

Special Features

Another Rural County Under Attack



By Mark Anderson

Like any writer trying their hand at a suspense novel or two, I've thought about ways to commit the "perfect murder." Actually, it wasn't so much the murder—which is a rather morbid thing to think about—but the hiding of the body that usually intrigued me.

Sometimes, these macabre flights of fancy involved stashing the evidence somewhere way out in an unpopulated area where the law would never find it. At one point, I thought I had a suspense novel that might go somewhere, which naturally inspired even larger fantasies about movie deals. I even came up with the tag line: "It's not murder if no one ever heard you scream."

Granted, I was 19 at the time.

I mention all this not for any nefarious reasons but simply to point out this sort of "stashing the evidence" is a parallel to the new modus operandi of the environmental left: do your dirty work in areas where no one can hear their victims scream.

The environmental left used to work in and around major cities to get noticed; now, they don't want you to notice what they're doing, so they move in and attack areas of low population where there aren't enough people to cause a fuss big enough to attract the attention of either the media or population of larger areas that could force legislators to stop it.

We've seen it with the effort to remove four perfectly good dams on the Klamath. The Klamath River Basin has far fewer voters and media outlets than, say, the Columbia River.

We've seen it with the efforts to shut down nearly 4,000 miles of roads in the Wallow-Whitman National Forest—and not the Mount Hood National Forest.

And we're seeing it now with Coos County. The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, is snapping up land all along

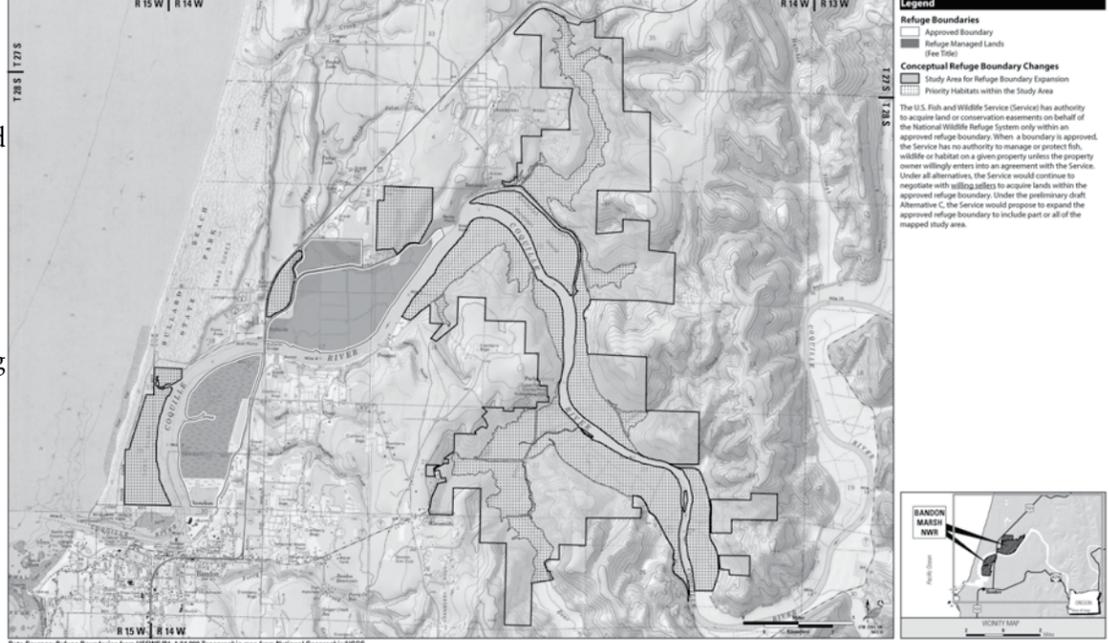
the Coquille River.

This is not land that's just sitting there idle that no one wants; it's farmlands that have been targeted to be taken out of production and used for "restoration" purposes. In other words, those evil (they'd throw in "rich" but these are hardly wealthy farmers we're talking about) landowners are once again destroying the planet, so the best thing to do is get rid of them—and permanently lock up the land in conservation banks.

According to the USFWS: *"Conservation banks are permanently protected lands that contain natural resource values. These lands are conserved and permanently managed for species that*

market value of \$24.5 million. When is this happening? Now.

Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge - Preliminary Draft Alternative C (Preferred Alternative) Land Protection Plan.



The USFWS has sent letters with an "Offer to Purchase" to the aforementioned 67 landowners. And remember, the funds to buy up \$24.5 million worth of land all come from the U.S. taxpayer.

Defazio on behalf of the Coos County Land Rights Association Organizing Committee, the effect of the Bandon Marsh Expansion

The following is also from Bonnie's letter to DeFazio: "Even more disturbing is the speculation that the Federal Government via agencies such as the USFWS is now in the lucrative land-banking and mitigation credit business and that the Bandon Marsh Expansion and adjacent restoration projects described, is merely a cash shell game enabling the purchase of private lands at bargain recessionary prices for resale to local and out-of-state developers and state-run public-private partnerships, at the going market rate of \$45,000 per acre of mitigation credit. Which by the way, can be multiplied per acre if sold by species, sub-species, pairs, habitat-kinds (riparian, wetland, upland, forest, etc.)."

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are endangered, threatened, candidates for listing as endangered or threatened, or are otherwise species-at-risk. Conservation banks function to offset adverse impacts to these species that occurred elsewhere, sometimes referred to as off-site mitigation. In exchange for permanently protecting the land and managing it for these species, the Service approves a specified number of habitat or species credits that bank owners may sell."

Remember that last point: "credits that bank owners may sell."

And remember too that bit about no one hearing you scream, because here's what's happening to our rural neighbors:

- The Bandon Marsh Refuge currently encompasses 889 acres.
- In "Phase I" of the Bandon Marsh Expansion Plan, 4,567 acres have already been targeted for acquisition. That represents an increase of 413.7%.
- Phase I includes 154 parcels (owned by 67 landowners) with a real

"will ultimately wipe out four self-sustaining communities (including Bandon, Coquille Valley, Coquille and Myrtle Point), an estimated population of 15,000."

Fifteen thousand? Hundreds of miles away? Portland and Salem will never hear them scream.

So why is all this happening? Now we come back

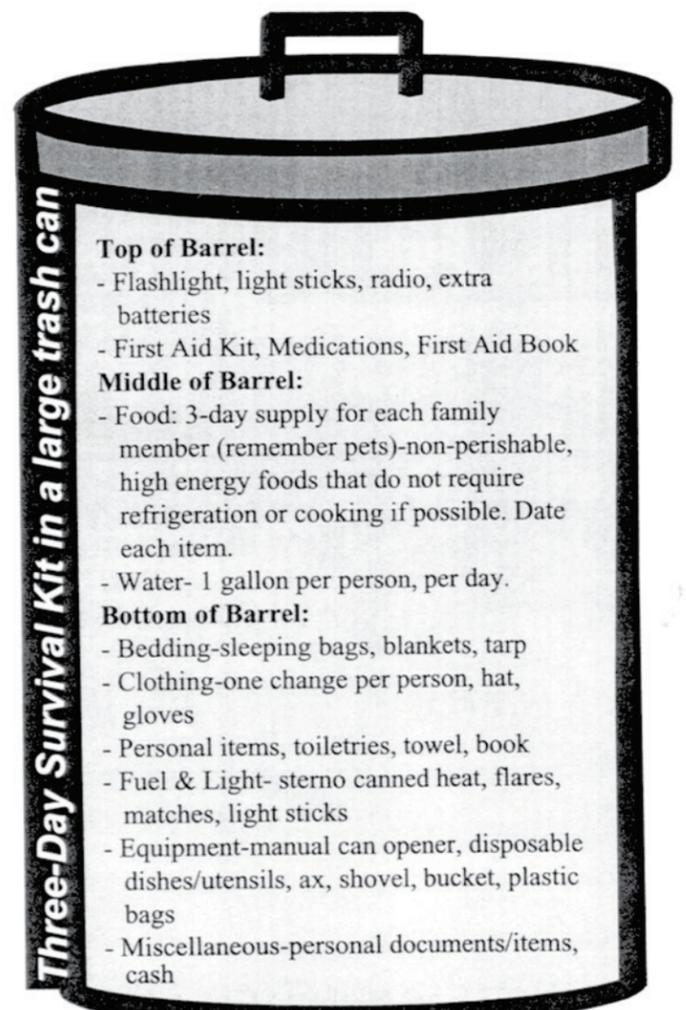
to that point I made earlier about "credits that bank owners may sell."

Those that don't sell will likely simply have their land destroyed and made unusable. The plan is to remove dikes and tide gates, allowing formerly useable land to become flooded with ocean water, at which point the helpless landowner will have no choice but to sell.

But, even worse, this is simply the beginning.

- In subsequent phases, they've targeted an additional 10,000 acres, bringing the total to 14,567 or an increase of 1,538.6% over the current size.
- In an email from Steven Denney of The Nature Conservancy to the USFWS, ODFW, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and others, wherein they discuss "the distribution for those restored acres," Denney states a target of 167 miles of river. Considering the Coquille, the North, East, and South Forks combined total some 186 miles, their target is to reclaim 89.6% of the entire Coquille River system.

According to Bonnie Montoya-May, an urban planning professional, in a letter to Congressman Peter



...cont. pg 16

Special Features

Mark Anderson
continued from pg 15

are able to sell mitigation credits. A developer in, say, Portland, wants to build a building, but it's going to destroy some habitat or wetland or what have you.

The developer has to have an offset—a mitigation—so he buys a credit for whatever it is he's destroying from a "conservation bank" that has some habitat or wetland or whatever the developer was destroying. These "credits" go for multiple thousands of dollars. Bonnie mentions \$45,000 but credits in Eugene are going for \$55,000 per credit; ecosystemmarketplace.com has them for \$84,500 in Oregon. (Which is cheap—the listed price in Virginia is for \$653,000.)

Additionally, as Bonnie points out, an acre can have much more than its base price. If you have a wetland acre that is also riparian and houses spotted owls and subspecies, it's the environmental jackpot because each of those credits can be sold separately.

If this reeks of carbon credit trading, you're on the right scent.

Is it any wonder the Left is constantly trying to declare some new species as "endangered?"

And did I mention that, many times, The Nature Conservancy and their ilk buy the land using grants funded by the US taxpayer—and take a hefty commission each time they sell the land back to another agency or developer?

And somehow the *conservatives* are accused of being evil capitalists?

If you'd like to do something about this, or to find out more about it, here you go:

- Visit www.cooscountywatchdog.com for news and more info on the Bandon Marsh Expansion.
- You can also listen to my interview with Bonnie Montoya-May and Sharon Waterman by going to the Archives Page of www.ispyradio.com. Their show aired on June 23, 2012.
- The USFWS says they want public input on this and other such plans (for the Willamette Valley no less). You can write to them at YourWillametteValley@fws.gov or by using their

comment form: www.fws.gov/YourWillametteValley/comment.

Let 'em hear you scream.

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