

# Water pollution: Later is here, folks

Water equals survival. Period. And Oregon's supply is growing increasingly endangered. Why? Contamination.

Industrial waste and various agricultural chemicals are the main culprits, finding their way into the state's water resource supplies in increasing amounts.

What we've been warned of for years is actually happening; no longer can we say we'll worry later.

Some examples: Portland officials have been warned by state and federal authorities not to use backup water supplies because doing so would draw nearby contaminated groundwater into the emptied cavity. This, combined with Oregon's water shortages, equals major trouble.

Thirty-two percent of Ontario's water wells contain excess nitrates, which have been linked with "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal condition where the blood's oxygen-carrying capacity is reduced. Dacthal, a poisonous herbicide, has also been detected.

Residents of Lakewood Estates, near Aurora, are now using bottled water because their wells are polluted with DCE, an industrial solvent associated with cancer and birth defects.

Where is it coming from? Fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide runoff, solid waste landfills, toxic spills and leaks, and buried waste are the biggest threats.

More examples: More than 80 percent of Oregon's 24 hazardous waste sites on the government's superfund cleanup list are now contaminating groundwater. Of the 25 landfills being monitored, more than 90 percent are leaking toxic chemicals into groundwater supplies.

So what do we do? One possible solution is a piece of legislation now being drawn up by the state's OSPIRG organization. The initiative contains three platforms.

Oregon law now provides citizens the right to know about the use of some industrial chemicals, but the law only covers 300 out of the 40,000 plus chemicals in use. The measure calls for expanded coverage to include additional industrial and agricultural chemicals.

The second platform addresses cleanup of existing contamination. Only a small amount of Oregon's known or suspected 1,000-plus hazardous waste sites have been cleaned up, with less than 50 now in the process of cleanup. The plan calls for more aggressive measures, a good idea since the present law has resulted in cleanup at only two sites since 1989.

Lastly, the measure demands a strengthened pollution prevention program, including forced reductions for waste-dumping companies not making progress. Presently, industry is required only to set goals and provide annual reports on its progress toward waste reduction.

The measure is not only a good idea — it could literally be a step toward our own survival. Support it, along with other measures aimed at helping our water supplies stay clean. Later is here.



**OPINION**

## Sorry Ducks could generate bucks



**THE FINE PRINT**

BY PAT MALACH

It's time to face the facts. The Duck men's basketball team sucks.

The Ducks have set new records for ineptness, losing to Washington State by the largest margin in decades. Arizona toppled the hapless hoopsters by 54. The Ducks even had their score doubled by the likes of the Montana Grizzlies. Being from Missoula, I kind of enjoyed seeing an 8,000-student, Big Sky school crush a 17,000-student Pac-10 school, but I had to ask the question: Is recruiting quality athletes to attend the University of Montana really that much easier than getting them to come to Eugene?

I doubt it. So what's the problem? It's not that any of the individual Ducks are terrible basketball players. They wouldn't be on the team if they were. There is just no chemistry. The individual Ducks just aren't able to gel as a competitive basketball team. (And, yes, for all you Duck faithfuls already starting your letters to the editor — the team has suffered injuries.)

But it's not necessary to purvey a gloom-and-doom attitude. Even if the Ducks have a single-digit-victory season, there's a silver lining to every cloud. They stayed in the game against USC, and at Mac Court they managed to avenge the fluke at Autzen Stadium in the fall against OSU.

But more important than any of that, with a little creativity, the in-debt athletic department could turn this drizzle of a basketball season into a money-making bonanza.

Here's one idea: I call it *Basketball Lotto*.

The premise of Basketball Lotto is simple. At every home game, the vendors already in place to sell programs would sell lottery tickets to students for \$5 apiece. At halftime, offi-

cialists would draw 10 names and those people would get to be the basketball team until a drawing at the next home game. A lottery for the coaching spot might work too.

The University would have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Consider the Ducks' performance this year. The lotto team would have about the same chances of winning as the recruited team, and attendance couldn't possibly fall any lower than it has the past few home games. After all, most of the fans at Duck games in these lean times are there to see players on opposing teams in the first place. In fact, attendance might even rise if people know their friends are going to be going up against the Don MacLeans, Tracy Murrays and Harold Miners of the league.

The advantages of Basketball Lotto don't end there.

The number of students allowed to compete in intercollegiate athletics would increase dramatically (which might positively affect the graduation rate); and not only would the University make money off the lotto ticket sales, it would save money it currently pays out in scholarships. Think of the money the University would save by not having to pay Don Monson's five-digit salary, which, coincidentally, is among the lowest in the league.

Basketball Lotto would be a financial coup.

In troubled times we need to double our efforts, rethink our priorities and devise some creative strategies for helping the beleaguered University.

If Basketball Lotto is a success, maybe we can introduce the lotto concept for the band if they don't learn to play "American Pie" when UCLA's Don MacLean is introduced.

Other creative money-making ventures are on the horizon if University officials would just put on their thinking caps. The University is going to pay artist George Greenamayer \$4,000 to redesign his fine

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sculpture that's being moved from the front of the Casanova Center. But with the huge Architecture and Allied Arts Department on campus, why not involve students in the redesign and make money at the same time.

The University could sponsor another contest. For say, \$25, students could submit their own redesign proposals. The student who submitted the winning design could be paid \$2,500 and increase the original investment by 100 fold. There are 1,456 students enrolled in the AAA Department. If less than 10 percent of them submitted designs, the University would break even. Any amount over 100 entries would be pure profit.

The money would be going to students (a pseudo scholarship), and the entire project would be a practical application of the educations they are receiving. Everyone would be a winner, except of course Greenamayer, the East Coast resident who created the ugly piece of ... uh, sculpture in the first place.

What are we waiting for?

Pat Malach is managing editor of the Emerald.

**CORRECTION**

Daniel Stiles' name was left off of a letter co-written with John Whiteside in the Feb. 17 Emerald. The Emerald regrets this error.

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