

SOUND OFF
Should the United States spend millions of dollars to further explore the possibility of life on Mars? Let us know.

OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

CONTACT US
BY MAIL: P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
BY PHONE: (541) 346-5511
BY E-MAIL: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu
IN PERSON: Suite 300, EMU

A Logging Landslide

Clear-cutting in Oregon forests may be behind recent flooding disasters

It's easy to forget the recent months of pouring rain when the last few days have been so sunny and clear. But if we just look at the still near-over-flowing, brown Willamette River, we see the rains and floods and landslides are not far behind us. And if the rains return, there is a strong possibility the floods and landslides will be back

OPINION



Laura Daniel

again, bringing more disaster.

People referred to the floods and landslides that occurred last November as "natural disasters," but how natural were they? Of course, flooding and landslides occur naturally, but with decades of clear-cutting

behind us these "natural" disasters are receiving a little help from mankind.

The clear-cutting of Oregon's forests and the building of logging roads increases peak flows in mountain streams by anywhere from 20 to 50 percent, said Forest Service Hydrologist Gordon Grant. When it rains, the water levels of these streams rise and often cause flooding. Without trees to maintain topsoil, the ground cannot absorb the excess water, which, along with dirt, drains into streams and rivers, increasing the chance of floods and landslides.

The exact relationship between logging and flooding is not simple. X number of felled trees does not equal x number of floods, but a connection between logging

and flooding is evident, and it can no longer be ignored.

Obviously, because the timber industry is highly profitable in Oregon, logging is not going to disappear anytime soon. But to prevent floods and landslides caused by logging, current forest practices need to be reevaluated.

Many of the laws regulating logging in Oregon forests were implemented decades ago. However, because the past 20 years have not been particularly wet, these laws have not been adequately tested until recently. Now that we are finding logging in one place affects the environment in another, the laws need to be revised to prevent

more disasters.

Not only do we need to think about the effect clear-cutting has on the habitat of forest and stream life, but we also need to think about the threat posed to humans who live in danger zones. Areas near rivers face potential flooding while areas on or near mountainous terrain must deal with landslides. Timber profits are not more important than human lives.

One way to decrease the threat to homes and communities is to change the zoning standards. Currently, when private property owners wish to build on their land, own-

ers are not required to have a geologist survey the land for the possibility of floods or landslides. And if a private property owner's home is built in a safe area, neighboring land owners may log nearby forests and cause a change in the natural run-off patterns. This could lead to floods or landslides that would harm homeowners and their property.

Laws that prevent such environmental turmoil must be implemented if the incidence of flooding and landslides is going to drop. The effects of clear-cutting have been ignored for too long. We should not wait for future floods and landslides to ruin more lives before logging laws are changed.

Laura Daniel, a junior majoring in biology, is a columnist for the Emerald. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper. She can be reached by e-mail at moonpie@gladstone.uoregon.edu.



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159, EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

Editor-in-Chief: Steven Asbury

Managing Editor: Thom Schoenborn

Night Editor: Sarah Kickler

Community: Jennifer Schmitt, editor. Eric Collins

Entertainment: Nicole Kreuger, editor. Jesse Stephenson

Higher Education: Laura Cadiz, editor. Benjamin Kwasney

Opinion: Ashley Bach, Brian Diamond, editors.

Chris Hutchinson, illustrator.

Student Activities: Angie Suchy, editor. Autumn DePoe, Dana Williamson

Sports: Mark McTyre, editor. Andrea DeYoung, assistant editor.

Chris Hansen, Ryan Frank, Ryan Halvorsen

Copy Desk: Sarah Kickler, copy chief. Holly Sanders, Mike Schmierbach, Kendra Smith

Presentation: Dennis Bolt, editor. Matt Garlon

Photography: Mathew Stiffler, editor. Joe Bunik, Amanda Erickson, Shannon Kilduff, Chad Patteson

Freelance: Carl Yeh, editor. On-Line: Nicholas Stiffler, director.

General Manager: Judy Riedl

Advertising: Becky Merchant, director. Anne Amador, Lee Yen Beh, Yujin Chi, Matt Johnson, Andrew Lakefish, Anne Miller, Trina Shanaman, Rose Soil, Matt Solomon, Greg Walsh

Classified: Tara Sloan, manager. Natasha Lumpkin, Debbie Levy, Heather Moye

Production: Michele Ross, manager. Ingrid White, coordinator.

Shawna Abele, Laura Daniel, Trevor Kearney, Tara Knight, Melissa Lebahn, Molly McCanta, Ellen Milne, Mike Young

Business: Kathy Carbone, supervisor. Judy Connolly

Distribution: John Long, Dave Ovali, Ferenc Rakoczi

Newsroom

Display Advertising

Business Office

Classified Advertising

(541) 346-5511

(541) 346-3712

(541) 346-5512

(541) 346-4343

Mayor, governor waffle on higher education

OUR OPINION: Mayor Jim Torrey and Governor John Kitzhaber forget college issues in recent speeches

Newly elected Eugene mayor Jim Torrey and Gov. John Kitzhaber discussed the state of the city and state on Monday and Tuesday and not surprisingly, had their share of hits and misses.

Torrey's talk at the Eugene Conference Center on Monday was mostly promising. His focus on public safety and handling the local effects of Measure 47 were consistent with the goals he set forth at a meeting with the Emerald editorial board before the election.

Those goals, among others, were the reason we endorsed Torrey for mayor. And we hope he follows through on his promises. Measure 47 was Torrey's priority even before it passed. As evidenced by his speech, this skillful forecasting seems to be paying off.

Torrey also said public safety is far from complete. The program of community policing, and the concept behind it, still needs more money and time. We couldn't agree more.

Torrey promised before the election to fight for higher education causes. However, since he has taken office little, if any, attention has been given to the city's relationship with the University or Torrey's personal crusade on behalf of higher education.

We understand the mayor has little control over the University's destiny. However, his vow to fight tuition increases in Salem and hope of joining together with other college mayors in the state to advocate on behalf of higher education cannot be overlooked. These are pledges that must be explored with the utmost effort.

And Torrey's few ideas of joining together the University and the city are good ones that should see fruition. A real connection can only be found with effort by both sides, but holding a City Council meeting at the University, like Torrey proposed, would help bridge the gap.

Kitzhaber, on the other hand, has already stood for higher education in the public arena. His 1997-99 budget called for a two-year tuition freeze and using the \$383 million tax kicker, in part, for schools. But when he came to Knight Library on Tuesday to further discuss his State of the State address, any talk of higher education was sorely lacking.

" [Torrey's] vow to fight tuition increases in Salem and hope of joining together with other college mayors in the state to advocate on behalf of higher education cannot be overlooked. "

One would expect the governor to discuss higher education issues when speaking at the largest four-year college in the state. But his comments only amounted to a few sentences, and that was only in response to a question from an Emerald reporter.

Both Kitzhaber and Torrey's speeches were disconcerting to a point. Perhaps all we have to rely on is their previous comments on behalf of higher education. But only a month has passed since Kitzhaber's budget, and Torrey has only been in office for three days. Let us hope each of these men's future actions will speak louder than their words.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.