

Submitter: Marla McKee
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1576

When I first started running after NOT walking for 18 months at age almost 57, it was in Peavy Arboretum which, is yes, part of the OSU Research Forests. However, I eventually began running onto other connecting forests with great appreciation and often verbal permission of owners. Oftentimes, the other lands lie in between and we are not sure where we are but we are EXTREMELY grateful and in no way would want landowners to have to protect themselves ridiculously and unnecessarily.

Ironically, before the upcoming passing of this bill was brought to my attention, we had gone to Starker Forest Headquarters and renewed our Starker Forest permits for the year. We are the eyes and feet for many of the forests!!! We help the landowners see what they cannot possibly monitor from the intricate parts of their forests!! I have the sheriff's numbers in my phone and do not hesitate to protect both our state or private forests with any concerns we see or suspect or have concrete evidence in!!!

Causing landowners to restrict public and fun access to their properties HURTS them!!!

Since I started running in late middle age, I have brought 30? 40? more? people into the forests as regular or intermittent users. Several of my converts are in the local medical professions and not only do they benefit and give better medical care to our community, they are also enthusiasts with a real experience.

To say the forests have changed my life (daily) is an understatement. My husband retired from the USN in 1999 after joining during Vietnam era (1971). We married in 1972 and he took an 8 year break, but retired in from extremely critical part of our military. His job was crucial and there were few of him, so after 9/11 he tried to rejoin at the age of almost 50 and after valiant effort joined Military Sealift Command at age 52 under the auspices of the Bureau of Naval Medicine. He only retired last May at 71.5 and actually due to world conditions is being recruited back in. ALL of that is to say that my 19 years of being a military "widow" here in the valley was blessed by the forests!!! His job with MSC required him to be on board ships around the world (once literally as ship was too big for Panama canal and he was requested) or in his last 9 or so years, he was a constant inspector trainer/damage control officer traveling to wherever he was needed for 10-14 days at a time before moving on. Hence, I couldn't join him and actually after 32 years of an unbelievably hard (truth) military family life, I declined to follow him as our children, grandchildren and my living parents are here. (There were the perks of joining him on some trips while he worked!)

This brings me to a special point of our story and another way how the forests saved my life. During March 2020, he was THE ONLY member of his team still working on ships, though he was far above the age the California governor allowed to leave home! He eventually finished his critical job and made it back to Oregon where all the team had to tele work (truly our ships were in a world of hurt). Go forth to June 12, 2020 when he received a call that he alone was the only one in the entire fleet (world wide) that qualified to go to the Middle East.

At that time, he'd not even seen his children in Oregon, Washington or California nor grandchildren due to Covid, but he was told to leave June 13 and fly to Guam immediately. After much crying and fit throwing, he gave June 13 as a day for his children to bring the grandchildren to us, then at 2 am on June 14, 2020, we drove to PDX, where I couldn't even enter to use the restroom! And he exited the car in the dark with a pink mask on that he wore for two days before being able to retrieve his luggage. (He was surprised to see himself in the airport men's room.) There's so much more to this, including that he saved another person's life on the flight home----
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