

Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CELEBRATE TONIGHT

JEDI celebrates 15 years of service

I am writing to announce a special event in our community. On Thursday, May 31, the Jefferson Economic Development Institute (JEDI) will celebrate 15 years of developing and supporting small business enterprise in Siskiyou County. In an era of headline-grabbing IPOs, overnight billionaires and mega-corporations and all that goes with that, small business remains the heart and soul of economic growth, opportunity and employment in the vast majority of communities across America, including ours. For the past 15 years, JEDI has helped would-be entrepreneurs throughout Siskiyou County realize their dream of establishing and maintaining a successful business.

JEDI also provides free income tax preparation each year for individuals and families in our county. Since 2007, JEDI staff and volunteers have prepared nearly 3,000 tax returns – all at no cost.

Day in and day out, the JEDI team works steadily and competently outside the limelight to serve our business community and develop our economic base.

On May 31 from 6-10 p.m. at the Mt. Shasta Brewery in Weed, JEDI will celebrate 15 years of service. I invite you to attend this celebration. Attendees will be treated to great food, music by the Sundown Poachers, a silent auction and a raffle with some amazing prizes. Tickets (\$15) and raffle tickets are available at the door and at JEDI (926-6670). Please join us – we welcome your attendance.

– **Bob Polkinghorn**
JEDI Board member
Mount Shasta

FISH SCIENCE

Salmon decreases explained

Agriculture, hydroelectric dams, algae, boating, fishing and a plethora of other assertions have been made regarding the decrease in salmon landings in California and Oregon since 1970. There is no doubt that salmon landings have decreased since 1970; however, science clearly shows that these cold water fish prefer cool water and will always migrate to waters that are more conducive for spawning.

First let us review the history of salmon landings in the Klamath Basin. In the California Division of Fish and Game 1930 report, Bulletin #34, it states that in 1916 there were 35,000 salmon counted and in 1922, after the dam was built, they counted 90,000 salmon returning to the Klamath. This could be explained in that the reservoir allowed sediments to settle out, supplying cleaner

water for spawning salmon. In 1970 the total landings of all salmon species in the Pacific Northwest was 195,000 metric tons and in 2007 the total was 403,000 metric tons. In the 70s, the total percentage of Salmon landed in Alaskan waters was 75 percent and in the 90s, was 95 percent. This clearly indicates that hydroelectric dams and hatcheries have done nothing but increase salmon landings in the Pacific Northwest. The scientific data indicates that the historic rise in temperature of the Pacific Ocean has driven these cold water fish north into cooler Alaskan waters.

Other aspects of lower salmon landings in California and Oregon can be attributed to the Endangered Species Act, protecting predatory seals, and the Caspian Terns in Oregon, gill netting across the Klamath and heavy commercial fishing off the coast. This article will not go into these specifics as ocean temperature rise is the primary factor.

No human activities have caused the decrease in salmon landings in California or Oregon waters.

Once again, agriculture, hydroelectric dams, algae, boating, fishing and a plethora of other assertions have been made regarding the decrease in salmon landings in California and Oregon since 1970 and are without any scientific evidence.

– **Dr. Richard Gierak**
Klamath River

PROP 14

Open primary requires your vote

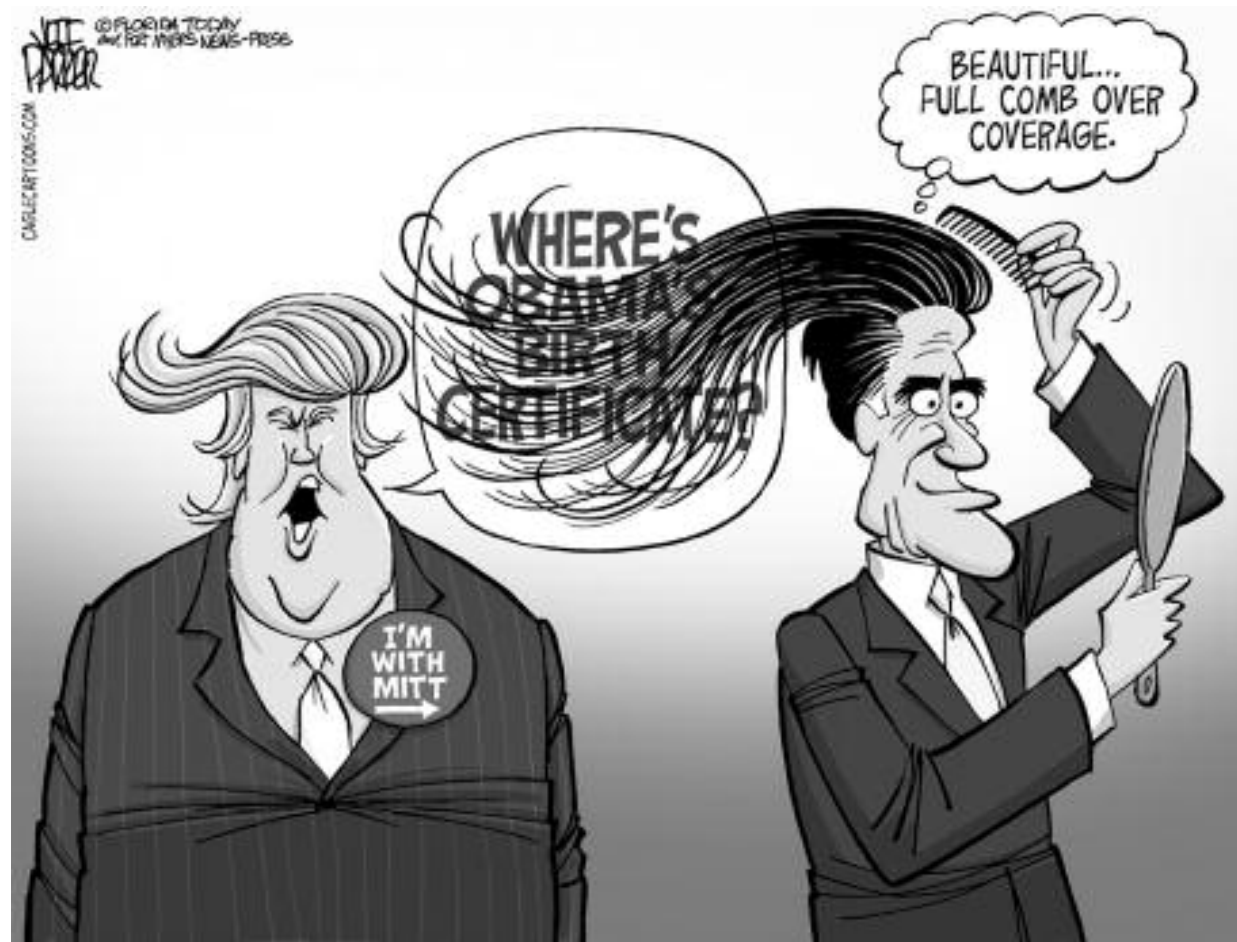
In 2010, California voters approved Proposition 14 which changed future primary elections for congressional, state legislative and statewide offices by creating an “open primary.”

Under an open primary system, voters will no longer be limited in choosing among candidates from their own parties. This will put the top two vote-getters in primary races for congressional, state legislative and state-wide offices, regardless of political party, in a run-off in the general election in November.

This process does not guarantee that there will be a Democratic candidate on the November ballot. It could be a Democrat and a Republican or two Republicans or two Democrats.

There is only one Democrat on the primary ballot running for State Senator and State Assembly, District 1, and two for U.S. Representative, District 1. It is crucial for Democrats to vote in the primary election on June 5. The Democratic turnout in the June 5 primary could have a huge impact on the November general election ballot.

– **Democrats of North Siskiyou**



GUEST OPINION

Dr. Houser responds to Knight

For critical decisions such as dam removal, it is important to seek truth. Here I respond to Mr. Curtis Knight's May 23 attempt to obscure the facts.

1) Mr. Knight claims that my allegation has evolved. My Feb. 24 scientific misconduct allegation is in writing and has not been modified, and my interviews have closely followed the written allegation. I have provided opinions when asked, but these do not represent changes in the allegation.

2) Mr. Knight claims that my suggestion of a less-extreme option of removing 1-2 dams was bizarre. This suggestion was made in the context of advocating exploration of a wide range of options to meet the objectives. Also note that the dam removal proposal is also only a partial solution, as it excludes the removal of the Keno and Link River dams.

3) Mr. Knight alleges that I am biased because I was paid by dam removal opponents. I have not been paid for my allegation or public speaking, and I do not hold financial interests in the Klamath Basin. Since the story went public, my philosophy has been to accept all interview and speaking requests.

4) Mr. Knight claims that I am not a fisheries biologist. This is correct, but I have earned a PhD in hydrology and water resources, and have a 25-year scientific career, with many awards and over 100 referred publications. I do have extensive experience in water research, observation, modeling, management and fisheries.

5) Mr. Knight claims that I am offering a “politically-driven opinion in place of science-driven decision making.” I have stated that I do not favor or oppose dam removal, and that my motivation is to be a champion for scientific integrity. Politics has no place in scientific integrity.

7) Mr. Knight states that the dams offer no irrigation function, degrade water quality and offer no flood control functions. A recent hydrograph analysis shows that the dams help to regulate downstream flows and are actively used to help improve flows and temperature regimes for downstream fisheries. A 2006 PacifiCorp study shows that the dams help to improve water quality by increasing residence time and settling. By working with irrigators and fishery managers, the dams could be used even more effectively to enhance water quality, fisheries and agriculture. Unfortunately, these facts, as well as creative solutions, are not being actively considered.

8) Mr. Knight objects to my statement that dam removal is an uncontrolled experiment. If an experiment has more than one variable changing, or if there is no control, then it is uncontrolled. In the case of the proposed dam removal, there is no control and multiple independent variables are changing, so it is by definition an uncontrolled experiment.

9) Mr. Knight criticizes my assertion that scientists are often biased based on who they are paid by. I assert that funding is only one of the issues that cause science to be biased. The very questions and hypotheses that scientists study are often formulated to arrive at a predetermined outcome. For example, in 2010, California Trout commissioned a study to “estimate the economic benefits” of the KBRA. As one would expect with such a charge, the resulting report collated a number of economic benefits, while ignoring potential impacts to agriculture, land valuation, power production, etc. A better question could be asked that would give the public a real answer to the economic impact of dam removal. Unfortunately, sci-

entific integrity issues run even deeper than this simple example. Decision makers often use science to support predetermined decisions rather than using science to help inform decisions. Decision makers, scientists and peer-reviewers may have conflicts of interest, and biased media reports can skew public understanding.

10) Mr. Knight concludes that dam removal is the preferred alternative for the Klamath River because the peer-review says it is. The panels conclude that removing the dams without addressing the water quality issues, reducing disease, enabling free migration to the upper basin, preventing hatchery salmon from not overwhelm spawning grounds, reducing predation to sufficiently low levels, accounting for climate change, addressing reductions in fall flows, and mitigating long-term sediment impacts, has a low chance for success. Further, there are significant conflicts of interest in the peer-review panels, and the evolution of the expert panel reports from their draft to final forms highlights some significant outside influences.

The outcomes of dam removal on this scale and in this unique environment have significant risks and uncertainties. A positive outcome is not guaranteed and a tragic outcome is possible. Decision makers need to be aware of these risks and uncertainties, and account for them in their decision-making process. By only reporting the positive aspects of dam removal without the uncertainties and additional needed mitigation, the meaning of the science is perturbed, which may lead to poor decisions.

– **Dr. Paul R. Houser**
Associate Professor,
George Mason University

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Barack Obama, The White House, Washington D.C. 20500, (202) 456-1414

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