

making the news

From Associated Press Reports

PORTLAND (AP) — Warm temperatures and a light snowpack in the mountains could mean trouble next summer for Oregon farmers who irrigate their crops, weather officials said Monday.

Tom George, who directs the Portland snow survey office for the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, said there is half an inch less water in the snow on Mount Hood than at a similar time in 1977, a year of record drought in the region.

A snow measuring station near Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood showed the snow 29 inches deep on Friday. It contained seven and a half inches of water, George said.

"The situation bodes ill for farming and especially for irrigation," he said.

George said the water content in the Diamond Lake snow course in Southern Oregon was a record low 1.1 inches, or 8 percent of normal. He said other Oregon snow areas had similar situations.

In contrast, the snow depth in the area of Canada that feeds the Columbia River system was 125 percent above normal, he said.

FLORENCE — Officials of three government agencies say they are planning to dynamite a large chunk of offshore rock at Devil's Elbow State Park north of here in an effort to prevent rock climbers from being swept to their deaths.

Planners from the U.S. Forest Service, the Oregon Parks Division and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife will blast a huge rock that they say forms a dangerous "steppingstone" between the north end of the beach and Conical Rock, a popular spot for climbing enthusiasts.

Officials are concerned because at least seven people have died in the past 10 years while trying to cross the slippery gap to Conical Rock.

State appeals court frees woman from mental home

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon Court of Appeals today ordered a woman released from a state hospital for the mentally retarded under terms of a new law restricting involuntary commitments.

In the first appeal under the law passed by the 1979 Legislature, the court said the state can't hold people involuntarily in mental institutions because of physical handicaps not caused by retardation.

The decision struck down Marion County Circuit Judge Richard Barber's order committing Gail Grandy to a continued stay in Fairview Hospital and Training Center in Salem.

The Court of Appeals said that although the 22-year-old woman has severe physical handicaps and has been at Fairview since she was 9, there is not sufficient evidence that she is mentally retarded under terms of the new statute.

The law restricts involuntary commitments to people who are mentally retarded and who also, because of retardation, are either dangerous, cannot care for their personal needs or are not receiving adequate care.

The law also requires that all involuntary commitments be reviewed annually. Authorities obtained the lower court commitment order following a review of Grandy's case in the spring of 1980.

She has cerebral palsy, is deaf and is confined to a

wheelchair. Authorities said she can feed herself and can dress herself to some extent but otherwise needs physical assistance.

Psychiatric testimony showed that Grandy is unable to care for her needs "because of physical deficiencies, not intellectual ones," the appeals court said in an opinion by Judge Betty Roberts.

"We find not only a lack of clear and convincing evidence that (she) is mentally retarded, but clear evidence... that she does not meet the statutory standard required for involuntary commitment," Judge Roberts said.

In another ruling, the Court of Appeals upheld an appeals board's order blocking development of a 480-acre subdivision in the North Umpqua River area of Douglas County.

The decision affirmed the state Land Use Board of Appeals, which reversed county

commissioners' approval of the project on grounds that it would violate a state land use goal requiring preservation of agricultural land.

A land use watchdog organization, 1000 Friends of Oregon, joined in an appeal after county commissioners approved David Flury's plans to divide the tract in twelve 40-acre parcels.

The land, part of a larger 860-acre parcel, has been used for sheep and cattle grazing. But county officials concluded that the acreage is marginal for that use and could best be used for small woodlots.

In its ruling, the appeals court cited policies of the state Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) toward both farm land and forest land, which also is protected under another LCDC goal.

Douglas County's land use plan has not yet been approved by the state panel.

Anti-smoking referendum introduced in Senate

SALEM (AP) — Smoking would be banned in most indoor public places under a proposed referendum introduced in the Oregon Senate today.

The measure, sponsored by Sen. Rod Monroe, D-Portland, would take effect July 1, 1983 if passed by both houses and approved by voters in the May 1982 primary.

Monroe sponsored an unsuccessful

anti-smoking measure as a representative in 1979 and then also tried unsuccessfully to get the proposal on the ballot as an initiative.

However, he said "heightened public awareness" about the effects of smoke on non-smokers may give his proposal a better chance of passage this year.

Monroe said the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act is co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of more than 20 senators and representatives.



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