

Community Comment
Tuesday, September 27

This is Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

A friend of mine from college stopped by for a visit this month both before and after she met up with colleagues for a hike on the Lost Coast. She is from Portland and her friends are part of a hiking club there.

Maggie is neither liberal nor conservative, she is not conventional in the regular sense of the word but was a fifth grade teacher from the time she graduated until she retired four years ago. She drives a Prius and is an environmentalist in the true sense of the word. She's divorced with two grown kids. She is someone who defies labeling.

When she returned from her hike, her first comments to me were about seeing the massive—and many—pot farms.

At first she said, they heard the sound of what they later learned were water pumps and then they smelled what they thought were skunks—boy you have a lot of skunks here she thought--and then they saw the fences. Many fences. Fences of every type—from the cheap black webbing to high tech expensive fences with monitoring devices. And everything in between.

She was shocked by the experience. In Portland she said, they have pot stores now on every corner, and that took a little getting used to. But this—she had no idea it was so all consuming down here.

One thought that crossed her mind was that businesses making Keep Out, No Trespassing and Beware of Dog signs must be doing very well down here.

Once she realized what the water pump was doing, she was disheartened. It was clearly taking water from the creek. That creek was now a ribbon, a trickle, the life was being sucked out of it.

The group she was with had lunch in Garberville when they finished the six-day hike and before they went back to their respective cars.

I asked her thoughts on Garberville. She was surprised at how busy that small little town was. It was buzzing with activity. It had the obligatory guitar player with his dog at one end of town, and lots of people milling around at the other end.

I asked her about the transients or trimigrants in Portland. She nicely calls them travelers. She said there were a lot more travelers here than in Portland (per capita) and that Portland isn't getting them as much as they used to. Sure. That's because they are down here.

Maggie doesn't smoke anything or drink, mostly because she's always been super healthy, it's not a judgement on what other people do. She loved the area, thought the hike was amazing with diverse plants and wildlife, friendly people--more toilet paper on the trail than she was expecting-- but overall clean and safe.

The people who say we need to keep business away in order to keep our area pristine need to finally accept that fact that the "business of pot" is the biggest detriment to our County. That's the business we need to be up in arms about. Work on keeping Pot Growers in check and we can keep our County unspoiled.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.