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The Vineyards at Gimpl Hill: An Empty Promise and Dry Wells

Photo: John Bauguess

Most interested residents of Oregon probably assume that Measure 49 limited the wholesale development of rural land permitted under Measure 37. Its ostensible purpose was to compensate long-term rural landowners for a perceived loss of property value resulting from Oregon's land use restrictions. Landowners filed claims and, if granted, received permission to build homes on clustered lots, but the land remained zoned to maximize suitability of the remnant lot for farm or forest use. Measure 49 was seen by many as a reasonable compromise.

In 2007 dozens of Gimpl Hill residents objected to the development of "The Vineyards at Gimpl Hill" subdivision, a Measure 37 application for 33 five-acre lots. In 2009 a M49 Final Order was granted for nine home site approvals on five-acre lots, with a remnant lot of

131 acres. The land remained zoned F-2 (impacted forest). Neighbors and interested parties assumed that this was indeed the end of development on this site.

However, it appears that developers can take advantage of a "work around" available through rezoning. The owner of "The Vineyards," a real estate developer, has applied to the Lane County Planning Commission to amend the Rural Comprehensive Plan (RCP) to rezone the land as "non-resource." This would change the designation of the land from Impacted Forest Land to Rural Residential.

Apparently Measure 49 has no provision to enforce the intent of the law: to retain as much productive farmland as possible.

To rezone M49 F-2 remnant land as non-resource it must be deemed

unsuitable for farming or forestry. According to standard state and county data sources, "The Vineyards" is classified as predominantly "Agricultural Land." However, developers are allowed to commission expensive soils reports from soils specialist consultants, who serve as "experts" to contradict the standard data sources.

Developers usually spend months, if not years, compiling the "expert" reports they need to apply for projects. Once the county Land Management Division is satisfied with an application, it submits a report to the county Planning Commission (LCPC), usually with a recommendation for approval. About three weeks before the LCPC public meeting, notices are sent to property owners neighboring the subject property. Most citizens lack the financial resources or the knowledge to respond so quickly

(Gimpl Hill, continued on page 2)

(Gimpl Hill, continued from page 1)

to the applicant's expensive "experts." The LCPC usually accepts the staff recommendation.

Dozens of Gimpl Hill area residents, many the same neighbors who protested the original subdivision proposal in 2007, attended a February 7, 2017 LCPC meeting to testify against the minor RCP amendment and zone change. The Gimpl Hill area is well known as a water quantity and a water quality impacted area, and, as this was a major issue for residents, the Planning Commissioners extended the review process for three months.

At the May 16 LCPC meeting Gimpl Hill neighbors presented an extensive database of well logs, historic water flow rates, well drilling, replacement wells, dry wells, and seasonal trucked in water purchases. This information contradicted the applicant's water report, a ten-year-old document—contested in 2007—the LCPC is willing to accept as contemporary data.

Richard Freund told the committee that, "...over the past 56 years water output has declined from 30 gallons per minute to 1/4 gallons per minute on my original well, and is only four gallons per minute on my current well. If this decline in water quantity is already happening at this rate ...the Vineyards

development ...could only worsen the already-existing water quantity problem near my home. "

Scott Palmer testified that his water levels have decreased and that five years ago he spent \$10,000 on a well that did not produce. At times he has stopped watering his gardens and fields. Palmer also mentioned fires that occur in the hot months when area wells run dry: "This area is prone to fire danger; there's no water to fight fire. It all has to be hauled in. There's not enough water to go around."

Houses behind the large gate at the entry to The Vineyards at Gimpl Hill are required to have a *minimum* 3000 sq. ft.; swimming pools are allowed.

Opposing the development is daunting because citizen testimony lacks the "authority" of expert credentials. A developer's expensive "expert" reports on soils, water, big game, traffic, and other issues are given prominent credibility. To review and contest these reports citizens must pool resources to hire lawyers, hydrologists, water masters, foresters, and soils consultants. Since the land cannot be inspected and no new reports submitted, the applicant's expensive attorney dismisses opposition testimony as "unscientific" and refers to the applicant's commissioned reports as if they alone have the final say.

In the end it remains up to the Planning Commission to decide what testimony to consider: that of a developer able and willing to spend whatever money necessary, or citizens with legitimate concerns for their community and its environment but with limited financial resources.

Atypically, neighborhood testimony in opposition was persuasive: the Planning Commission voted 5-3 to deny the application. The denial was based, however, on the commission's assessment of water availability to the development, not on the development's impact on neighbors' wells.

The application next goes to the Board of Commissioners, where it almost certainly will be approved. If/when that occurs, Gimpl Hill neighbors will surely appeal to the Land Use Board of Appeals(LUBA).

If the Vineyard's rezoning strategy is ultimately successful it will subvert the limitations of Measure 49 and validate similar land developments throughout Oregon.

Stephen Stanley
Gimpl Hill



Lauri Segel

Water Quantity and Quality: What, Me Worry?

For the past six months or so, LandWatch has been working with neighbors living in close proximity to a proposed 29 lot subdivision located off Gimpl Hill Road, on 176 acres of forest land approximately one mile outside the Metro Plan Boundary in southwest Eugene. Nine 5-acre sized lots were approved in 2007 as a Measure 49 (M49) claim.

Almost 10 years later, a new owner from California unrelated to the original owner, applied for a rezone of the tenth lot of 131 acres, referred to as a "remnant lot", from Forest to Non-resource. His intent is to split the "remnant" into 18 lots on what was once property tax-deferred hay growing and cattle raising farmland. Stephen Stanley, a Gimpl hill neighbor, has

explained the impacts the development would impose on this "water quantity limited" area and what neighbors are doing to oppose it.

Meanwhile, a few miles away off Bailey Hill Road, other neighbors are concerned that a proposed 4 lot subdivision on 60 acres, recently rezoned from Forest to Marginal after receiving decades of property tax deferrals, will have a detrimental effect on their water availability. Many have experienced ground water drawdown and have had to drill new wells. For this application the county has indicated it won't require an aquifer study in conjunction with the land division, as mandated for the Gimpl Hill development, because they say their regulations don't require them to do so. However, lands zoned for farm and forest use were never intended to provide for the domestic water needs of large single family dwellings. Therefore, it is shortsighted at best to ignore the contributions of rezoning and land divisions to the County's increasing ground water deficit.

In addition to these rezones and subdivisions, the county approves dozens of forest template dwellings every year, all without water availability related criteria. The only condition of approval is that a well exists, not what it's able to pump, or that a permit to drill a well be obtained from the state.

These forest template dwelling approvals are more often than not on lots/parcels of less than ten acres, although it isn't unusual for them to be less than five. However, the minimum sized lot/parcel that can be created by a land division in the F2 zone (which allows forest template dwellings by special use permit) is 80 acres. Thus, many more dwellings with domestic water needs are being approved and developed on forestland than the zoning for such dwellings ever anticipated and with no regard for groundwater availability.

As the Land Management Division is currently amending Lane Code, perhaps it will see fit to revise its list of water quantity and quality areas, which hasn't been updated since 1983.

Meanwhile, instead of taking a hard look at the epidemic conversion of resource land to residential uses on small lots and parcels and its effect on the carrying capacity of areas such as Gimpl Hill, so far the Lane County Planning Commission's response has been, simply, "buyer beware."

Members are appointed by Lane County Commissioners. Voters, be aware.

Lauri Segel





Phil Robbins

Parvin Butte Up Close and Personal

It's been over five years since my neighbors and I fought the destruction of Parvin Butte in Dexter by Greg Demers and the McDougal brothers and lost at every level of the legal process. From all the hearings one image stands out for me: of Greg Demers standing at the back of Harris Hall nonchalantly watching as an elderly woman broke down in sobs, unable to complete her testimony about the impact of his project on her nearby business – a care facility for veterans with PTSD.

I got involved because about a month before Demers and company bought Parvin Butte for about \$300,000 my wife Jan and I bought a farm about a quarter mile away for a bit more. I noted that there had once been an old quarry at the Butte, but it's all quiet there now said the realtor.

Quiet was what I was looking for. I wanted to be a farmer, the final occupation resort for a nearly deaf guy who can't tolerate noise and can't see very well. I had been a stonemason, deck builder and general contractor. I had worked as a logger, forestry contactor, crew supervisor and manager. I was a volunteer fireman and a forest firefighter. I worked as trail crew foreman for the Forest Service at Mt. Hood, the Columbia Gorge, Mt. Rainier, Mt.

St. Helens and Glacier Peak in the North Cascades. I served as a guidance counselor at Angell Job Corps on the Oregon Coast. I developed some ocean view lots and built three houses. I enjoyed the work.

I did not choose to quit logging. Did not choose to quit fighting fires. Certainly did not choose to give up being a trail crew foreman, leave Job Corps or stop building houses. I was forced out of all these jobs, forced time after time to reinvent myself and start over because of damage to my hearing from industrial noise. Chainsaws, jackhammers, blasting, steel driving, helicopters, masonry saws—all helped destroy my hearing. It started, though, when I was two years old, riding around on my grandpa's Diesel Cat and watching the logs churn through the shrieking saw of his little mill.

Now I have a hearing loss of about 80 decibels with severe tinnitus and hyperacusis. I use powerful hearing aids 24-7. The hearing loss is bad enough—I'm practically deaf—but the tinnitus is the worst thing. The effects include fatigue, irritability, anxiety, insomnia, cognitive dysfunction, hyperactivity, hypertension, severe depression, suicidal "ideation" and a tendency toward self-destructive behavior. When I first heard about those effects, I figured they wouldn't all apply to me, but after 45 years of tinnitus I can say emphatically that they do.

What happened at Parvin Butte hit me very hard, and I took it very personally. I could not comprehend that in my search for a peaceful place to farm I had ended up ¼ mile from a noise and nuisance factory. It made no sense that I would roam among all those majestic mountains and then be content to settle next to this homely little landform—only to wince at the shrieks and clanks of the machinery as the butte is blasted into oblivion. Though I never officially joined Dexter Lost Valley

Community Association (DLVCA), the neighborhood group fighting destruction of the butte, I became deeply involved and became friends with my neighbors who opposed the project.

I couldn't hear well enough to follow the group meetings or the hearings. My wife Jan explained things at the meetings she attended with me, but she soon stopped going. She was concerned but not as impassioned as I was; and she felt that her job created a perceived conflict of interest if she spoke out against the project. As I plunged into the fight, she stepped back, and it created a great deal of tension between us. Our youngest son Sam was a senior at Pleasant Hill High School during the final hearings and decisions process. He also has a hearing loss, and he was extremely concerned about the impact he saw this debacle was having on me and our family life. Sam got involved and wrote letters, testified at hearings, gave videographer Tim Lewis an interview, and gave me considerable emotional support. He got a reality lesson in civics, as we all did.

As the outcome of the "process" became clear, and as hope died, I was full of bitterness that poisoned my relationships. In late September of 2013, I loaded Sam's stuff in my pickup one morning to take him to college at Eastern Oregon University far across the state from us. We gave Jan a ride into town and dropped her off at the U-Haul truck rental center. When I got back from La Grande the house was dark and silent. Everything of hers was gone and her closet was empty. The pictures of our three boys were gone from the walls and bookshelves.

I was alone, heartbroken and suddenly terrified, as panic attacks became part of my life. My income dropped from \$2,000 to \$17.57 per month at one point as Oregon Personnel Management mismanaged my retirement annuity. An ill-advised root canal surgery at McKenzie Dental went seriously wrong,



Carvin Parvin. Photo: John Bauguess

resulting in an emergency session on Christmas day and severe infection of my face, sinuses, head and neck. The antibiotics resulted in stomach infections and a month of severe diarrhea. After losing over 30 pounds, I was walking down the hall one day and passed out, apparently hitting my head on something solid on the way down. I came to after who knows how long, lying in a puddle of blood on what I determined after great effort was the floor. The rest of that day I sat in the rocker, still bloody, broken glasses gouging my nose, trying to remember where I was and who I was and why it even mattered.

Three years have passed since that winter of my terrible discontent. Jan is with me now. Sam is with us. He works nights at FedEx, then works on the farm a couple of hours and sleeps all day. He should be in college, but he's happy here looking after the critters. I have often longed to leave and not look back. The

farm has been for sale off and on during the past three years, and we've done a lot of work on the house. The berry crops and veggie gardens have continued to expand.

I've been a board member for seven years now of the Dexter Lake Farmer's Market, where my strawberries and fruit smoothies are very popular. The market has moved to Lowell this year from Dexter Lake State Park for a major expansion in Rolling Rock Park. Robbins Rock Farm is now selling at Rolling Rock Park. It was meant to be.

Still, I have no idea, really, if I can stay here another three years and put up with all that noise. Some days it's not too bad. Others it is, and maybe I get to feeling angry and bitter and have a bad day. Some days the noise just magnifies my tinnitus and I resent that. I hate seeing what's left of Parvin Butte as I look up from my fields or walk the roads around here. Jan and I spent four months this

past winter living in an apartment in Springfield to avoid my being stuck out here during the winter when it haunts me the most.

I didn't see the Tim Lewis film documentary series *All About Parvin*, but I heard that it includes me singing the song I wrote, "Carvin Parvin." When we recorded it, because of my poor hearing I had to bounce the guitar sound and my voice off a nearby wall in front of me. Otherwise, I had no idea if either were in tune. Needing a small room to record in, Tim chose the little half-bathroom near the den. There I was, leaning on the sink, one foot on the toilet, singing at the bathroom wall. I can only imagine the visual, and I try not to, just as I try not to think of the disappearance of Parvin Butte and the housing subdivision that will likely take its place.

Phil Robbins
Dexter

Lane County's Good Neighbor Policy

In 2007 Michelle Briggs appealed Lane County's approval of an auto body shop and skateboard park in the same "agriculture" building on F2 (impacted forest) acreage at 90858 La Lone Road in the Mohawk Valley. The owner, Bud Johnson, already had an auto body repair shop on Main in Springfield and lived on Deerhorn Rd. His sons would live on the La Lone property, and the shop and park would give them something to do and keep them and their activities well away from him.

Ms. Briggs and her neighbors offered compelling testimony regarding the noise, chemical pollution and accumulating vehicles and their parts from the auto repair work, as well as the skateboard crowds enticed by regional YouTube advertising. Vehicles transporting the skateboard enthusiasts regularly clogged La Lone Lane, creating an

impasse to neighbors and emergency vehicles. Ms. Briggs reported that one of Johnson's sons frequently brandished a gun on the road in an intimidating manner. Repeated calls to the county's enforcement officer, Jane Burgess, provided no relief.

Adding insult to injury, Hearings Official Gary Darnielle confirmed the county's approval; but he at least did so with the condition that no vehicles and parts would be allowed to amass on the property. On June 29, 2017, I sent a message to Darnielle, the County Commissioners, the Public Works Director and the Land Management Division Director regarding recent emails that I had received from Ms. Briggs.

The emails included links to promotional videos for a weapons coating business one of Johnson's sons added to his auto repair and skateboard enterprises two years ago:

youtu.be/oUB-jOCvGvY;
youtu.be/YEGRNTDP15E

Among other things, these promotions demonstrate that the accumulated vehicles shown in the aerial photo accompanying this article serve as more than found art sculpture and for the neighbors, one of whom is directly in the line of fire, considerably less than performance art.

According to one of the Johnson sons, a towing company provided the vehicles that would be blown up on site. One of the videos features a "Gender Reveal" party wherein a junked Honda is loaded with 10lbs of Tannerite and blue and pink chalk that will determine the gender of Johnson's child when the hulk is exploded by automatic or semi-automatic gunfire and sends up either blue or pink smoke. The smoke came up blue—a boy!

Various pieces of the Japanese auto are scattered into the woods it was towed near, many of them lodged in trees and providing amusement for the gathered men, women and children, including the delighted mother-to-be. Asked

what his son will be named, Johnson quips, "Rambo Terminator Johnson." The "cute" video's tagline is "Darrin and Rose have a baby on the way! This is the perfect way to tell the world what the Gender is! Please share."

The aerial photo shows the prospective victims; what it does not reveal are the roads Ms. Briggs says cut extensively through the wooded areas used by ATVs, motorcycles and, likely, some of the assault vehicles shown in the videos. Complaints to Ms. Burgess apparently fell on deaf ears, as no action was taken to stop these violations.

Ms. Briggs told me that while she was in her hot tub late one evening bullets coming from Johnson's property flew over her head. She said the sheriff dispatcher demonstrated what action she could expect from the department by asking her why she was in the tub so late.

I received the following response from the Hearings Official:

"Thank you for your letter. It is useful to know whether my conditions of approval are observed and whether they should be strengthened in some circumstance. I obviously cannot do anything about the situation until there is action taken by the county, either the planning department or the enforcement department, and that action is appealed to me. Another option is for the Planning Director to start a revocation process and that would come to me as well. I am forwarding your letter to both Lydia McKinney and Jane Burgess."

To date there's been no word from the commissioners or from Lydia McKinney, the Land Management Division Director. Jane Burgess retired in July.

Robert Emmons



Towed in relics ready for Rambo extermination



Gender determinator opens fire on Honda incubator



Forestland stewardship on La Lone Road in rural Mohawk Valley



One of the boys demonstrating Lane County's good neighbor policy and serving as a family role model



Tim Elsea

Interview With Tim Elsea

Tim Elsea was hired less than a year ago as Lane County's new Public Works Director.

LW: *As Director of Lane County Public Works, you oversee county roads planning, engineering and maintenance, vegetation control, land use planning and enforcement, parks planning and management and waste management. How do you juggle the demands of each department, particularly when they may be in conflict with each other and with the interests and demands of the public?*

TE: I've been in public service in Public Works for almost two decades now, but oddly enough it was never my intent for public service to be a career. After a stint in the Army, then working three part-time jobs to put myself through engineering school, I intended to make my fortune in the engineering consulting business. I worked for some amazing professional engineers who not only taught me the engineering business, but also taught me to revere the guiding principles and ethics of the profession.

The chance to work in the public sector was just an interesting challenge that presented itself when I was offered the job of Public Works Director/County Engineer for Bonner County Idaho. Neither the county nor I knew what we were in for, but it wound up being the most rewarding 6+ years of my career up to that point. First of all, it was fascinating, varied, rewarding work. I could literally be in a Board of Commissioners meeting, on a paving project, at our Hazohut and at one of our parks all in one day. I had opportunities to speak with state senators and state department heads, and testified in front of senate and house committees.

I didn't take a lot of time to look around me, but I knew it was the hardest, most rewarding job I ever loved. I was able to serve the community in which I lived, developing long range Capital Improvement Plans, responding to emergency situations, and I was able to have great conversations with salt of the earth, hardworking moms and dads who wanted to help build a better community. I began to see glimpses of the public involvement process and how fulfilling that could be, and I grew more professionally in those six years than I've ever grown in that timeframe before or since.

While I was there, a local radio reporter gave me some of the best advice I'd ever heard, words that often ring in my ears: "The public's business must be conducted in public." The reporter, Mike Brown, was generally a critic of the County, but he was very fair to me, and I'd like to think it's because he knew I was an honest guy who was doing my best for the taxpayers. I left that job to be the Utility Director for Schweitzer Mountain Ski Resort, a job that should have been my dream job, but within two years I knew I had to return to Public Service.

That's a long way around to get to your question. I'm able to juggle the demands of each division within Public

Works because of my varied experiences. I certainly couldn't have done it successfully in 1997 when I first took the job with Bonner County, but my experiences before and since working in both private and public positions have given me the ability to know where to focus my energies and when.

The Division Managers in Lane County Public Works are a tremendously talented and hard working group who are all leaders in their field. I'm also fortunate enough to have a background that includes overseeing Road and Bridge construction and maintenance, Municipal Solid Waste, Building Inspection, Parks, Engineering and Surveying. I may, for example, spend a lot of energy on Parks as we put together the Parks Master Plan, but my background allows periodic updates from most of the other divisions.

One of the things I speak with our team about is that the public is not an inconvenience for us; the public is the reason we exist, the reason we have jobs, the people who pay our light bills. Second, I've found in my career that most people simply want to be treated fairly. They want and deserve to know that whoever walks in the door before or after them will receive the same answer they do no matter their connections or social status. The public is pretty smart; they understand that we can't be everywhere at once, and, almost always, constituents will understand if we have more pressing priorities as long as we trust them enough to tell them the reasons.

LW: *What do you see as the role of Lane County Public Works in responding to peak oil and global warming; increasing soil, air and water pollution from both public and private policies and practices; increasing county population; decreasing water availability; decreasing land available for farms, forests, natural areas and open space?*

(continued on page 10)

(Elsea interview, continued from page 9)

TE: I believe we have two major responsibilities from which many others flow: First is to understand that our responsibilities really stem from recognizing and accommodating diversity. Embracing diversity means that we can no longer see the world as us versus them. It is a way of interacting on this fragile planet, knowing we are all in this together, and our actions inevitably affect others. But we have to act; we have to develop policies. We have to decide, for example, how we will maintain roads and bridges to help keep people safe on roadways, how we ensure equal access to parks and open spaces, and we can do so mindfully. We can and do use 100% renewable diesel in our heavy equipment, look at purchasing more fuel-efficient fleet vehicles, and explore more ways to remove recyclables, renewables and putrescibles from the waste stream. We can be strong partners in organizations such as Rivers to Ridges, participate in wetland creation as we do at Quamish Prairie, and make conservation part of our culture.

Our other major responsibility is to ensure we have a conscientious, dedicated, curious, well-trained and well-educated workforce. I don't simply mean ensuring we send someone to learn about the emerging technologies such as warm mix (vs. hot mix) asphalt, or keeping up on the newest ways to reduce waste in the waste stream, or even belonging to peer organizations so we can learn from others that face similar problems we face, although all of those are important. I also mean providing internal training for our operators to identify noxious weeds, teaching best management practices for working in and around riparian areas and forests, literally making diversity a topic in everyday conversations. If we can succeed in developing a culture of diversity we will have no choice but to create better policies for responding to environmental issues both locally and globally.

LW: Brent Walth's book, *Fire at Eden's Gate* describes how Oregon's nationally recognized land use program came to be largely through the passionate and courageous efforts of journalist and governor Tom McCall. Walth also reveals the forces at work from the program's inception to overturn regulatory protection of our rural lands. What land use controls, if any, existed in your previous places of employment, and how does their effectiveness compare to what you've seen so far in Oregon?

TE: Thanks for lending me *Fire at Eden's Gate*. It's a fascinating read, and it helps me gain perspective, which is often the hardest commodity to find in a new position.

In my career I've worked in Idaho, Montana and Washington prior to coming to Oregon. The land use controls in Montana and Idaho are likely pretty much as you might imagine: not very comprehensive. Washington, however, was a good primer for moving to Oregon. Washington passed the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990, requiring state and local governments to manage growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands. It also required the designation of Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) for cities and then regulated the services that could be provided outside of the UGA; e.g., a sewer system was specifically designated an urban service and could not be provided outside a UGA unless there was an imminent health threat. By my observation, though, Washington does not have the underlying culture of land protection and stewardship that Oregon seems to possess in its DNA; therefore, their land use controls are not as effective or comprehensive as Oregon's.

LW: You've recently moved to acreage in Marcola. How's the country life suiting you?

TE: My wife and I love Lane County. The time has flown by since I've been here, and my wife is a saint for allowing me to immerse myself in my work. She certainly understands that public service is for me more a calling than a job, and my first 11 months have been some of the most rewarding and fascinating months of my life. Marcola already feels like home.

Although I've lived and worked in large cities (Atlanta being one), in my heart I'm a country boy. The ability to unwind in the amazing Oregon forest every night when I get home is an unmatched treasure. We've had friends and relatives come to visit and they all use a common word: blessed. We are blessed to be in Oregon, and I'm blessed to be able to make a living serving my community and to work with such amazing professionals as our Lane County employees.

Tom Giesen June 25, 1940 – March 4, 2017

Many of those relatives, friends and colleagues gathered at Tom Giesen's memorial on a sunny April afternoon at McKenzie River Eco-Lodge had been joggers, cyclists and hikers on treks Tom led for decades. The adventures they described clearly tested their fortitude and often their patience but ultimately gained their admiration and respect for a man who pushed himself even harder than he did them. Lean as an alley cat, he never seemed to sit still long enough for fat to catch up with him-- or complacency either.

It wasn't reporting to boot camp that brought me to Tom's office on Willamette Street when I was still living in Eugene in the 1980s. I was there to strategize our mutual opposition to a growth-driven city council decision that would negatively impact Eugene's environment. As we talked at his drafting table, I remember being puzzled by the seeming discrepancy between Tom's work as a construction cost consultant and his environmental advocacy.

Later I learned of his early membership on the Oregon Natural Resources Council board, now Oregon Wild, and for a year as its president; his coordination of Citizens For Public Resources advocating stewardship on private forestland; his membership in the Association of American Foresters and in the Isaak Walton League. Late in his life, well after he and I had worked together as environmental advocates, he went back to college to earn masters degrees in both forest ecology and creative writing and was an adjunct

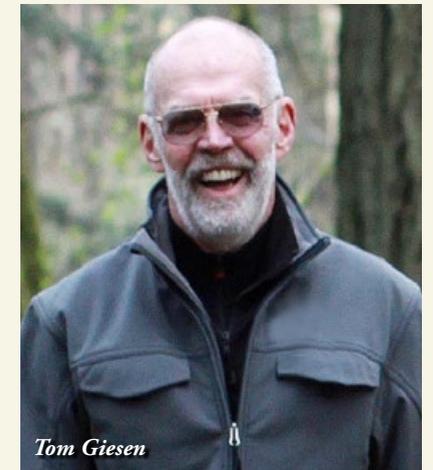
research associate in the University of Oregon's Public Planning Policy and Management Department.

Though we communicated infrequently, what brought us together, usually by email or phone, were our responses to each other's guest editorials or letters in the Register-Guard or Eugene Weekly. In his writing Tom was as clear and instructive, as forceful and uncompromising as he must have been leading his group forays up or down a mountain trail on bike or on foot. And he was carefully factual as well as forthright.

In a 2001 R-G op-ed Tom responded to righteous recriminations against "eco-terrorists" by pointing out those who ought to be punished: economic terrorists who clear-cut steep slopes and create dangerous landslides, then spray aerial poisons over the remains.

Despite obvious signs of global warming, he averred in a 2009 RG guest editorial, "many people are adopting an attitude of 'Waiting to see.' He pointed out that instead of "a cautious approach to a gnarly dilemma with lots of unknowns...waiting is actually reckless.... It's like waiting until you've had an auto accident before you put your seat belt on." He went on to explain the basic science of greenhouse gas accumulation in both the atmosphere and the ocean, how, as a consequence, the planet continues to heat up, and that to stop the rise, "a rapid and immediate reduction in emissions is the only rational option."

To stop heating the planet, he asserted in a 7/14/16 R-G opinion piece, we have to stop heating the economy with fossil fuels and deforestation. As one way to turn down the heat, he proposed a substantial tax on carbon emissions.



Tom Giesen

He also insisted, in a 2010 RG editorial, that we stop using the term 'sustainable' without concrete meaning and substance. "Sustainability", he lamented, "has gone viral in more than one sense: It is suddenly everywhere and it has infected all of us.... 'Sustainability' is an example of the empty rhetoric that now pervades our culture."

Whether on the trail, in the classroom, at home or in the papers, Tom Giesen was an educator, an unrelenting, passionate purveyor of ecological truths born of his own education, compassion and on-the-ground experience. He had an incisive mind honed by a keen sense of environmental justice and integrity. It was a mind still sharp enough to appreciate the irony when he told me last year that he had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Characteristic of his ruthless logic and responsibility, he also mentioned that when the time came, when he was still lucid enough to know that neither he nor time could brook further delays, he would kindly stop for death before death unkindly stopped for him.

Many may miss his rides in the wind. Those of us who recall his editorial insights and integrity will miss his words for the wind.

Robert Emmons