

*“Humanity is cutting down its forests, apparently oblivious to the fact that we may not live without them.” – Issac Asimov*

Three years ago, Bonnie and I learned that the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) was planning to sell clear cutting rights to the Norristown Heights forest directly across Highway 101 from our house (which we occupy full time) just north of Hug Point. We soon discovered why ODF was so hot to push this project through with limited public comment – the entire budget of ODF is derived from the sale of trees to timber companies. Clearly it represents the interests of the timber companies far above the rights of community members.

Those of us living across the street from this forest fought hard to turn this around – attending ODF hearings, testifying at Clatsop County Commission meetings, forming alliances with environmental groups, and contacting the press. We pointed out that...

- Trees, especially old growth trees, take in carbon dioxide and produce the oxygen we breath;
- Trees control climate by moderating the effects of the sun, rain and wind;
- Trees deep roots hold soil in place and fight erosion;
- Forests provide a home for thousands of species of plants and animals.

While we cannot yet declare victory, the clear cutting decision has been put on hold indefinitely. But as we were celebrating this result, we discovered that leaders of our own Cannon Beach appear to have declared war on our trees.

Certainly, those of us privileged to live in this idyllic community cannot block others from deciding to live here as well. But does commercial and residential development have to come at the price of our precious trees. Are trees to be viewed as nuisances to be rid of or as priceless treasures to be protected?

It takes decades for a tree to reach fruition but just hours to cut it down. Let's not rush into ridding our community of trees in order to put up a few houses, driveways, parking lots and bicycle trails.

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