

Neighbors meet to hear about toxic groundwater

Sixty test wells have been contaminated by a toxic plume that was found in northern and western Eugene neighborhoods

Andrew Black
Environment/Science/Technology

Residents concerned about the affects of contaminated groundwater and the subsequent livability of their neighborhoods listened to representatives from the Department of Environmental Quality and the Oregon Toxics Alliance on Monday, receiving the latest information on an investigation of a toxic plume found beneath a Union Pacific railroad in West Eugene.

One message was clear: Don't drink the well water. But the potential affects to human health, property values and fish and wildlife all remained murky.

Years of dumping and spills on the 400-acre industrial site have contributed to the formation of toxic plumes in local neighborhoods. DEQ and Union Pacific have been studying the site for al-

most 10 years, and the agencies have detected more than 36 hazardous chemicals.

DEQ Project Manager Gene Wong, who presented to a full room of more than 60 community members, said 60 test wells sampled in the affected area showed that a plume of contaminated groundwater was slowly moving north in the River Road neighborhood. Another plume is moving westward, toward the Trainsong neighborhood, he added.

Wong said DEQ is reviewing draft reports formed during the past several years to verify that Union Pacific environmental investigations are adequate for forming the foundation for cleanup strategies.

"If there are holes in the data, we'll ask Union Pacific to do more investigations," Wong said. "It is safe to irrigate gardens and wash cars with the water; everyone that is affected has drinking water served by EWEB with water from the McKenzie River."

Trainsong Neighbors President

Michael Waldorf said he thinks Union Pacific and DEQ are moving forward too quickly on the project, and that community involvement is vital.

"If I had a well, I sure wouldn't irrigate my vegetables with the water," Waldorf said. "When you mix those contaminants, who knows what kind of soup you're getting."

Oregon Toxics Alliance Director David Monk said that to make sure the investigation is accurate and comprehensive, it is important for community members to be involved in the process.

"We want to make sure that the investigation is complete and that all the contaminants are identified," Monk said. "We believe that there are other chemical spills and illegal dumpings in the rail yard that haven't yet been identified. From the first-hand stories of illness and illegal dumpings, we believe there is much more to this case than the DEQ has identified."

Contact the reporter at andrewblack@dailyemerald.com.

Marijuana

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she thought the fine would hurt young and old people alike.

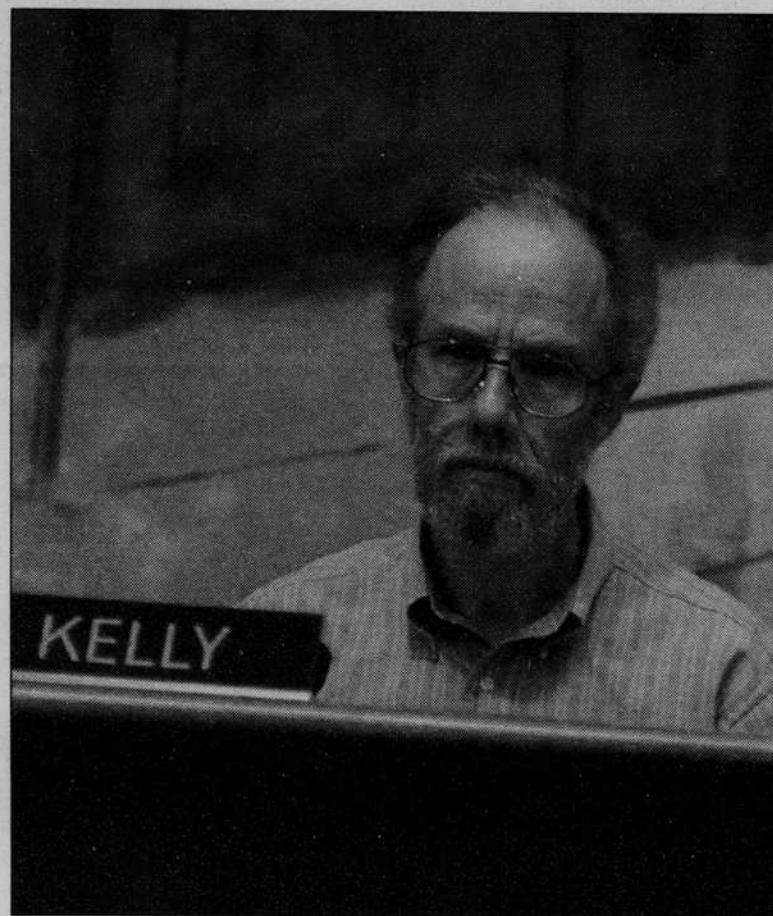
"I will be voting against this," she said. "I don't think that raising the fine will be a deterrent."

Taylor added that forcing people into treatment isn't effective if there is no willingness to change, and most people not willing to stop smoking don't think about the difference between \$100 and \$250.

Ward 3 City Councilor David Kelly, who represents the University area, said the only reason he was supporting the measure was because of the advantage the diversion will bring to students. Successful completion of the program will result in the city dropping the conviction for first-time offenders, and students who are convicted of drug possession could potentially lose financial aid if it stays on their record.

Kelly added that he will be listening to make sure medical marijuana patients aren't being harmed, and to make sure offenders are not automatically charged \$250, warning that he would not hesitate to revisit the issue if he found that it was harmful or abused.

Contact the senior news reporter at janmontry@dailyemerald.com.



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Ward 3 City Councilor David Kelly, who represents University students, voted yes on the ordinance to increase the fine for less than an ounce of marijuana.

Flasher

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Pilliod said she raced to reach the rec center and call the Eugene Police Department. The police logged the call at 6:34 a.m. and noted the suspect description but were unable to locate the flasher. Pilliod described the suspect as a middle-aged Caucasian male with short brown hair and a full beard. She said the man was wearing a long-sleeved, horizontally striped shirt, dark pants and large glasses.

Despite a roughly close proximity in reported locations, the description of Pilliod's flasher in no way resembles those reported to EPD over the weekend.

A female called EPD at 1:50 a.m. Saturday to report a male suspect masturbating with his pants around his knees while following her and her friends back to her residence near East 19th Avenue and Alder Street. The suspect was described as

a Caucasian male in his 20s wearing a handkerchief over his face. The responding officers were not able to locate the suspect, who was last seen on Alder Street between East 17th and East 18th avenues.

Less than an hour later, a second female caller gave a similar description of a suspect masturbating on her front porch. The female called EPD at 2:39 a.m. after peering out a window to view the suspect, who had rung her doorbell. Officers were unable to locate the suspect, who left the scene before they arrived.

Still settling down from the initial shock of the crime, Pilliod said the incident has given her reason to think twice about walking home alone and has made the walk to and from her car a task now filled with fear and uncertainty.

"I have always felt really comfortable in my neighborhood," she said. "It's unbelievable — I'm so angry."

Contact the reporter at caronalarab@dailyemerald.com.

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