

Tillamook Environment: What Went Wrong with Commissioners' Labhart, Hurliman, and Josi

A few weeks ago, Senator Ron Wyden sent me a letter addressing the Stanfill Family habitat concern. He stated he would send the Corps of Engineers to evaluate the Tillamook Bay tidewater aggregate berming.

The Corps of Engineers arrived "pocket poor", with no money to repair the fishery habitat. They will permit no one to do their work, the Bub Boquist gravel berm removal permit "not allowed."

We had a U.S. Senator give of his time to Small Town America and Commissioners' Hurliman and Josi didn't show up for work! They sent our new Commissioner Labhart unprepared to deal with these regional heavy-weights. Had Labhart known Federal rules he could have had a local judge issue permits in absence of the government department's failure to perform! Same as Judge Reynolds of Grant County, who overruled the U.S. Corps and Oregon Fish and Wildlife when floods damaged stream habitat and farm fields, and issued permits himself on the John Day river.

Fact: After a natural disaster the land owner himself, County Commissioners collectively, ODFW, and a judge have authority with Federal Congressional protection to clean and repair, without interference or penalty, "all levels." I know, I've been through three disasters.

We have brother-in-laws as County Commissioners use county money, without approval, to rebuild a levy on the Josi farm and ignore the Bub Boquist obstruction downstream and the Cummins Farm damage displacement upstream.

While county expenditures is in question, the money, whatever the source, was well spent. The flood bypass route "floodgates" point to downtown Tillamook. The Bub Boquist berm removal is of the same nature and could deliver, at no charge, enough gravel to repair all county roads while also reducing floodwater impact on businesses in the city center. Less, of course, there were hateful goals on FEMA procurement of ALL in city flood properties which would justify our Commissioners lack of involvement!

For those who don't know Bub Boquist, he is the farmer that loaded 129 flood dead cows from the Blazer Farm and sent them to a Seattle Rendering Plant. He "himself" knew the family that lost everything and could not handle their whole life laying dead among the flood debris. He is the farmer that would remove gravel at no charge to give the county for road repair. His "community goal" is to keep farmers from losing their farms and cows by assisting with river maintenance and habitat improvement programs in support of the land, soil, & water.

This year many farms suffered damage! The Snell farm lost their heifers to flood waters while helping the Rocha farm save their animals. The water rose faster than they could load and relocate.

Our Commissioners have shown that they do not support the farmers and are wasting our fishery, wildlife, and forestry through lack of direction.

Our Tillamook State Forest uses herbicides so efficient that it kills all foliage and seeds for 3 years. The clear cuts that used to be green are now brown or gray. This application was not the science in the Forest Diversification Management Plan. Are we not the pulpits to a forest income ghost "tree farm" for school dollars we never see; approved by our County Commissioners with no plans to change?

We destroy and re-arrange, for lack of food, all forest wildlife. We undermine departments already in place and cripple ODFW responsibility to maintain fisheries and game management through political interventions created by special interest groups, that may be good or bad, that we ourselves are not members of.

We are lead by our leaders to differ amongst ourselves on issues that make no sense. We fix the Josi Farm, but not the others. We had two years of the Government taking private land called "Safe Harbor" to protect our fish, and now we feed them to the birds. We have a rain forest converted into a tree farm that forces wildlife to graze by the side of the road, which we kill with our vehicles or shoot in farm fields. Makinster road, our county's worst, has a gravel berm three hundred feet away, and are not allowed to use it. We invite the Corps of Engineers and don't show them the damage. Certainly, I'm concerned what we are teaching our children!

On social issues, our Commissioners do "fair to good", on our environment "poor", and our wildlife "bad." My advice to Commissioner Labhart! Your roots are from a county where all people stand together. You need to lead the people. Don't spray your neighbors yard with forestry herbicides. To Commissioner Hurliman: if you are going to pull the wagon I suggest you harness up! To Commissioner Josi: had we given to ODFW, local money wasted on the new library, we could have a fishing and wildlife arena equal to Alaska!

Our Commissioners need to visit and meet with each group of tidewater farmers county wide. Tone Road, the county's worst habitat, would be a good place to start.

If I embarrass people like Rudy Fenk or step on toes, it is in respect to oath of office. The by, for, and of, is my cornerstone. I do not roll! These issues I have stated need to be heard!

My Opinion - Richard Stanfill, Tillamook, 503-842-4086

P.S. - While in the service at Fort Benning, GA, I wore a shoulder patch; it had a silver sword on a deep blue background, with words above that said "Follow Me." I was proud to wear it and wore it to Korea! Get used to the fact that my family supports County employees and school teachers, and has little respect for State level departments that destroy what we do here! Thank you for your concern!