

Nestucca protection debated

By Martina Joffe
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

SALEM — A bill in the Oregon Legislature would remove portions of the Nestucca River from the Oregon Scenic Waterway System.

The river, south of coastal Tillamook, was added to the scenic waterway program by a statewide ballot initiative in 1988.

Those for and against the bill say they want to protect the river's environment, though each has different strategies for that protection. One side's protection of the river and its ecosystem includes the construction of a dam on a creek on the upper Nestucca.

Sally Cross, of the Oregon Natural Resources Council, and other environmental groups see bills like this as a danger to the way in which state and federally protected species and habitat are kept protected.

The portion of the river that would be affected if the bill passes is a 15.3-mile segment from Ginger Creek to the Rocky Bend compound on the upper Nestucca. A portion of the river that would be affected contains a wetland called Meadow Lake, which is habitat for a federally endangered plant, the Nelson's checkermallow.

According to Ralph Friedman's 1987 book, *Oregon for the Curious*, "many fishermen consider the Nestucca River, near Hebo, the finest fishing stream in the state."

The river is also exalted by a Seattle adventure group called the Mountaineers. Their canoe routes guidebook describes the Nestucca as a "beautiful stream that drains the Coast Range south of Tillamook."

But everybody wants different things from the river.

McMinnville Power and Light wants to build a dam for a municipal water supply on the upper Nestucca's Walker Creek.

Cross, who opposes the bill, said the Nestucca was a popular recreation site in need of continued and genuine protection. She said significant salmon runs existed on the river and said if the scenic waterway designation were revoked, the river's ecosystem would be seriously degraded.

Les Helgusen, who initiated the bill, is a property owner along the river. Helgusen formed Friends of the Nestucca, a public-benefit corporation that represents land owners who live along the Nestucca.

Friends of the Nestucca supports some development of the river, including a proposed dam, and property owners' rights more than national environmental laws. Helgusen said the Nestucca had been protected "without a study with a scientific basis."

Helgusen, a botanist and professional resources consultant, said few fish in the river would be affected by either the dam or by revoking the wild and scenic river status of the Nestucca.

Helgusen said there were wild salmon on the river but that "a second dam could improve things."

Jack Nicholls of McMinnville Power and Light supports the bill and has been proposing a dam on the river for several years.

Nicholls said McMinnville is exceeding population projections for its water supply and the utility company would need more water for the city soon.

In testimony before the House Natural Resources Committee April 13, Nicholls grumbled repeatedly about botanists, kayakers and other nature lovers who trespass on private lands, destroy plant life and generally disrespect private property.

Helgusen said some of the support for the bill comes from property owners who want to keep wild and scenic river tourists off of their land. Both Nicholls and Helgusen said urban outdoor enthusiasts seeking wilderness experiences thoughtlessly trample plant life, such as the endangered checkermallow, leave trash and trespass on residents' private property.

Nicholls and Helgusen said the river would be better cared for by property owners and by putting in the proposed dam, than it would be with its current Oregon wild and scenic protection.

However, Cross said, "they want to stop the people who kayak. To blame the scenic waterway system is to blame the wrong culprit."

Tagging proposed to protect wild fish

By Martina Joffe
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

SALEM — There are several bills in the Oregon Legislature that are meant to protect wild fish stocks in Oregon.

Wild fish, as opposed to agriculturally raised hatchery fish, contain genes that make them resilient to disease and more capable of surviving through environmental extremes, such as weather variations and increases in predation.

Hatchery fish are of similar genetic lineage and bred using the same agricultural methods as might be used on domestic cows or corn.

It is because of wild fish's highly adaptive nature and resilience to disease that groups such as Oregon Trout, Oregon South Coast Fishermen and even some power companies are supporting House Joint Resolution 11.

Power companies have been criticized for the declining fish population by not protecting fish from turbines, which grind up the fish as they travel up and down rivers.

Jim Myron of Oregon Trout, a group devoted to protection of wild fish, said 80 percent of fish are killed on their way downstream, many in the turbines of hydroelectric dams. Myron and University conservation biologists said that of the fish that survive the voyage downstream, only half will return to spawn.

It is not known what percentage of the remaining trout and salmon are domestically raised hatchery fish and how many are indigenous wild fish.

Dr. Fred Allendorf, a conservation biologist from the University of Montana, said when the pioneers first came West, the wild salmon population was estimated at more than 12 million fish. The current number is down to about half of a million.

Salmon are extinct in many rivers, notably the Snake River Sockeye salmon. Last year, Fish and Wildlife biologists saw one lone male return to the river to spawn.

Myron said the scientists were saddened when no female came to join him. Myron said the lone male Sockeye's sperm was frozen by biologists until the time exists when it is safe for his genes to be passed on to a new generation. Fish and Wildlife biologists and other biologists are stockpiling wild salmon sperm because of the fear that all wild salmon will go extinct.

One of the wild fish bills, House Joint Measure 11, would create an agreement requiring Alaska, California, Idaho, British Columbia and Oregon to join in the effort to mark all hatchery fish by clipping the adipose fin, a small fin on the fish's underside. The National Marine Fisheries Service and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries would work together on the project.

The agreement might be a precursor to an international agreement that would protect migratory wild fish.

By clipping the adipose fin, fishermen and scientists will be able to distinguish between hatchery fish and wild fish, which look the same. Fishermen would be required by law to throw back wild fish.

"Wild stocks are almost non-existent on the coast," Myron said.

Higher ed considers credit crackdown

By Chris Penttila
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

University senior Mike Eskeldson plans to return for a fifth year and expects to graduate in June 1994.

Eskeldson, 21, is just one of many college students statewide who needs a fifth year of schooling to earn a bachelor's degree.

"It just takes some students longer," he said.

But some state officials have

decided that enough is enough.

The board of higher education is now considering a recommendation that would require all resident undergraduate students attending Oregon's state colleges or universities to pay out-of-state tuition if they exceed a proposed credit limit.

The recommendation, called the Credit Hour Threshold Policy, would charge students non-resident tuition rates when they

take more courses than they need to graduate. It would apply to all undergraduates with Oregon residency who have accumulated at least 48 credit hours beyond their specific baccalaureate degree requirements.

Graduate and out-of-state students would not be affected by the change. If the board approves the proposal in July, it would take affect no later than

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