

OPINION

VIEWPOINT

We need new ways of working together or we may die together

BY L. BRYAN WILLIAMS

A terror is welling up within me. As the snow recedes, the danger of fire rises. Images of burning homes from wildfires in so many other places have strangely become commonplace.

The right lightning and swirling wind will bring that danger to any neighborhood. Neighborhoods and communities are all at risk. Our community is at risk.

I so appreciate the firefighters in our midst. My anxiety is lessened knowing that so many of my neighbors are trained to fire fires. However, the anxiety remains. To assuage the risk, we all need to be a part of the fight to save our homes.

A key factor in the elevated risk of wildfires seems to be climate related. Last June was so hot in such a weird way. Although some prefer to call what is happening global warming, I prefer global weirding.

Our lack of moisture so far this winter adds to the weirdness of our regional weather patterns. How can we all be effective in shaping the future for this generation and the next to reduce this threat?

Like all social issues, the environmental struggles are broadly split into conservative and progressive tendencies. Conservatives tend to maintain the successful ways of the past, even if stale; progressives tend to

offer new ways, often untested, of dealing with problems.

Each group tends to view the opposite as antagonistic and attempts to dominate the political landscape to impose their respective wills. Lately, that strategy hasn't worked very well. We need new ways of working together or we may die together.

My work focuses on bringing opposing views together to function as complements to improve society. My tactic is a new to some and yet ancient ethic, what I call Complementary Ethics.

This ethic offers a strategy for the environment. The ethic draws together our opposing social categories to find new ways toward environmental success.

Hunter-gatherers over the millennia, ancient conservatives drawing on time-proven knowledge, have harvested the excess resources and animals that may dominate an area. However, without restrictions, this group depletes and damages a region.

Environmentalists, creative progressives who use modern scientific data to warn us all, have tended to exclude humanity from wilderness areas on the assumption that most humans will only destroy an area.

However, without restrictions, this group spends more money that we have,

How about a different working relationship? How about using an older technique than collecting and revealing data?

Lately, too many of those who come to our region seem only to want to use if not abuse our mountains and lakes. We need to attract a new visitor who reveres the settings that we offer.

We need more conserving gatherers such as our foresters with sound environmental awareness who respect the resources and produce of the land. We need progressive environmentalists who recognize that most humans respect the resources and produce of the land.

We need them both at the table with a determination to do something meaningful to change the weirdness we are all experiencing. And where can we do this best: McCall. And what binds us together: our spiritual love of our surroundings.

Where everyone tends to agree is that we are in awe of the forests and mountains around us; we now sense the reverence of the indigenous people toward the land and its products.

Our wilderness has been transformed from life threatening hinterlands to our American cathedrals. Our spiritual yearning now points in the direction of the massive fir trees and towering granite

mountains that ring our communities.

We need to organize those who want to protect them even if individual methods may differ. We can come together to optimize our differences and transform our energies to make our community better.

I would beg everyone to do something to improve our environment. Do anything that makes your surroundings better.

For those who are able, McCall College invites those conservative hunter/gatherers along with progressive environmentalists who have a heart for making our region better to join at a table on Thursday nights from March to June. The goal will be to support each other in individual or collective environmental projects that make our world better.

The menu will be a course entitled "Environmental Spirituality & Ethics." We will assess our work by the benefits our citizens and communities realize in reducing the terror caused by our weird environment.

While there is much to do in the world, plenty of work begins right here. For more information, email Dr. L. Bryan Williams at president@mcCallCollege.org or visit mcCallCollege.org and click "Environmental Spirituality."

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