

OSPIRG lobbies to clean up toxic waste sites

By Sean Nelson

Of the Emerald

The Oregon State Public Interest Research Group currently is campaigning to clean up toxic waste sites through a "superfund" program that would affect 204 of the 206 toxic waste sites in Oregon listed by the Department of Environmental Quality.

According to OSPIRG Executive Director Tom Novick, Senate Bill 122 is currently in a Joint Ways and Means subcommittee for funding approval.



Legislative issues

The bill is expected to reach full committee this week and should go to the Senate floor the week after, Novick said.

"My guess is that the middle of June is realistic" for House passage of the bill, Novick estimated. The bill was sponsored at the request of the DEQ, he said.

Presently only two of the 206 total sites are scheduled for cleanup, and OSPIRG proposes to raise money to clean up other sites through increases in waste dumping fees at the Arlington Waste Disposal facility in Arlington, Ore.

OSPIRG has proposed an increase from \$10 to \$20 a ton.

These funds are earmarked for the State Highway Department however, and OSPIRG would need to get an amendment to the Oregon Constitution passed to gain access to the tax revenues.

The actual cleanup of the sites would involve one of four possible actions: surface cleanup, site containment, site evacuation or on-site treatment of toxic wastes.

Sara Laumann, a staff attorney for OSPIRG, said that specific sites affected near the Eugene-Springfield area include: the Bethel-Danebo landfill, the Bloomburg Road landfill, the Cascade Plating Co., the Day Island landfill, J. H. Baxter and Co. and the L. D. MacFarland Co. Also affected are the Lawrence-David Co., Monsanto, the Short Mountain landfill, the South Willamette Street landfill and Southern Pacific and State

Industries Inc.

Of these the Bloomburg Road, Day Island and Bethel-Danebo landfills have drawn the attention of the University's OSPIRG chapter.

The DEQ noted the "potential exists for groundwater contamination" in all three sites. University student Ken Petri, who has researched the problem for OSPIRG, said the reason those sites have drawn the attention of OSPIRG is that they are all closed.

Often the DEQ will close a site when it has been filled to capacity, Petri said.

Petri points out that the kinds of wastes to be dealt with on the three sites include PCP, PCB and "higher than normal" concentrations of mercury, arsenic and chloroform.

PCPs are used for the treatment of wood such as that in telephone poles, and PCBs are used in generator oils.

In a sampling of well water close to the Bloomburg Road landfill an independent company found that concentrations of mercury, arsenic and chloroform all were present in high levels.

"The first two chemicals occur naturally in the soil," Petri said. "Chloroform, however, does not."

"The Day Island landfill underwent extensive testing by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency)," Petri said, and was determined to be "relatively safe." But dumping of toxic chemicals has occurred there.

The EPA noted many areas where the dumping occurred, Petri said. The problem is that if these chemicals were stored in barrels, they would eventually rust through and leakage would result, he said.

The Bethel-Danebo site contains PCPs and PCBs as well as various other chemicals, Petri said.

In addition to the effort being carried out at the University, a letter-writing campaign is being conducted by students at Portland State University.

The bill was approved unanimously by the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

OSPIRG estimates it would take from \$6 million to \$12 million to clean up a single site.

Stockwell Continued from Page 1

never know what would have happened if we had left the Sandinistas alone, Stockwell said, adding that since the Sandinistas have been in control, they have abolished the death penalty, released 800 of Somoza's National Guardsmen, launched a literacy campaign, built 25 clinics, returned land to the people and established free enterprise — all things that the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship failed to do.

Aside from the 10,000 mostly

Catholic peasants that Stockwell said have been killed by the U.S.-backed Contras, he alleges that covert CIA activities have caused the deaths of "gross millions" of people around the world, including one million Chinese and two million Vietnamese in the Vietnam war, as well as tens of thousands of citizens killed by CIA-trained "death squads" in Central and South America.

"They don't do these gory, bloody destabilizing things in

England, France, Sweden, Belgium or Denmark," said Stockwell. "It's all done in the Third World where the governments are too weak to fend off the brutalization of their people."

According to Stockwell, in the 200 years since the U.S. has been a country, it has been at war for a total of 50 years. It has had 15 major wars with an average of 10 years in between each, the longest peaceful

period falling in between World Wars I and II when, Stockwell alleged, we were invading seven different countries.

Before each war there was an orchestration of public opinion and then a trigger to set it off, usually a claimed communist threat, Stockwell said.

"It's been 22 years since the Gulf of Tonkin," Stockwell said. "You have to look around... We're overdue... we're being set up for

another war. We've spent over \$2 trillion on arms in the past six years gearing up for the next war."

Stockwell's lecture was sponsored by the Council for Human Rights in Latin America, What's Happening, the OSU International Affairs Task Force and the University Latin America Support Committee. It was endorsed by Witness for Peace, MEChA and the University International Studies department.

Gorge Continued from Page 1

not be done in this landscape," Hulse said. "This kind of predictive modeling allows everyone to see what the implications are of a decision before that decision is actually implemented in the

landscape."

The project culminates with two slide show presentations to the public in June, one here at the University and one in the community of Stevenson, Wash.

"I hope the presentations are really sort of meaningful, not only to the people within Eugene and in the school, but also to the people we'll be presenting to in the gorge — both local residents and residents who've cared about the landscape throughout the state," said graduate student Jennifer Steber.

Legislation passed in November created the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area and divided the gorge up into three management types. However, Hulse said, the details of management and what types of development would be allowed in the various areas still needs to be clarified. The data base the students have put together could help, he said.

Both the principal lobbyists for legislation protecting the gorge and the opponents to the legislation have expressed an interest in the project, Hulse said. The U.S. Forest Service

also has cooperated with the collection of information for the data base and is interested in the final result, he said.

To evaluate the impact of possible development on the economies and landscapes of the gorge, Hulse and his students made field trips to the gorge where they interviewed experts and concerned citizens.

These included the timber industry, the U.S. Forest Service, urban planners, real estate developers and people who use the gorge recreationally, Hulse said.

Students Steve Mullen and Jennifer Steber have been spending 40 to 60 hours per week on the project, which counts as 10 credits per term, they said. Mullen and Steber are the only two students who have been involved with the project since it began in September.

"Fear of large projects starts to diminish after awhile," Mullen said. The project

presented an unusual opportunity to work on such large-scale planning, he added.

The financial backing for the project came from a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as funding from the University and the landscape architecture department.

Hulse, who worked on a somewhat similar project focusing on Yosemite National Park when he was a graduate student at Harvard, does not know of any other schools combining computer color graphics and predictive modeling and applying them to an actual public landscape.

Software for the project was developed by University fine arts graduate student Rick Reed.

The students will present the project with a slide show and a poster exhibit on June 2, at 7 p.m. in Room 107 Lawrence Hall.

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