

COMMUNITY



Photo by Andre Rainier

Chuck Missar, facility manager at Spectra Physics, stands in wetlands that Spectra Physics is rebuilding to compensate for lands lost when the company built a new plant.

Wetland mitigation to start Spectra Physics slated to begin wetland restoration

By June Russell
Emerald Reporter

In spring 1990, Spectra Physics Retail Systems, makers of the laser scanners at grocery store checkout counters, began ground breaking in a new field: the restoration of wetlands.

With the help of a barrage of consultants, Spectra Physics formulated a plan to mitigate, or compensate, for wetlands filled when the facilities housing the company were built.

At a cost of more than \$850,000, the company has moved 15,000 yards of dirt in more than 750 truckloads to create uplands, lowlands, ash forest and a lake on the 40-acre site along the Amazon Channel in West Eugene.

And that's just the beginning. In the next year more than 10,000 trees and shrubs will be planted on the site and additional landscaping will be done to give the project more natural lines.

Spectra Physics will be responsible for the maintenance of the mitigation project for an additional five years, to make certain the wetland restoration is a success.

Spectra Physics' wetland mitigation project provides an example of the wetland legislation in action and a focal point for concerns raised about the future of commercial development in West Eugene. Much of the land set aside for commercial development is partial wetlands, subject to the same protective mitigation regulations affecting Spectra Physics.

Under an amendment in 1977 to the Clean Water Act of 1972, the definition of wetlands was ex-

panded to include areas saturated by surface or ground water and supporting vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

Wetlands generally include swamps, bogs, marshes or the wet prairie grasslands found in areas north of West 11th Avenue and west of Danebo Street.

The act is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which relies on the Army Corps of Engineers to administer the permit and enforcement provisions. Anyone filling in regulated wetlands is required to mitigate for the loss and compensate through restoration or creation of equal acres of wetlands.

When Spectra Physics built their facility in West Eugene, no one involved in the permit and planning process had ever heard of wetland regulations. The city of Eugene encouraged the company to fill-in and build on a 32-acre site in 1979 as an anchor for future high-tech development in the area. The company again sought a permit to fill a portion of the site and build a second building in 1985.

"About 1987, a person from the city came along and said, 'we think we have a problem, and that problem is wetlands,'" said Chuck Missar, facility manager at Spectra Physics. "A study in 1987 had found wetlands on our site. The contention was that we filled in wetlands in 1979 and 1985, and we had to mitigate for filling in to build the past buildings.

"We hired consultants and lawyers, and decid-

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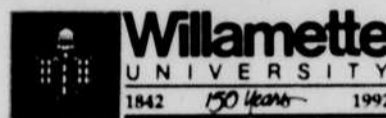
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OPEN LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON LESBIAN AND GAY CONCERNS

We wish to acknowledge the courageous act of Greg Johnson, whose honesty serves as a statement that sexual orientation is no longer a reason to be silent. We recognize a heterosexist climate that supports and encourages hostility toward Gays and Lesbians prevails at the University of Oregon. However, we hardly expected such an overt example of this to be displayed by the School of Law administration. Many of us have found ourselves in circumstances similar to that of Greg Johnson at one time or another, the difference being that we are not usually subjected to the public humiliation imposed on Johnson. Intimidation and silencing are more often accomplished behind closed doors.

It is not uncommon for departments to receive student complaints about classroom instructors. It is, however, unheard of for a department to coerce an instructor into an admission of wrong-doing for identifying her or him-self as a member of a protected class. If an African American instructor had chosen to discuss Civil Rights on Martin Luther King's birthday and had discussed her involvement in that movement, the University would have, no doubt, supported these actions. And rightly so.

The President's Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Concerns recently released a report documenting the discriminatory practices and attitudes encountered by Lesbian and Gay students, faculty, and staff. (Copies of the report are available through the President's office.)

President Brand has been very clear about his commitment to diversity and tolerance on campus. The Law School administration displayed its disrespect for the President's agenda, its disregard for University policies, and its obvious contempt for Lesbians and Gays.

The unfortunate message conveyed by the actions of the Law School administration is that it is permissible to silence certain individuals by virtue of their minority status. Gays and Lesbians are being told to keep quiet and run back into the closet. This is the same administration which has historically devalued African Americans, Hispanics, and women. Intentional or not, the Law School has created a dehumanizing atmosphere that has a chilling effect on all of us and is an embarrassment to a progressive educational institution.

The President's Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Concerns, University of Oregon
November 27, 1990

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