 - Landfills are the Number 1 human generated source of methane, belching 7 million tons of methane into the atmosphere each year.
-

What Will You Choose?

By Scott Stouder

Cottonwood trees lining the river breaks slashed the September high country of Alberta like wildfire with their autumn colors, and the green timbered hills were quilted with fluorescent jigsaw splashes of aspen.

It was the mid-1970s, only a few years before timber and oil companies swept through Canada's then-wild country south of Grande Prairie leaving a mangled web of clear-cuts and roads in their wake. And a decade before a paved highway sliced this wild home of wolves, grizzlies, elk and moose.

At the time, beavers were the only industrialists at work here.

Below my panoramic view from an aspen ridge, an unnamed valley curved toward the Cutbank River where the water flowed north to the Big Smokey and Peace Rivers, then on to the McKenzie and the Arctic Ocean.

The valley floor spread out like an engineering project sectioned with layered stick and mud beaver dams surrounded by willow and grass meadows.

It was prime home sites for moose and songbirds, but watching the morning sunlight wash across the valley I felt I like I'd arrived late to a party. The feeling nagged as I balanced my rifle in my hand and started downhill.

Breaking out of spruce trees a few hundred yards above the windless valley floor, the land seemed to hold its breath. Water lay in the tiered dams like blue, molten glass. Nothing moved nothing.

I paused in shadows watching for dark shapes of large animals, but the feeling that something was missing returned. I watched the silent valley. It was treeless and abandoned.

At one time poplars had lined the creek and blanketed the surrounding hills. But no bright autumn colors lit this little valley now. The further I walked, skirting beaver dams and stepping over layers of felled trees, the more I felt I was touring the remnants of a lost civilization.

This had once been a busy community. Beaver—lots of them—had been in this valley for decades. But now the mounds of stick-huts sat silently in the water like vacant homesteads. Sharp stumps and corpses of skinned trees—evidence of the once-bustling beaver industry—lay weathered-gray and deteriorating.

They'd constructed dams, built lodges, fell trees and raised young. Then they'd built more dams, fell more trees and raised more young. And more, and still more. As the community prospered, they

Once they'd cut the valley floor, they began clear-cutting the hillsides as far as they could reach. But they finally ran out of trees. Trees to beaver are like bunchgrass to elk, browse to mule deer and milkweed to swallowtail butterflies. Without trees, beaver don't live.

In the years since the oil and timber companies invaded that wild country and I quit hunting in Alberta, I've often thought about that little valley.

Castor canadensis are peculiar animals. Chewing down trees is more than learned behavior. Beavers have to chew because their large incisor teeth, which are self-sharpened with a hard enamel front and soft dentine back, never stop growing and must be constantly ground back to a manageable length. If a beaver doesn't chew wood, its teeth will elongate, force open its mouth permanently, and cause it to starve to death.

Beavers have been shaped by evolution to chew to live. This natural compulsion can literally drive them to eat themselves out of existence.

Humans seem compelled to an equal dichotomy. We continually strive to find more ways to provide more food and shelter for more humans. This compulsive act has many consequences, but the inescapable one is that it increases our own numbers. Human habitat spreads over a wider scale of time and space than beaver, but the principle is the same: If a species' population continues to increase, resources will eventually be exhausted.

Author Daniel Quinn, who wrote *Ishmael*, the groundbreaking book on the genesis of modern civilization, makes the case that humans evolved for millions of years as hunters and gathers, but about 10,000 years ago became totalitarian agriculturalists. In *Ishmael's* sequel, *The Story of B*, Quinn says this shift, which began in the area now known as Iraq, was the turning point in civilization that set humans on a path of unsustainability.

"What these founders of our culture fundamentally invented for us was the notion of work. They developed a hard way to live," he writes in *The Story of B*.

Quinn theorizes that humans transformed from foraging natural foods to harnessing themselves to fields and factories not because of a need for food, but to gain power over other cultures and the natural world.

Today, after centuries of power struggles, we are faced with the byproduct of that thrust. With 6.5 billion humans propagating geometrically on this planet, we are manipulating genetics, spraying chemicals and wildly wringing life from the natural world to increase power and food production in an ultimately futile effort to feed, clothe and shelter more and more people.

There are differences (besides dental) between humans and beavers. When beavers overpopulate and eat their way out of a home in one place, they are limited in expansion by suitable habitat, so their cycles of boom and bust occur in confined areas. In contrast, we extend our consumption to other regions and continents until none of the Earth escapes our voracious habits.

But as we congratulate ourselves on our technological cleverness, we might keep in mind the simple lessons nature gives us. Beavers don't have a choice. They must chew to live. We have a choice. We don't have to accept the continued expansion of our own numbers or unsustainable consumption. We can change both.

I was young when I hunted that beaver valley in Alberta. At the time I simply wondered at its largeness and emptiness. I wasn't yet thinking of the bigger implications of the story it held. But I've

—Scott Stouder, an avid hunter and angler is a freelance writer and the Idaho field coordinator for Trout Unlimited. He has also worked as a newspaper columnist in Corvallis, Oregon, and as the editor of Mule Deer magazine.

Product Plunder of the Week: WAL-MART "ORGANICS"

This week, the OCA announced a boycott against Wal-Mart for refusing to respond to formal complaints that many of its stores are placing "organic" signs next to products that are not organic. The Cornucopia Institute filed a complaint more than 60 days ago, and neither the USDA nor Wal-Mart have taken any action to fix these problems. Six months ago, the OCA called on Wal-Mart to stop selling cheap factory-farmed organic milk from Horizon and Aurora, and to increase the amount of domestically grown organic products on its shelves. Currently, Wal-Mart is selling cheap "organic" food by sourcing products from China, Brazil, and other nations, where labor and environmental standards are lax. Over the past year Wal-Mart has lost 2-8% of its USA customers. Please join the OCA boycott. OCA 1-25 Organic Bytes

Learn more: http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_3809.cfm

The Meat You Eat is Cranking Up the Heat

The United Nations has sent tremors through the livestock industry with a new report that states, "The livestock sector emerges as one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global." The report shows that livestock production accounts for more greenhouse gases than automobiles. For every calorie of meat consumed, at least ten calories of fossil fuels were required to produce that meat. Animal agriculture takes up 70% of all agricultural land, and 30% of the total land surface of the planet. Today, 70% of "slash-and-burned" Amazon rainforest is used for pastureland, and feed crops cover much of the remainder. The ultimate ramifications of the report suggest that the average American can do more to reduce global warming emissions by adjusting their meat eating habits than by switching to driving the most fuel efficient car currently on the market. Negative environmental impacts can be greatly reduced by reducing (or eliminating) meat consumption and buying locally grown and sustainably produced meats, dairy and animal products. OCA 1-25 Organic Bytes

Learn more: http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_3853.cfm

Klamath Basin Coalition for a Livable Future
Working Meeting
Monday, October 22nd; 6:15 PM
Winger's Restaurant on Washburn Way

This will be a "working meeting" to plot a course for the several projects on which we are working. The more people we have working on projects the more we can accomplish. Your participation is

Membership & Donations Requested

Klamath Sustainable Communities (KSC) was started as a collaboration of local League of Women Voters and Audubon chapters. More recently KSC was taken under the wing of the Klamath Basin Coalition for a Livable Future (KBCLF) a not-for-profit corporation which was created by KSC folks.

This newsletter has been paid for with income from printer ink cartridges which are returned for reuse in envelopes from dispensers which we have placed at many locations in our community. For two years this income more than covered the cost of the newsletter. To the detriment of this effort, many organizations are also collecting cartridges and office supply stores collect them with one offering a credit toward future purchases.

Due to changing dynamics in cartridge returns income this year and last has not covered costs of printing and mailing this newsletter. As a result we are asking you to become a dues paying member of KBCLF. Enclosed is a membership form for your convenience in joining. Core Partners have voting rights, Associate Partners do not. Please fill it out and return it with a check to the address on the form.

**NEVER DOUBT
THAT A SMALL GROUP
OF THOUGHTFUL COMMITTED CITIZENS
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.
INDEED IT'S THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS.
Margaret Mead**