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New growth threatens old growth

Clackamas Community College is supporting the construction of a road that would require the removal of old growth trees

By Abigail Neet
News Editor

Clackamas Community College is supporting the controversial construction of a road that runs through an old growth forest with trees up to 1,000 years old.

Clackamas County is working on a plan that would extend Sunnybrook Road from 82nd Avenue to Harmony Road. The road would run through 3-Creeks natural area. 3-Creeks is 19 acres of streams, wetlands and upland habitat along Mt. Scott Creek, Phillips Creek and Deer (Dean) Creek.

Streams provide habitat to a resident Cutthroat Trout and a very small number of still returning Coho Salmon and Steelhead. Mammals living in the area are beavers, mink, otter and a wide variety of bird species. Grabill, instructor at CCC believes putting the road in would take things off for the current inhabitants of 3-Creeks. He recalled the Tsunami Crew visits 3-Creeks each week to restore the area. The crew began over nine years ago and is still strong.

The group is run by Chris Runyard, who is at Portland Community College. Runyard lead the group's

sustainability club on a tour of the area.

According to Grabill, Runyard is unsupportive of the plan to extend Sunnybrook.

Grabill explained that the Tsunami group put a lot of work into bringing 3-Creeks back to life. The Tsunami group worked on removing invasive species and planting native species, as well as cleaning the area up.

Grabill said he wondered if the county considered that the area was being taken care of in their decision making process.

Grabill also believes in the importance of old trees saying "Old trees are symbols of the power of the ecosystem. They provide homes for many different species, and it seems like they deserve to be protected."

"They speak to our values and represent the greater wilderness, literally, and symbolically," he added. "It would be a real shame to cut them down."

The road would run on top of the bluff and behind the Aquatic Center and Harmony Campus.

Grabill explained that the road would separate land and interrupt life patterns.

"Species like to have space between civilization and wild-life," Grabill said.

This project is on a list of plans for the county.

According to Courtney Wilton, vice president of College Services,

"Extension is necessary for development of Harmony."

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Wilton explained that the college has received \$8.5 million from the state and would need another \$20 million in a bond in order to expand Harmony campus.

"If we do get the bond, we would be able to build a second building for Harmony," Wilton said.

The building would be used to possibly expand on Health Sciences and would have general classes as well.

"We believe we need to expand at that campus to provide a more convenient location for students who may go elsewhere," Wilton added.

There are some who are not so fond of the road implementation.

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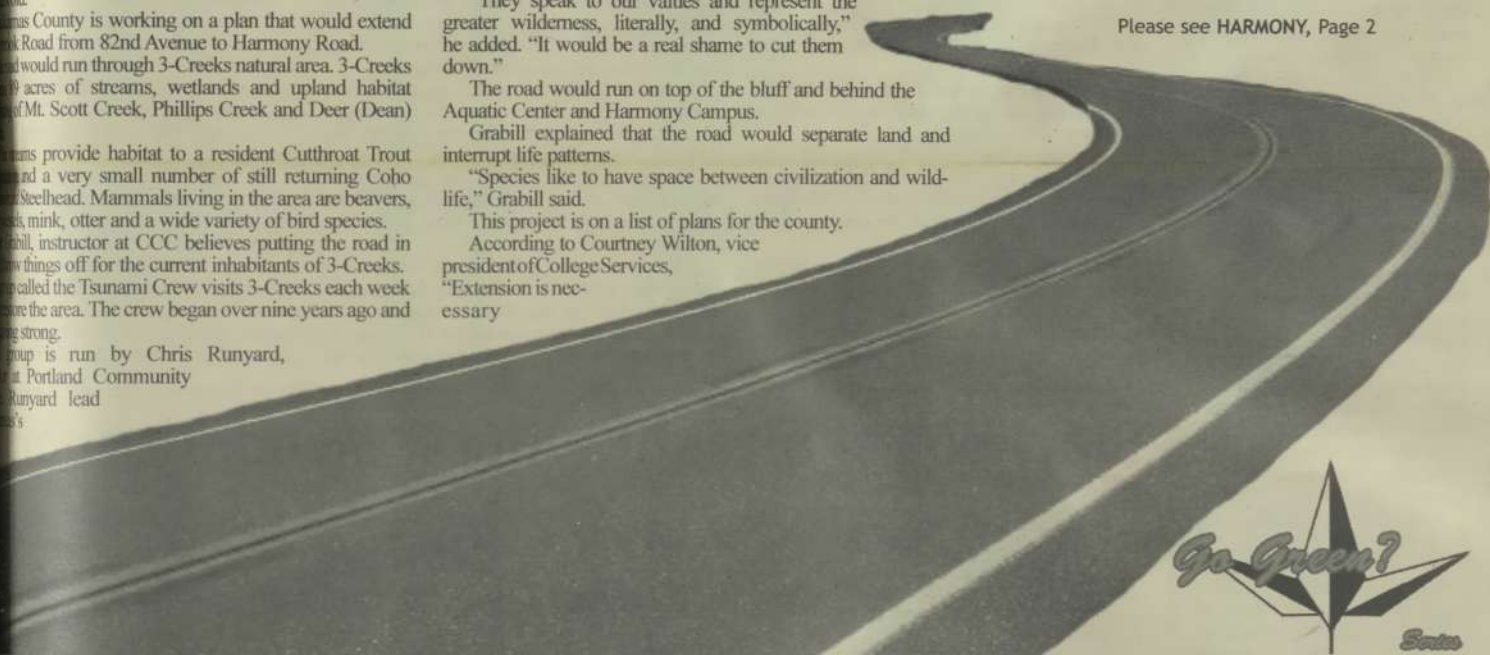


Photo illustration by Kayla Berge Clackamas Print

to legalize or not to legalize, that is the question

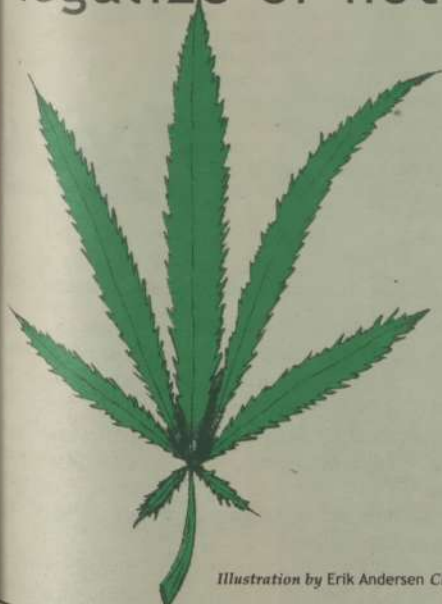


Illustration by Erik Andersen Clackamas Print

Mass public sentiment towards the use of marijuana has been shifting away from the negative spotlight to a more tolerable opinion. Now that more and more Americans are starting to understand that the drug will not turn users into maddened murdering rapists, a new question is emerging: does this substance have a place in our culture and should it be considered legal and would it fix our economic low?

In February 2009, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced that the Justice Department government would no longer raid medical marijuana dispensaries in states that have allowed them. The announcement fulfilled a campaign promise that Obama had made during his run for presidency to stop the raids.

The announcement led to multiple cannabis cafés opening in Oregon for those who can use the drug as medicine.

Currently pro cannabis advocates are gathering signatures in order to get two new laws put before voters that would legalize marijuana for recreational use.

Oregonians will decide their own fate ultimately if and when they vote on the Oregon Cannabis Tax Act and the Oregon Cannabis Tolerance Act.

The topic of legalization remains hotly debated.

Two editors take sides on pages 6 and 7