

Fall Issue 2019

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This issue's cover is of Teddy Muir's Roosevelt Elk taken in the Astoria, Oregon area.

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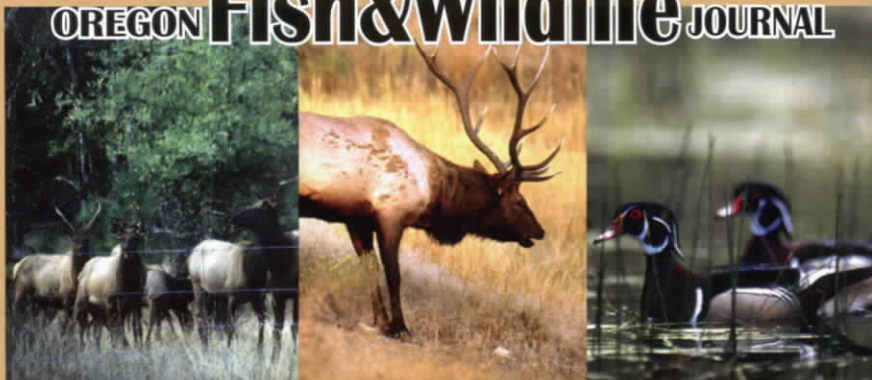
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“Keep Up the Good Fight, Eric”

**Wayne Giesy,
1920-2019**

By Dr. Bob Zybach

Wayne Giesy died on Sunday, July 28, 2019, with his son by his side and after being bathed, shaved, taking his medication, drinking a chocolate milkshake, and talking to his grandson on the telephone. Very few people today know who Wayne Giesy was. Everybody who does has heard about the Giesy Plan.

In public and in meetings Wayne’s demeanor was always upbeat and positive. He was known for his booming voice, boundless energy, stronger-than-firm handshake, solid convictions, and a consistency and determination that became ever more apparent with time.

More than anything he was a man of his word.

Wayne was always a gentleman to anybody. He was unfailingly polite, kind and considerate, joyful and optimistic, determined, and tough as steel. He lived on a small tree farm near Philomath with his wife of 63 years, Betty Jo. They heated their home with firewood that Wayne cut with a chain saw until he had a two-year supply when he was 95 or 96. After that was gone, they began using electrical heat.

He was a man of his word. He would sign a contract



Elliott Old-Growth. (L-R) Wayne Giesy, Jerry Phillips, and David Gould discuss the history and 250-foot heights of this stand of 250-year-old Douglas fir trees in the Elliott State Forest. The combined ages of these three men is greater than the age of the trees they are considering.

At the time this picture was taken this preserve was named “Silver Creek Heritage Grove.” It has subsequently been renamed, by an Act of the 2019 Oregon State Legislature, as “Jerry Phillips Reserve” in honor of the man who made it possible. Photo by author, July 8, 2017.

agreement if you asked, but it wasn’t necessary. He always did what he said he would do. His handshake was his guarantee, and your word was expected to be just as reliable, unless you proved otherwise.

Wayne also had a few aphorisms he liked to occasionally repeat. Each one had a story, which he would tell in detail once or twice, and thereafter they were just a short-hand way to

make a point:

"A country boy can tell you everything he knows in about five minutes."

"The trick is to tell them to go to hell, and have them enjoy the trip."

"You can get a lot done if you don't care who gets the credit."

The Accident

Governor Kate Brown: "Thank you, Wayne. It was delightful to have you here again and I wish you the best as you roll into 99 and hope we all have your energy and enthusiasm for making the world a better place when we reach your age."

State Treasurer Tobias Read: "Hear! Hear!"

Wayne Giesy: "Well, I have my driver's license until I'm 106, so . . ." (loud, sustained laughter from the audience).

-- Transcript from Oregon State Land Board December 18, 2018 public meeting regarding ownership and management of Elliott State Forest.

On Wednesday, June 19 of this year, probably about 8:30 in the evening, I called Wayne to "check in" to discuss what each of us had accomplished that day, and also to make plans for our scheduled meeting with OSU President Ed Ray that Friday.

Betty Jo answered the phone and told me the news. Wayne had fallen and

broken his leg earlier in the day in their front yard. Rather than call out for help he had crawled on his knees to the back of the house and pulled himself into the Gazebo and out of the sun.

After an hour or so, when he hadn't returned as expected, Betty Jo had gone out to the back deck and called out for him. When Wayne answered and she couldn't see him, he said it was because he was on the floor of the Gazebo and couldn't get up. Betty Jo had just talked to their son, Reid, who was in Philomath, less than 10 miles away. When she asked Wayne if she should call Reid back and ask for his help, Wayne thought for a while and then said "okay."

On Thursday Wayne had surgery to put a metal rod into his left leg, "from the ankle to the knee." On Friday, Russ Sapp -- our third Board member of Oregon Websites and Watersheds Project, Inc. (ORWW) -- and I met with Dr. Ray at the scheduled time, in Wayne's absence.

After the meeting I went to visit Wayne in the hospital, where he was alert and wanting to know everything that had been said at the meeting he had missed. The nurses had had him up and walking that morning and he was surprised by the

fact he could "feel no pain," although he had just had surgery and had been groggy at the time from the drugs they had given him. We talked about the meeting and plans for what needed to be done next for more than an hour. Wayne expected to go home "in two or three days" and somehow that didn't seem out of the question.

While he was undergoing surgery his family had decided to surrender his driver's license because of his age and health, but no one ever told that to Wayne.

"Working for Ralph"

Ralph Hull got us together. Ralph agreed with much of what I thought about education, forest history, and forest management and provided a significant amount of the funding and encouragement I needed to complete my PhD. Wayne had similar concerns and perspectives and Ralph -- his "best friend" for many years -- provided steady work, a share of his sawmill ownership, and funding needed for Wayne to attend political



Amity High School Sports. Wayne was a star athlete at Amity High School, lettering in football, baseball, and basketball during his sophomore, junior, and senior years. He was quarterback on the school football team, catcher on its baseball team, and guard on the basketball team.

During that time Amity teams won 27 separate championships, including State "B" league basketball champions in 1938 that also finished second to Baker in the "A" League tournament. Wayne made both Oregon "A" and "B" League basketball All-Star teams that year, likely the last person to ever do so. It has been claimed by others for many years that Wayne introduced the one-handed set shot to Oregon basketball, and he has never denied that distinction. In 2013 he was elected to the Amity High School Hall of Fame.

and professional meetings to promote his "Giesy Plan."

All three of us had deep pioneer Oregon roots, long personal histories of hard work in fields and forests, and a common concern for the future of our rural schools, families, businesses, and communities. Ralph had the desire, insight, and resources; Wayne had a plan and political connections; my job was to get the academic credentials needed for research and public education. Ralph told Wayne to keep an eye on me while I did so. Not to spy, but to assist.

And that became our relationship, on a collaborative basis. For nearly 30 years Wayne and I would talk on the phone four or five times a week, usually about 8:00 or so in the evening, recounting the day's accomplishments and making plans for the following days and weeks. Despite our best attempts otherwise, these plans were rarely financially successful -- yet almost invariably completed to the best of our abilities.

In December 1996, as I was finishing my Master's degree at OSU, Wayne met with me and asked how I thought my degree could best be used for reaching a wider range of students regarding the history and management of Oregon's natural and



1997 ORWW Live Internet Broadcast. On June 6, 1997, ORWW broadcast a live event over the Internet from the Philomath Middle School gymnasium; one of the first live Internet broadcasts in history. A 28.8K dial-up modem, a Pioneer Telephone Co-op connection, a rebuilt Apple computer, and a Kodak DC20 digital camera were used to create a concurrent typewritten commentary and a dozen digital photos documenting participants and actions that have remained online ever since.

The occasion of the event was an awards ceremony celebrating the students and teachers that had participated in the “PEAS” (Philomath, Eddyville, Alsea and Siletz) Project during the school year by putting students’ local natural science projects online to share with others. An ORWW survey of the computer and Internet capabilities of the five schools showed that: only one school at that time had more than one line dedicated to Internet access (Siletz, with four); most modems (10, for all five schools) were only 14.4K and only five modems (four in Siletz) were 28.8K; and of the 79 total computers in the schools, 67 had only 8 mb. of RAM and only 12 computers (10 in Siletz) had 16 mb. of RAM. Definitely the beginning of Internet use, communication, and education in Oregon’s rural schools.

The two pictures shown here were put online by ORWW event webmaster and photographer, Zongyao Wen, with remaining photos taken by students in attendance -- mostly of themselves, mostly acting silly, and all being the first digital photos they had ever taken or had placed on the World Wide Web. People who can remember Internet communications from those days will recall how slowly pictures loaded, line by line. As a result, photo files were made as small as possible, with the picture of Wayne and me being only 16 kb. in size, and the group photo just 23 kb. This was well before Google, online videos, smartphones, and selfies that students expect today.

cultural resources. I suggested the newly emerging “Internet communications” as a way to involve modern students anywhere at any time in the State.

Wayne thought that was a good idea and Ralph agreed to provide startup funding. Western Oregon Timber Supporters (WOTS), a small Philomath nonprofit group advocating for responsible forest management, agreed to sponsor us. Mack Barrington, a recent OSU PhD in Geography, provided technical expertise and on January 15, 1997, ORWW launched its first educational website: The PEAS (Philomath, Eddyville, Alsea, and Siletz) Project, which has remained online – in common with more than 35 subsequent ORWW projects -- to this day.

Ralph Hull died at home, age 90, in 2002. The following year I completed the PhD he largely paid for. All this while Wayne and I kept working together, using ORWW as our base. At some point a few years ago, Wayne said: “You know we’re both still working for Ralph, don’t you?” I told him yes. We both knew it, but that was the first time it was spoken or acknowledged between us.

“One Question”

Wayne was a WWII, Army veteran, mustering out as a second lieutenant in 1946. In 1955 and 1957 he was elected as Benton County Representative to the Oregon House, serving “along with Mark Hatfield and Bob Packwood, who was a page at that time.” It was there that he became known for his booming voice, handshake, and blunt, pointed – yet unfailingly polite – questions at public hearings.

It was also in the State Legislature that Wayne first became familiar, and friendly, with nearly 65 years of Oregon’s political and educational leaders to follow. He rarely ever missed a meeting. He was always early or on time and knew everybody by first name, and their phone number. When a meeting ended he left almost immediately, to “get back home to Betty Jo” and his telephone.

If there was a major presentation or proposal at a meeting, Wayne always asked at least one question near the conclusion and, because of his voice, everybody always heard it. His questions usually began with a compliment or two, and were often

asked in a way that made people laugh, sometimes nervously.

A typical Wayne question, perhaps following a grandiose forest management scheme, a new federal regulation, a proposed Wilderness, or other government set-aside, might go something like this:

“Well, I think you have a wonderful idea and should be complimented for the great amount of thought and detail you have put into it. I sincerely hope you can make it work. But I do have a question for you: ‘Who is going to pay for your idea?’”

The Elliott

Wayne and I had met with OSU President Ed Ray at his office on January 2nd for more than 90 minutes, following the December 18, 2018 State Land Board meeting in which all three of us had testified.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss our concerns regarding the Elliott State Forest, its history, and OSU plans for its management; and as compared to the ORWW “Giesy Plan Alternative” proposals that Wayne and I had presented to the Land Board over the course of the previous two years.

Wayne had an affable relationship and great respect for Ray during his entire tenure at OSU, and the meeting was very productive, resulting in written statements and subsequent actions of mutual cooperation. A tentative future meeting was planned “after the HCP [Habitat Conservation Plan] is developed” for the Elliott; “probably sometime by late spring or summer at the latest.”

Wayne arranged the follow-up meeting with President Ray for Friday, June 21 to discuss the Elliott, the HCP, and to plan an ORWW field trip with Russ Sapp for late summer or early fall. Russ and Wayne had also known each other and worked and lob-

Wayne Giesy displays Oregon Society of American Foresters (SAF) Honorary Membership certificate for lifetime achievement in forestry, given at the annual State SAF meeting held in Pendleton, Oregon, April 25, 2013. On October 24, 2013, Giesy also received the national SAF award in Charleston, South Carolina for his lifetime contributions to forestry and forest policy. Photo by the author. Text of Wayne’s SAF national acceptance speech follows.



“Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Wayne Giesy and I receive this award as an honorary member of the Society of American Foresters with a real sense of responsibility.

I am 93 years old and have spent over 50 years (including two terms as an Oregon legislator) advocating management of Federal Forests.

When the Forest Service was established, SAF wrote the management plans that produced products for US citizens and jobs for rural communities. This plan operated successfully for years, and then the environmental community took over.

We now have a policy, “Let it Burn and Rot.”

While it has been a privilege to work in the forest industry – an industry that has a proud history of investing in science to inform continuous silvicultural and environmental improvements – federal forest management is broken.

My career has spanned both extremes. I’ve seen it. And I’m here today to say the pendulum has swung too far from management to favor preservation, and our communities are paying for it.

I challenge the SAF to again assert their past success and return as the entity that writes the Federal Forest Management Plan.

I join as one of you – let’s get going!

Thank you.”

bied together for more than 30 years.

Russ and his family are descendants of Tillamook County Trask pioneers and have logged and built roads and homes in the Alsea Valley since the 1950s. The purpose of the tour would be to visit forested and reforested areas in the Alsea basin that the Sapp family

had worked on since then. The idea was to consider economics and aesthetics of possible OSU-managed Elliott Forest futures, as they might appear – and at what cost or benefit – 20 or 30 years from now.

Another focus of the tour would be the potential value of using the Elliott as a “demonstration model” for managing forested USFS and BLM lands in Oregon; the “Giesy Plan Alternative.”

Wayne had developed the “Giesy Plan” (he preferred “Oregon Plan,” but few others followed this lead) with Ralph Hull and others in the 1980s; the initial target was the Siuslaw National Forest, as a potential example for all federal forests in the western US. The basic idea is to statistically divide federal forestlands into three categories – riparian, reserve, and commodity – in order to provide work, business, and tax revenue into rural communities while providing older forest habitat for recreation and dependent species.

The Elliott State Forest “alternative” to this proposal would be to combine the Giesy Plan approach with the OSU Douglas County “paired watersheds” research design for a 20-year period and have the results be transparently shared online with everyone for the duration of the project. And then let the next generation of students and voters decide what to do with the land, armed with this acquired knowledge and experience.

According to State economists, the Giesy Plan Alternative would provide more than 430 full-time, family wage, blue collar jobs to Douglas and Coos counties and more than \$460 million to the Common School Fund during its 20-year existence. That would be in addition to the critical research findings it would produce regarding marbled murrelet, spotted owl, coho, lamprey eel, and pine marten habitat, as well as significant carbon sequestration data.

Local residents and US taxpayers could then use that information to make more informed decisions regarding state

and federal forestlands lying within rural counties in the western US.

Goodbyes

Eric Thompson is the President of Thompson Timber Co., in Philomath, Oregon. The family tree farm and forestry business

was started by his grandfather at the end of WW II, managed by his father and now by Eric and his son Jake, all who attended OSU College of Forestry. The family has a beautiful managed forest on the slopes of Marys Peak, and I was privileged to plant several thousand trees there myself, in the early 1980s.

Eric is a member of the Board of Directors of Oregon

Forest Industries Council and commutes to regular meetings in Salem from his home in Philomath. He lived near Wayne, who was also an OFIC Board Member, and for the past few years was giving Wayne rides to and from their scheduled meetings.

Wayne became a Board Member of OFIC in 1997 and missed a few meetings in the early years when he was out of state. From 2002, when he was 82 years old, and until he broke his leg, Wayne never missed another meeting. Until recently he drove to every one.

During their rides together Wayne and Eric developed a good friendship, discussing forestry issues, current business, and politics. When Wayne was going through rehab in Albany in July, Eric made a point of visiting him, buying him batteries for his hearing aid, and discussing current events and plans. All meetings with Wayne end with a strong handshake, a look straight in the eye, and a “thank you.” Sometimes two or three thank yous.

Then Wayne’s heart began to give out and his body began retaining water and after a while he had to return to the hospital. During his final days he realized he would not be going home after all. The last time he talked with Eric he must have known his time was getting short. When it was time to say goodbyes Wayne gave the firmest handshake he could and said, “Keep up the good fight, Eric.”

It was a request, not a demand.

Publisher’s note: “Having dealt with Wayne and Ralph since about 1980 a big Thanks to Bob for this article!”

Wayne Giesy ‘fought to the end’

Logging fixture a tireless champion of Oregon forestry, dies at 99

BENNETT HALL
Corvallis Gazette-Times

Wayne Giesy never backed down from a fight. So it was no surprise to anyone that, when he broke his leg this summer on his Philomath-area tree farm, he attacked the challenge of recovery with the determination of a boxer training for a title bout.

For awhile he appeared to be winning that battle, but things took a turn for the worse and Giesy died on July 28. He was 99 years old.

“He fought right up to the end,” said Bob Zybach, Giesy’s

CONTRIBUTIONS

Family members chose not to be interviewed for this story, citing Giesy’s desire to avoid publicity. In lieu of sending flowers, a family spokesman said people can make contributions in Giesy’s name to the Oregon Websites and Watersheds Project (www.orww.org) or the Aurora Colony Historical Society (www.auroracolony.org).

longtime friend and collaborator in the Oregon Websites and Watersheds Project, a nonprofit devoted to the idea that timber harvesting and conservation can coexist in Oregon.

Standing up for the importance of active forest management



ANDY CRIFE CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES FILE PHOTO

Wayne Giesy is shown in 2013 on his tree farm near Philomath. Giesy died last month at the age of 99.

Please see GIESY, Page A4

This headline, photo, and article by Bennett Hall appeared on the front page of the Corvallis Gazette-Times on August 13, 2019. The photograph by Andy Cripe was also used to illustrate a profile of Wayne (“Still Giving ‘Em Hell at 93”) that Hall had published in the same newspaper in 2013.