

apparent challenge to the political orthodoxy is usually met with great consternation by government. Codes and regulations have grown all out of proportion to reality and the bureaucracies spawn ever greater numbers of “enforcers” to keep the public in line. The case to be made about matters in May Valley has, and will continue, to open some eyes about the environmental downside of all this misguided “protective enforcement.”

While the focus of my report here to you is primarily on our “Little River” – the May Creek Ditch, the pattern and practice of regulatory excess and consequent destruction is commonplace; not just in this County, but indeed throughout the State and across the nation. As you must be aware, successful court challenges are on the rise: Palozollo v Rhode Island and Hage v Bureau of Land Management. Lawsuits are abuilding hereabouts as well.

I wish to mention that my concerns, as present here, do not require the “tarring” of every governmental employee. No indeed. There are many in our County agencies that have been helpful, especially in refining the Amended May Creek Basin Plan. Unfortunately, they do not, at this moment, prevail.

The Plan called for precisely the sort of restoration that I undertook last summer at which time it became clear that a bull-headed few in the County Dept. of Development and Environmental Services were determined to thwart the will of this community as well as our elected representatives. Playing the same old “ya can’t get there from here” game about the permitting process, it was common knowledge that they would miss no opportunity to preserve their destructive policies on our Ditch and its now destroyed salmon run.

I well remember a meeting some seven years ago which was

hosted by, among others, the Corps of Engineers. After a tour of the Ditch and environs, we all ended up at the very “scene of the crime” – the bridge at 164th Ave. SE where the reach of the Ditch that I cleaned begins. Agreeing with all of us from the community that dredging was the only means to alleviate the flooding and restore the fish run, a representative of the Corps was quickly cut off by a representative of the County Grading Section who said bluntly, “We will never allow a permit for dredging.” The stated view of the Corps spokesman was, of course, consistent with every previous utterance of the Corps and all other real scientists who have weighed in on the protection and maintenance of such waterways and their fish – but no matter for King County.

I made the choice, then, to take action that I knew would force the issue – it did so. King County has made much of the publicity to penalize me for the challenge. They have had far less to say about the quiet concessions they have made to our plan and our determination to overcome the pointless and destructive hurdles they have placed in our path.

In point of fact, the cleaning of the Ditch will continue. Pioneer Park will come into being at the site of my initial effort, and the fish run will be reborn as we plant fingerlings there this spring in a grand community effort. Mr. Ron Sims, King County Executive, has quietly ordered his staff to cooperate in this program. I think this belies the efforts on the part of others at King County to exact some “pound of flesh” from me.

You have, I believe, by your issuance of the notification to me, committed your agencies to the task of investigating and righting the wrongs that have troubled the May Creek Ditch over the past several decades. You have been given to understand that I am a culprit because of my actions last year. You are faced, then, with the prospect of hauling me up on several “technical fouls,” the