

State to enter new planning phase

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles on the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

Escapeses from California and the East worked with Oregon residents — who wanted to avoid repeating the horrors the transients had fled — to pass Oregon's revolutionary land-use legislation in 1973: SB 100.

The legislation established an appointed board, the Land Conservation and Development Commission, and charged it with developing state-wide goals for the use of every square-foot in Oregon.

The goals, which reflected what the Commission had decided after hours of public testimony, were to achieve an optimum mix of agricultural, residential, industrial and forest land.

Once these goals were established, localities were required to draw up more detailed plans for their area and submit them to the LCDC. The agency was to ensure that local plans met state-wide goals.

That process is almost complete. And with the state about to enter a new phase of land-use planning, the LCDC is poised to accept a new role. The question



Emerald Graphic

of what that role shall be figures to be a major legislative battle this session.

Needless to say, there have been large Oregon interests unhappy with the idea of the state having any say in how localities use their land.

In 1976, opponents, backed largely by development and realty interests, attempted a repeal at the ballot box. They failed. Two years later they tried again and lost by an even greater margin.

According to House Majority Leader Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, those endorsements at the polls were expressions by the voters that the beaches of Lincoln County belong to everyone in the state, not just the

people who live there.

"We have, through those referenda, declared that we are in the same lifeboat together — we're in a lifeboat called Earth — and we've only got the one vessel."

Kerans allows that the LCDC is, in part, a redefinition of the word independence. But, he says, that redefinition is necessary.

"The question is one of do we have the independence to destroy permanently the vessel that we're in or should we owe our allegiance to another, and I think higher, form of independence, and that is the ability to succeed ourselves with future generations."

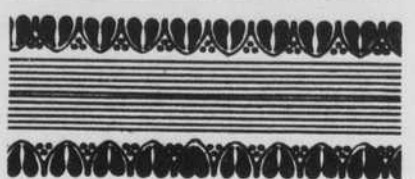
According to Eldon Hoet,

legislative liaison for the LCDC, most opposition to the concept of state-wide planning comes from those with a financial interest in development.

Hoet says that the LCDC process took the decisions out of the backroom and put them in the cold light of the hearing process, a process that makes some uncomfortable.

Tomorrow: The three major legislative plans to redefine the LCDC.

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Forum debates fate of timber

By GABRIEL BOEHMER
Of the Emerald

Forest service and timber industry representatives and conservationists traded opinions on the future of the Willamette National Forest Wednesday evening.

The cutting of old-growth timber in the 1.6 billion-acre Willamette National Forest has sparked conservationists' interest in the forest's resource management plan.

The timber industry is asking the forest service to allow increased cutting of old-growth timber. Conservationists claim the timber should be protected as a national resource and that some wildlife depends on its protection for survival.

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 requires the planning process for the Willamette forest to be completed by 1985.

Conservationists say they doubt the plan will be put into

effect by that time.

"I'm afraid it's going to turn out like the space shuttle and be three years behind schedule," says Sierra Club representative Jack Desmond.

Planning has been hindered by confusion over the definition of old-growth timber, Desmond explains.

"Nobody really agrees what old growth is."

Getting the forest service to acknowledge old-growth timber as a national resource is the top priority of the conservationists involved in the planning process.

"With the forest service plan we have a chance to change the forest plan of the Willamette," Desmond says.

The forest service has defined approximately 395,000 acres of Willamette National Forest timber as old growth, but Oregon Wilderness Coalition associate conservation director Andy Kerr believes there could be as much as 1,000,000 acres.

Kerr attributes the difference in figures to the "inherent bias of the bureaucracy."

The majority of the forest service staff is employed for timber-cutting issues and not for recreational or resource issues, he claims.

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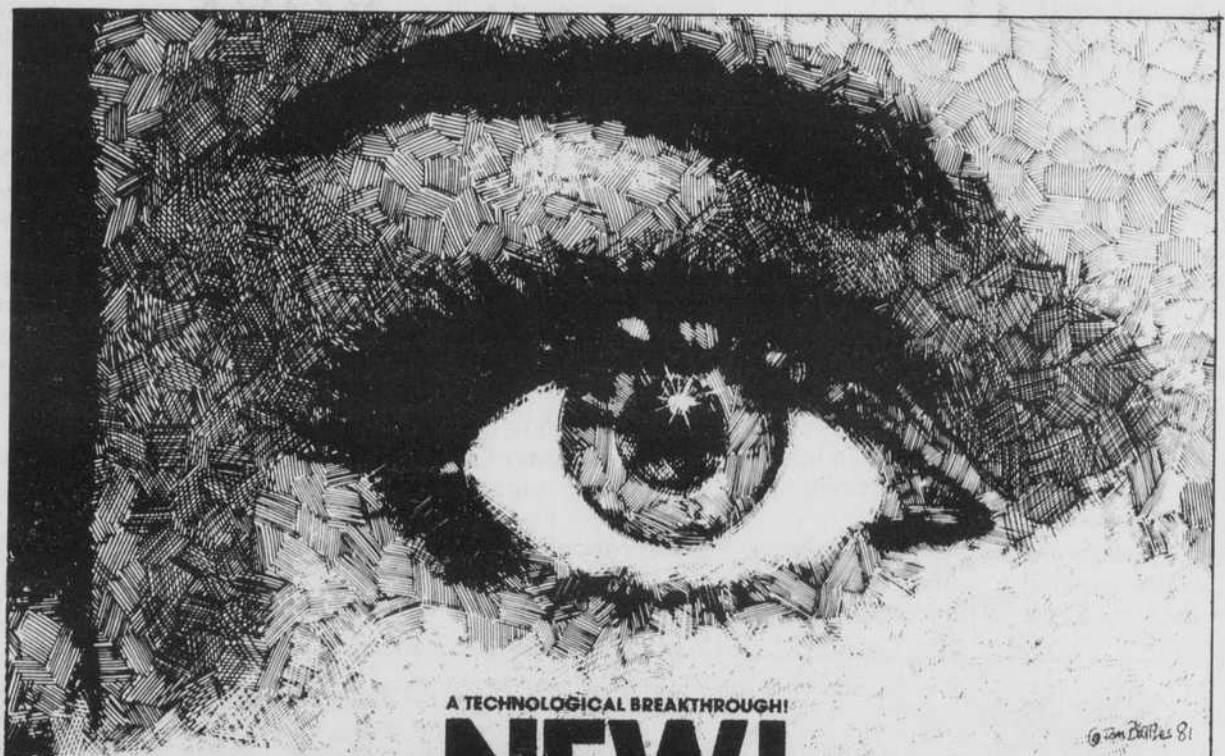
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