

Opinion

Sunday, September 9, 2007

Letters

Rewarding good stewards of our land

The taxpayers of New Jersey, especially those who value and utilize the wonderful resource known as Whitesbog, would be best served by the renewal of the berry farming lease held for decades by the J.J. White Company.

Governors and administrations in Trenton have come and gone and the money, manpower and other resources available to parks and forestry have ebbed and flowed with the political tides, but one constant has been the good stewardship of the land by the Darlington family.

My routine includes a nature-watching tour of Whitesbog almost every morning and evening, and my personal observations of activity there are the opposite of the inflammatory charges made in the Sierra Club's letter to Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Lisa Jackson.

Rearranging and revitalizing a cranberry bog that has been farmed since 1857 is not wanton destruction of wetlands.

Accusing a responsible business operated by good citizens of deliberately skipping the permitting process for profit may play to that organization's base, but it is a malicious and completely

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groundless accusation.

The most easily refuted charges are those of "denying public use," "blocked public access," "prevented the public use," "privatization of public lands" and "public lands ... held captive to a special interest."

The hunters, fishermen, bird watchers, retriever trainers, dog walkers, joggers and bikers who enjoy their time there know better.

Much of the unique plant and animal habitat at Whitesbog exists because of the cranberry bogs and the supporting network of waterways.

Without J.J. White's continued maintenance and considerable investment in the infrastructure of dams, canals and roads, that habitat will change and the public's ability to easily access the tract will be greatly impeded.

The future enjoyment of Whitesbog by New Jersey's citizens can be best assured by renewal of the lease.

Thom Jameson
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Try new tack to deal with drinking

The editorial Sept. 5 about the binge-drinking tragedy at Rider University ("Alcohol 101") suggests controlling the behavior of adult students is a primary responsibility of college administrators.

The Burlington County Times also seems to support the decision to charge university administrators with a criminal offense to send a message, and praises Rider officials for "vowing to kick underage drinkers off campus"

I disagree with the BCT's positions. As with prohibition and the abuse of other drugs, instituting draconian regulations and relying on law enforcement do not work. All you end up with is more criminal entrepreneurs, overcrowded jails, ruined lives and expensive policing and legal expenses.

It is very unlikely prohibition on campuses will work any better than it did in the 1920s. Education and realistic legal controls would work much better.

It is rather ridiculous to impose total prohibition on alcohol consumption for legal adults ages 18 to 20 and then lift the prohibition on the day they reach age 21.

A step-by-step approach similar to the graduated driver's license system makes more sense. It is time to reform our approach to drinking by young adults to save lives.

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