

emerald

Amazon tenants protest spraying

By Brooks Dareff
Of the Emerald

Amazon housing residents are concerned that the spraying of the herbicide "Round-up" at nearby South Eugene High School on Monday was spread by the wind to their adjacent residences and to common areas used for gardening and day care.

The presence of Round-up, administered twice a year on all 4J school district grounds, could quarantine the Amazon yard and day-care areas from children for eight weeks and prevent crop planting in gardens for one year, according to guidelines listed on the product's label.

Courtney Lupton, a member of a special task force formed by the Amazon Community Tenant's Association, says the sparse dandelion foliage along the chain link fence separating South Eugene High School's running track from the Amazon housing complex was sprayed between 2:00 and 2:30 p.m.

To prevent Round-up spray from drifting, the product's label warns not to "spray in winds in excess of 5 mph." At 2:50 p.m. the wind was blowing northeasterly at 6 mph at Mahlon Sweet Airport, and later gusted to 10 mph, according to a U.S. Weather Service official. The University-owned Amazon housing complex is located due west of South Eugene High School.

Gail Campbell of the 4J school district publication office, says school district officials "don't know whether it drifted." Oil is mixed with Round-up as a holding, anti-drift agent, she says. University chemistry professor Raymond Wolfe acknowledges that as an additive oil might inhibit drifting, but it might also prevent the ordinarily water soluble herbicide from diluting and breaking down, thus extending its toxic lifetime, as well as its effectiveness as an herbicide. In its pure form, Round-up (also known as Glyphosate or N-Phosphon-O-methylglycine) takes 18 days to dissipate. The label warns users not to "feed or forage for eight weeks after application," and "do not plant crops for one year following application."

Lupton says that Kent Smith of the Environmental Protection Agency's Salem office has taken blood samples from six community members who have reportedly suffered from nausea, diarrhea, headaches and throat irritation since Monday's spraying.



Spraying of herbicides near Amazon housing has tenants worried about health effects.

Photo by Bob Baker

While Professor Wolfe said he was not qualified to comment on Round-up's human toxicity, he said that generally, "it is very difficult to get unequivocal proof of a cause-effect relationship" in a situation where a controlled experiment is impossible.

Pending further action, Amazon Community Tenant Association is filing a "Report of Loss" with the Oregon State Department of Agriculture. The association will meet today with University legal aid adviser Chuck Spinner on the possibility of filing chemical trespass, criminal neglect or label violation lawsuits against Monsanto Chemical Company, the manufacturer of Round-up. On May 2, at 7 p.m., the tenants association will hold a special herbicide

meeting in the Amazon Community room at 24th Avenue and Patterson Street.

Regarding the spraying of Round-up, Wolfe says, "my position is, why take a chance if there is an alternative?" While the 4J school district permits voluntary weed control programs — hand pruning — for interested schools, they maintain the option to reinstitute spraying should a voluntary program be assessed as ineffective, according to point two of the school district's six-point weed control program.

Wolfe also questions the need for a massive weed control program, especially since many weeds provide food for birds and habitat for insects.



Photo by Mark Pynes

Mary Zentner, executive vice-president of the Pacific Northwest Four-Wheel Drive Association, testified against the closure of three Oregon beaches to off-road vehicles Tuesday at a Eugene City Council meeting.

Proposal to close beaches revs up dune buggy debate

By Ron Hunt
Of the Emerald

Off-road vehicle enthusiasts shifted into four-wheel drive Tuesday night to oppose the possible closure of three more Oregon beaches.

ORV drivers — and environmentalists supporting the closures — packed the Eugene City Council chambers to testify at a public hearing on a proposal to make more beaches off limits to ORVs.

Citizens for "Untreaded" Beaches would like the state parks and recreation division to close 17 miles of beach between the mouth of the Siuslaw River near Florence and Tenmile Creek south of the Umpqua River near Reedsport.

CUB supporters say the proposal should be adopted to ensure fairness for "non-vehicle beach recreationists," aesthetic values, public safety, and the protection of wildlife like the "snowy plover" bird.

ORV enthusiasts say present regulations are fair and that ORV use does not adversely affect wildlife and the public.

Another proposal, by the Umpqua Valley Audubon Society, would close two estuaries, at the Siltcoos River and Tenmile Creek, to motorized vehicles.

The current regulations "do strike a balance," said Rick Scott, manager of the Dunes National Recreation Area in the Siuslaw National Forest. Before 1979, 91 percent of Oregon beaches were open to ORVs from May 1 to Sept. 30, while the current figure is 47 percent, Scott said. In 1976, there were 1.7 million ORV visits to the NRA, but 5.4 million visits per year are expected by the year 2000, he added.

Proponents of more beach closures "want their own private beach," said Wallace Fields, of the Eugene

Sandbugs. Of the 1,500 or so people who signed the CUB petition, "most have a U of O address. It's a known fact they'll sign almost anything," he said.

Harvey Yarborough, also of the Eugene Sandbugs, said the NRA is already well managed. "Students don't pay much, if any, taxes. Listen to the people who work, play and pay taxes in the state of Oregon," he said.

Andy Kerr, associate director of conservation with the Oregon Wilderness Coalition, urged the adoption of both proposals. He cited a poll by Bardsley & Haslacher of Portland which found that 81 percent of Oregonians want less ORV activities on state lands, while only 9 percent want more.

"What about our families?" asked E.J. Nagy. "What about our kids? You want us to save it (the land) for birds, pigeons and the seagulls." ORV recreation strengthens families, he said, but dune-buggysts are being "closed out like orphans."

Closing more beaches would be a grave mistake, said Mary Zentner, executive vice president of the Pacific Northwest Four-Wheel Drive Association. Because ORV use continues to increase, closing more beaches would cause "over-use" of the land remaining open to ORVs.

ORVs and humans have an equal effect on wildlife, she said, adding that she once saw an eagle mating dance unaffected by a nearby helicopter.

Wendell Wood, of the Umpqua Valley Audubon Society, said signatures were gathered throughout the state for the CUB petition and that fewer than 10 percent of those who signed it are from Eugene.

The proposals would keep ORVs where they would cause the least biological impact, Wood said. Existing seasonal restrictions lead to conflict, he said, adding that

Continued on Page 3