

From: [Oliver Orjiako](#)
To: [Sonja Wiser](#)
Subject: FW: There is more than one kind of forest in Clark County
Date: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 11:59:21 AM

Hi Sonja:

For the record. Thanks.

From: Clark County Citizens United, Inc. <cccuinc@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 8:35 AM
To: Karen Bowerman <Karen.Bowerman@clark.wa.gov>; Gary Medvigy <Gary.Medvigy@clark.wa.gov>; Michelle Belkot <Michelle.Belkot@clark.wa.gov>; Glen Yung <Glen.Yung@clark.wa.gov>; Sue Marshall <Sue.Marshall@clark.wa.gov>; Kathleen Otto <Kathleen.Otto@clark.wa.gov>; Oliver Orjiako <Oliver.Orjiako@clark.wa.gov>; Jose Alvarez <Jose.Alvarez@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: There is more than one kind of forest in Clark County

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Clark County Council
P.O. Box 5000
Vancouver, Washington 98666

November 8, 2023

FOR THE PUBLIC RECORD AND THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Dear Councilors,

I married a "yooper" from the State of Michigan. Yooper is the name given to those who come from the upper peninsula, along Lake Superior. My husband's father was a Conservation Officer for the State of Michigan. When my husband was a boy, he traveled with his father and learned the ways of the woods. His father was highly respected for his conservation work.

I had never been to the state, until after our first two children were born. We flew to Detroit, bought a car, and drove to "yooper" country. It was a pretty drive along the Great Lakes. But one thing troubled me. When we got to his parents house, overlooking Lake Superior, I had to ask him an important question. *Where is the forest?* My surprised husband said, "All around you". I said, "I didn't see any Douglas Fir, all I see are deciduous trees". In our area, deciduous trees and brush are not considered the "forest".

That put my thoughts in perspective. I realized there are many kinds of forests, not just conifer forests. That is what we now experience on our land, after a former Douglas Fir timber harvest. The deciduous forest has grown up, and with it came far more wildlife, than what was there before. Each morning I look out our picture windows and marvel at how many more animals are living in the "forest".

When county staff and environmentalists claim we have to save the forest with large lot zoning, do they really know what that means? The trees get old and worthless as they die. When they say we have to preserve the farmland with large lot zoning, do they really know what they are saying? These fallow lands have turned into deciduous forests long ago, for lack of farming activity. So what is it we are preserving? It's simply open space, and at what cost to our society? The county has placed a heavy financial and emotional burden on those who own that space, with their large lot zoning. The councilors must put themselves in these landowners places. Would you want this to happen to you?

At the recent Buildable Lands Councilor work session, not one word was said about how the county is planning to accomodate the needs of the rural people. Not one word was said about how the county is planning for critical job and housing needs in the rural areas. These rural people haven't just disappeared. Equity means that all people are treated equally. But where is the equity and equality in a planning scheme that ignores almost 50% of the people?

Oliver Orijako made the statement similar to, "There is only so much land in Clark County, and when we get to the line, that is it." That's not true. The land doesn't stop at the Clark County line. So what if the rural areas have small lots and more homes? There is still plenty of land in the county, and adjacent counties, that can be used for whatever is needed. The county is obligated to comply with the recently passed Climate Change bill. That bill says to reduce the need for fossil fuel and travel times. Regardless whether one uses gas or electric, the commute distance doesn't change. Clark County is going the way of California where people commute 2 to 3 hours, in order to own a home on a plot of land. Does this council really want that to happen? How does forcing people to move out of the area, to own a home, equate to the new law?

But it's already happening. Rural families are moving out of Clark County into other counties North, East and West, because they can't find rural housing in this county. Their commute time is two to six hours, to come back to Clark County for their jobs. In the counties they move to, they can own land. That's not surprising to the Council, because this has been happening for decades, when 80,000 people commute to Portland areas for work. Commute time is one to two hours.

You are being "hoodwinked" to believe we are "Portland". We are not and never will be. Why are you giving away precious tax dollars to Oregon, when it's critically needed in Clark County? The "old school" of planning doesn't work. Clark County must look to new ideas and different ways to plan for people and jobs.

Sit down and make a list of what Clark County needs, and then make it happen.

1. Home ownership for all county citizens who want it. Housing for all.
2. Jobs close to home, employment for all who want a job.
3. Community family and neighborhood togetherness.
4. Abundant affordable land throughout the county

5. Small acreage commercial farms that are affordable
6. Small acreage commercial forest lands that are affordable
7. Small parks in all communities of the county
8. Commuter service that is convenient and close by.
9. Maximum railroad use for businesses and commuters.
- 10 New roads to serve the growing population.
11. A focus on Rural Center commercial centers and railroad access.

This list is just a start. Our growing cities throughout the county need help and cooperation from the county to serve their communities. Battle Ground needs roads. Yacolt needs a sewer. LaCenter needs commercial land. But I believe you can easily see this. It's not all about Vancouver, and never should be. Equity is in the Bill, but not in Clark County. Everyone needs a fair share of jobs and housing.

We recently harvested a stand of prime Douglas Fir on five acres. It generated \$200,000. A large portion of that money goes to the state, county and country. We are now looking forward to the new "forest" of deciduous trees and the abundant wildlife that goes with it, while the new Douglas Fir grow. It's time to grow our communities throughout Clark County, too.

Sincerely,

Carol Levanen, Exec. Secretary

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