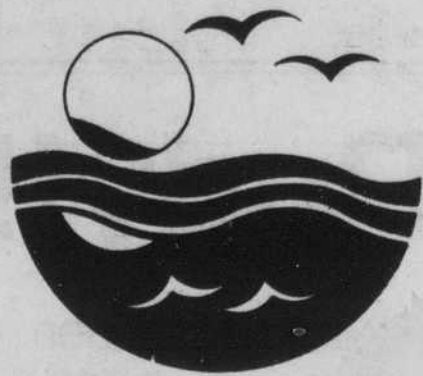




By KATHLEEN MONJE
Of the Emerald

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's new Unique Wildlife Ecosystems program has just begun in the Pacific Northwest.

The program is a part of Pres. Carter's National Heritage Program, designated to identify, evaluate and protect the country's natural and cultural resources.

The Service plans to protect such ecosystems by bringing them under federal ownership and management.

A concept plan will be de-

veloped for each state in the region, attacking the wildlife problems in four major steps:

- Inventory of unique wildlife ecosystems — primarily those on private lands.

- Ranking of the unique areas based on their value to wildlife.

- Identification and evaluation of methods for protecting the areas, i.e., acquisition by fee title, easement or donation.

- Identification of future management and operation of the selected sites.

- The steps in the concept plans will be accompanied by public comment through hearings and testimony. Service officials say they are looking for areas ranging from the habitats of endangered or threatened species to those occupied by traditional game species.

A Service spokesperson said "Millions of acres of valuable wildlife habitat have already been lost.

Quick action must be taken to protect what remains."

The University Survival Center is one of three groups appealing timber sales in the Willamette National Forest,

because they say the sale areas should have been included for protection in the Forest Service Roadless Area Review and Evaluation.

The Eugene and Corvallis

groups of the Sierra Club have joined the Survival Center in appealing eight timber sales, totaling 55.4 million board feet, in the Detroit, Sweet Home and McKenzie Ranger Districts.

Public power drive launched in county

By STEVE DODGE
Of the Emerald

While the mercury in the thermometer outside hovered near the top Thursday a similar gauge inside the headquarters of the People for Public Power read only half as much.

However, it wasn't the temperature the "thermometer" on the wall measured, but the number of signatures gathered in Lane County and around the state on an initiative petition which would put a measure simplifying formation of public utility districts (PUD's) on the November ballot.

Five thousand signatures have been gathered in Lane County and 20,000 have been gathered state wide. State law requires 46,000 signers in order to qualify the measure for the November general election ballot.

John McCauley of the public power group said, that if approved, the measure would remove some of the barriers to forming PUD's that now exist in Oregon public utility law.

He said the new law would eliminate at least one election and one initiative petition drive required to form a public utility district. It would also make it possible for a vote of a given county commission to set up a PUD.

"They'd be in business overnight," he said, instead of the current lengthy process.

A public utility is distinguished from a private utility by the fact that a public utility's board of commissioners are subject to a vote of the people. Under current law PUD's receive preferential rates from the Bonneville hydroelectric power system.

McCauley said that 80 percent of the residents of Washington state, which has more liberal PUD laws, now are served by public utility districts — only 20 percent of Oregon's utilities are publicly owned.

He and other speakers at the meeting, including newly-elected EWEB commissioners Jack Craig and John Bartels and Richard Eymann, former House speaker and chairman of the group said that locally the new law would facilitate formation of the Emerald Public Utility District which would govern outlying areas of Eugene and Springfield. Both cities are now powered by PUD's.

George Adams, a former economist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, also spoke to the group. He said the state's energy emphasis should be on conservation because "It's our No. 1 resource."

He criticized Gov. Bob Straub's plan for extending the public utility preferential clause to private utilities (DRPA), saying "It's simply not going to result in many benefits for the ordinary user."

Adams thought the recent election of Bartels and Craig to the EWEB board "may indicate people are waking up a bit about thermal (nuclear and coal) power." He hoped Bartels and Craig would join with fellow anti-nuclear commissioner Camilla Pratt to "reshape EWEB policy" to "reorganize energy efficiency from one side to the other."

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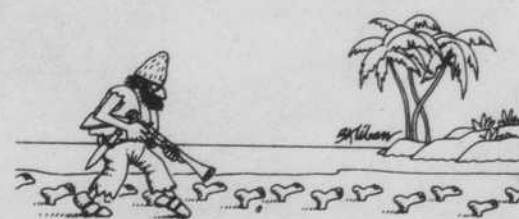
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