

Hardesty Mountain wilderness raises feud

By Thomas Henderson
Of the Emerald

There once was a 149,000-acre lot of untouched forest in the Hardesty-Mount June Wilderness southeast of Eugene. Today, all that remain are 7,000 acres and a bitter feud between conservationists and the U.S. Forest Service.

Although Hardesty Mountain was included as wilderness by the U.S. House of Representatives in the recently passed Oregon Wilderness Bill, it was removed in the Senate and final compromise versions.

Controversy arose when the Hardesty-Mount Wilderness Council, a coalition of such conservation groups as the Oregon Natural Resources Council, National Wildlife Federation, Ob-

sidians, the University Survival Center and others, began meeting with the forest service to discuss proposed timber sales in the area.

According to Andy Kerr of the ONRC, the forest service initially seemed receptive to concerns for preserving Hardesty Mountain as wilderness area and agreed to hold off timber sales until the completion of a comprehensive plan for the forest.

However, the forest service already has signed a contract for 32 acres of the area to be clear-cut, with logging set to begin early this week, Kerr said.

In a press conference Monday, Kerr charged the forest service with violation of both the National Forest Management

Plan and the National Environment Policy Act and said the wilderness council would be filing a lawsuit in federal court today to obtain a restraining order against any further logging.

The forest service maintains the clear-cutting is necessary because a wind storm blew down a number of trees, creating a breeding ground for potentially hazardous Douglas Fir bark beetles.

Conservationists claim if the area were treated as wilderness, nature would resolve the bark beetle problem itself. If not, they say pheromone traps affecting the insects' reproduction ability could solve the problem without harming the forest.

However, Ron Humphrey, a forest service district ranger in

the Hardesty Mountain area, said the success of pheromone traps is speculative, as they have never been used on a large scale.

In addition, the beetles must not be allowed to damage potential timber sales so long as the land has been designated for multi-purpose use by the federal government, Humphrey said.

Conservationists, with the exception of a few groups like the Sierra Club, are not satisfied with the forest service response. Survival Center Director Doug Norlen said the bark beetle problem is merely an excuse to continue shrinking the already minimal Hardesty Mountain wilderness area.

Hardesty Mountain is the closest wilderness area to the University community, he said, and is an invaluable resource for scientific and recreational use.

"The public pressure (to preserve the area) has been there for years," he added, "but they've chosen to ignore it because they're an outlaw agency."

Extensive logging of the area will pose a further threat to such already endangered species as the wolverine and spotted owl, Norlen said. Although logged areas are replanted, the resulting uniformity of trees and environment is incompatible with the needs of the animals, he added.

Future of trees debated

By Cynthia Whitfield
Of the Emerald

In order to widen West Sixth and Seventh avenues, the City of Eugene plans to remove six 90-year-old maple trees. But Ballot Measure 52 seeks to save the trees by requiring voter approval of such street projects.

The Survival Center brought supporters of both sides of the issue to campus Monday, and the lines of disagreement were sharply drawn.

City Councilor John Ball argued against the measure, which would amend the city's charter to make the removal of any historic street trees within the city's 1915 boundaries more difficult. Ball contended that the old maples need to come out because "the streets are unsafe and inefficient."

But John Silverman, a U.S. Forest Service archeologist and one of the main organizers of the measure, asserts that the public is generally opposed to cutting down the trees.

"Last January, the City Council decreed that Sixth and Seventh avenues should be widened to four lanes through the heart of town," Silverman said. "That decision came despite opposition by the Eugene Downtown Commission, four of the seven members of the council-appointed Design Review Committee and the overwhelming majority of people at three public hearings."

Ball countered that the plan is necessary and that it already has been modified because of citizen input. He said the new plan calls for the removal of six trees instead of the original 37, as well as new tree planting.

"Years go into the development of these plans," Ball said. "If we impose the possibility of a last-minute veto — if at the last minute we might vote against such plans — the state won't want to provide us with funds."

But Silverman insisted that the state is being unfair in its plans to go ahead with the project.

"The state is now going ahead with the development... as a limited-access arterial, even though the current city charter requires voter approval of freeways and limited access arterials," he said. He argued that many people find Eugene attractive because the city has managed to "escape urban decay and environmental demise caused by street widening."

Ball, a 1976 University graduate and former member of the Survival Center, said he, too, is committed to environmental issues.

"The state is finally willing to pay attention to us after years of avoiding us like the plague," Ball said. "We were able to get their trust again. If we're going to expand we have to have an arterial system and, more important, safety."

Long discusses nuclear arms

Douglas County Commissioner Bruce Long visited campus Monday night to discuss how the American public views nuclear weapons.

Long, the Republican congressional candidate for the 4th District, said that it was one of his first opportunities to address the issue of nuclear arms

during his campaign. Long is running against incumbent Democrat Jim Weaver in the Nov. 6 election.

"Today there is a serious misconception of U.S. policy (on nuclear weapons)," Long said. Most people believe that the United States would never use nuclear weapons on a first-attack basis, he said.

According to Long, current U.S. policy advocates using nuclear weapons to counter a Soviet first strike or a large Soviet conventional invasion of the United States or its allies.

"It is the modernization issue that concerns me most," Long said.


He explained that because the amount of time required for a nuclear missile to reach its destination is decreasing — it's now only 30 minutes — the Soviet Union and the United States are increasingly relying on computers to make important launch decisions. Thus, a computer foul-up could easily ignite a nuclear holocaust.

Long fielded questions from a panel and from the audience. He emphasized that people must come to an understanding of U.S. nuclear arms policy.

"There's much I don't know about," he conceded.

The event was sponsored by the University Arms Control Forum.

Tuesday, October 23, 1984



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