

Eugene wetlands receive funds

■ Congressional funds will aid a local environmental program that works on saving wetlands

By Sue Ryan
Oregon Daily Emerald

The West Eugene Wetlands Program will receive \$1.5 million in funding, thanks to Congress's approval of the Interior Appropriations Bill.

"[The bill] funds each department within the government," said Kristine Greco, an aide to Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Eugene.

The monies are earmarked for the Bureau of Land Management's real estate budget and will be used to buy 3,500 acres of additional wetland properties along the Amazon Creek in and near Eugene. The bureau is part of a coalition that administers the wetlands program.

"The money will go to priority acquisitions," said Scott Duckett of Eugene's mitigation bank program. "The goal is to form large, contiguous

blocks (of wetlands) and get closer to connecting to Fern Ridge Reservoir."

Ed Alverson, an ecologist with The Nature Conservancy who is working with the city on the program, said the \$1.5 million approved for 2002 is the next installment in congressional funding that, over the last 10 years, has been used for land purchases in Eugene.

The coalition, which started the program in 1992, includes the city's public works department, the Bureau of Land Management and The Nature Conservancy. The program aims to create a viable eco-wetland system to meet public and private uses of the area.

It protects approximately 8,000 acres of wetlands, which are defined as land where water exists at or near the surface of the soil.

The Eugene wetlands provide habitat for birds and an environment for many endangered plants species, including Bradshaw's lo-

matium, the Willamette daisy and Kincaid's lupine, Alverson said.

"A number of native plants listed (as endangered) are found in only a few remnants of prairie wetlands in the Willamette Valley," he said. "And these wetlands are one of those areas."

DeFazio requested that funding for the wetlands program be included in the bill, and said he was pleased with its passage.

"The West Eugene Wetlands Program stands as a national model for creating a balance between environmental protection and development," he said in a statement.

The bill also provides \$500,000 for Waldo Lake in the Willamette National Forest. The money for Waldo Lake will be used to improve sanitation conditions at the lake in order to protect its water quality.

Sue Ryan is a community reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. She can be reached at sueryan@dailyemerald.com.

Arab-Israeli conflict escalates again

By Michael Matza
Knight Ridder Newspapers

BETHLEHEM, West Bank (KRT) — Intensifying the broadest invasion of Palestinian territory in more than a year of violence, Israeli troops pressed sharply into Bethlehem, killing two Palestinians in a gun battle not far from Manger Square.

The Israeli army said Palestinians threw a bomb at an Israeli tank near El Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem on Sunday morning, setting off a fierce exchange of fire in which the two men died. A third, unidentified Palestinian man was killed when an Israeli tank shell exploded in nearby Beit Jala.

The Israelis say they entered Bethlehem and Beit Jala to stop Palestinian gunmen from firing on Gilo, a nearby Jewish neighborhood. Elsewhere in the West Bank, the incursions were designed to apprehend Palestinians planning attacks on Israel, Israeli officials said.

Palestinian militants have waged a suicide bombing campaign against Israel since an uprising against Israeli occupation erupted almost 13 months ago after peace negotiations collapsed.

At least 23 Palestinians and one Israeli were killed in fighting last week and Sunday after the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine took responsibility for the assassination Wednesday of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi. The group said the killing was to avenge the Israeli assassination of its leader, Mustafa Zibri, in August.

Israeli troops responded by deploying tanks to cordon off seven towns in the Palestinian-controlled West Bank. In Bethlehem, Israeli tanks took up positions outside two hotels, which they commandeered. Six tanks overlooked Bethlehem from surrounding hillsides.

In addition, Israeli troops and armor have entered Ramallah, Tulkarim, Jenin, Nablus and Qalqilyah and Beit Jala.

The incursions are the largest assault by Israel against the Palestinians since it started turning territory over to Yasser Arafat's autonomous Palestinian Authority in 1994 under interim peace accords.

The United States has been urging the sides to end the fighting to avoid rocking the international an-

terrorism alliance, including Arab and other Muslim states, that so far has backed U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan.

On Saturday, the State Department issued a statement that said in part: "Israeli entries into Palestinian-controlled areas are not helpful, complicate the situation, and should be halted." On Sunday, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell telephoned Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to urge an end to the fighting.

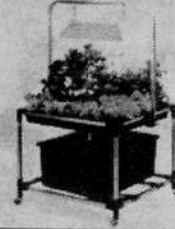
Yet each side continued to blame the other.

"The end game which (Sharon) is now pursuing is to destroy the Palestinian Authority and to destroy the peace process," top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said in a television interview Sunday.

"The state of Israel has the right to defend the lives of Israelis. We don't have an interest in staying in the Palestinian cities. That's not the goal of this activity," Israeli cabinet secretary Gideon Saar said. "If there will be quiet, we'll pull out."

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