

Legislative land-use battles over, for now

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

Typically, there are few points of agreement between property rights group Oregonians in Action (OIA) and environmental group 1000 Friends of Oregon.

But at the beginning of the Legislature’s session in January, both groups agreed that they strongly opposed House Bill 2229. It codified the recommendations of the Big-Look Task Force, a group that traveled the state seeking input from citizens on the state’s land-use system.

The session ended on Monday, June 29. Prior to that, HB 2229 was amended in committee, to the satisfaction of both groups. It passed through the House on May 8 on a 53-1 vote, and then went to the Senate, where it was amended further and passed 17-13. A concurrence vote was held Wednesday, June 17 in the House, where it passed 45-12.

Eric Stachon, spokesman for 1000 Friends of Oregon, stated he was pleased at the legislation that eventually emerged through the process.

“We were able to take what was a proposal from the task force that had dangerous consequences for rural land,” said Stachon, “and turn it into a bill that will allow for greater flexibility in designating agricultural lands, but do so in a way that doesn’t destroy the system, as the task force was essentially proposing to do.”

The policy agreements between OIA and 1000

Friends end there, however. They found themselves on the opposite sides of HB 2227, a bill seeking to regulate destination resorts statewide.

HB 2227 passed the House on April 13 on a 31-29 vote, and the Senate on Tuesday, June 16 on a 16-14 vote. Hunnicutt said that it is a “bad bill” that “applies broadly” throughout the state.

“It was amended on the Senate side to make it a little better, but it’s still a bad bill that will result in a number of people in rural Oregon that would benefit from the jobs that would be created by a destination resort not getting those,” Hunnicutt said. “It’s just another attack on the ability of counties in rural Oregon to plan for themselves.”

During the floor debates on HB 2227, District 2 Sen. Jason Atkinson (R-Central Point) carried a minority report that was defeated 12-18. Atkinson expressed his opposition to HB 2227 in a telephone interview shortly thereafter. He said that the bill transferred law-making authority from the Legislature to the Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation & Development.

“I do not believe that it is in the best interest of Oregonians for that authority to be transferred from the elected to the unelected,” Atkinson said.

“I think,” he stated, “that agency has proven to be an activist agency that walks very closely in line with lobbying organizations from the northern part of the state at great harm to the rest of Oregon -- especially Southern

Oregon.”

But Stachon said that passage of HB 2227 would create “a rule-making process which we hope will ultimately lead to destination resorts going back to what they were originally designed to do, which is bring tourism dollars to rural areas.”

Overall, Stachon said, he rates the 2009 legislative session as a B-minus on environmental and land-use issues.

“I think there’s no question that the economy and the budget deficit weighed heavily on any number of issues this session,” he said. “I still feel like, in terms of thinking long-term, I think in the context of sustainability and green jobs, I think there’s a lot more exciting, big-level thinking happening at the national level than there is on the state level.”

Hunnicutt heralded the passage of HB 3225 through the House on a 55-0 vote on Monday, June 15. That bill would allow for an additional 500 Measure 49 claims to be filed with DLCD.

“These are people who are rural property owners who thought they were going to get something under Measure 49, only to find out that the way they worked the measure, they weren’t going to get anything,” Hunnicutt said. “It’s a real good bill, and we worked real hard on it.

“It has good bipartisan support. I’m really happy about that. I consider that our key bill in this session.”

Also pleasing to Hunnicutt was the legislative success of SB 794, which moved

out of the House on a 55-0 vote June 10 and passed 28-0 in the Senate two days later. It changes how property owners are awarded attorney fees in condemnation lawsuits.

Hunnicutt said that he was glad to see a number of bills stopped, including HB 3099, which would have taken away many uses for farm and forest lands. HB 2761 dealt with property owners who wanted to challenge their soil classifications.

“We were able to kill that,” Hunnicutt said.

Amendments to SB 788 would have required everyone with a well in a rural area to get a water right prior to drilling a new well. Those provisions were stripped out of the bill, Hunnicutt said.

“The worst part of that bill, we got rid of,” he said. “That would have essentially stopped all development in rural Oregon.”

Stachon said that the biggest disappointment for 1000 Friends of Oregon during the session was passage of HB 2001, the Jobs & Transportation Act.

“What came out of the governor’s Transportation Vision Committee is very different than what the final bill was,” Stachon said.

Hunnicutt and Stachon agree that the 2009 Legislature left many land-use issues unresolved. Stachon said that he sees the future of Oregon land use as “bright.”

“I think we recognize the need to address global warming, which means we need to do a better job of planning our communities,” he said. “Also, I think on the flipside, the explosion of farmers markets and increased success of agriculture in the state, particularly smaller farms, I think are going to lead to even greater awareness about how reigning in urban sprawl means better opportunities for local agriculture, which is a good thing. It’s a win-win for urban and rural.”

Hunnicutt said that OIA will continue its 30-year battle for property rights.

“Obviously, there’s a lot more that needs to be done and continue working, especially towards local control,” he said. “We believe so strongly that counties throughout the state should be in charge of planning for themselves,” Hunnicutt said. “We will continue fighting for that every session until we actually make it happen.”

Alumni from IVHS, KUHS gathering for ‘09 reunion

Alumni from eight classes at Illinois Valley High School and the former Kerby Union High School will assemble for Reunionmania 2009 for the Fourth of July.

Hundreds of graduates, their spouses, friends and relatives will be in the valley from Friday, July 3 through Sunday, July 5. Dinners, lunches and other gatherings are planned.

The schedule of events, some open to the public, is in an ad on page 2.

RCC summer classes offered

Summer term at Rogue Community College will begin Monday, July 6, and the eight-week term will continue through Aug. 27, with classes Mondays through Thursdays.

New students interested in registering for summer or fall term, which will start Sept. 28, should contact the RCC Counseling Dept.: 956-7306 in Grants Pass, 245-7552 in Medford. To schedule a placement test, phone 956-7191 in Grants Pass, 245-7552 in Medford.

Returning students

should phone Rogue Central, 956-7501 or 245-7501.

Persons interested in taking Community Education classes for personal enrichment (not for credit) can phone 956-7303 in Grants Pass or 245-7619 in Medford. Community Ed classes start throughout the summer and run for as little as two weeks.

RCC will be closed on Fridays from July 10 through Sept. 11. For more information, visit the RCC Website at roguecc.edu.

‘Suspicious’ blazes in CJ investigated by officials

Six small brush fires on Wednesday afternoon, June 24 kept Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) and other agencies busy.

Although called “suspicious” by IVFD and Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF), which is investigating the causes, no maniacal arsonist was located. However, two boys with fireworks apparently started a fire off Kerby Avenue, resulting in an estimated 2-acre burn, said Chief Harry Rich. It was reported at 2:23 p.m. and handled by IVFD.

Deputy Chief Jeff Gavlik said that the blaze threatened some homes, and burned part of a fence.

Some 25 minutes later, during a period of strong wind, five blazes occurred between the 3100 and 3200 blocks of state Hwy. 46. They ranged in size from a quarter acre to 5 acres.

KDRV television re-

ported Tuesday, June 30 that a faulty catalytic converter on a moving car apparently started the Caves Hwy. fires. Because flames from the largest fire jumped the road twice, Oregon State Police temporarily closed the highway because of the numerous pieces of fire apparatus that responded. Some structures were threatened.

Besides IVFD units, equipment was sent by ODF, Rural/Metro Fire Dept., and Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety. ODF equipment was comprised of four engines and a bulldozer.

A Wildland Task Force from Jackson County was put on alert, but a response was canceled.

One minor injury was reported to IVFD Firefighter Bob Clark. His head was struck by a charged hose line that blew apart. He was taken to a hospital, where he was treated and released.



No apparent injuries were noted following what appeared to be a major motor vehicle accident at 2300 Thompson Creek Road. The crash was reported at 3:42 a.m. with the alarm answered by Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD), American Medical Response, and Josephine County Sheriff’s Office. Indications were that a Subaru Outback, whose driver lost control on a curve, flipped and then slid on its top for some distance. Chainsaws had to be used to reach the vehicle, as it ended up in some woods. No one was around the vehicle. (Photo by Dale & Elaine Sandberg, IVFD)



Flow Test Easier Than a Pop Quiz with Bob Quinn

If you are preparing to offer your property for sale, the last thing you’ll want is the stress of discovering that your flow rate for your well is in an unacceptable range for your buyer as per the contingency clause in your contract.

A simple test you can perform on your well will provide you with an early warning. Turn on a garden hose while you keep an eye on the gauge of your pressure tank. A normal gauge will signal the pump to come on when the pressure drops to about 40 lbs. and to go off at approximately 60 lbs. Let the water run until the pump comes on, and then adjust the flow of water until your pressure gauge is holding steady at the midpoint (approx. 50 lbs.). If the needle creeps up to 60, you need to run more water; if it drops toward 40, you need to run less.

When you are satisfied it’s holding steady, leave the water running for four hours. Don’t



Would You Believe...
It takes a ton of water to make a pound of sugar!

Bob Quinn is the owner of Quinn’s Well Drilling and Pump Service located at 6811 Williams Hwy. He is a former board member of the Oregon Ground Water Association. As part of a tradition of information that began more than 50 years ago, these columns are provided to help take the mystery out of well drilling and ground water.

Visit Quinn’s web site at www.quinnswell.com — it’s a tremendous source of information. We provide well drilling, plus we install, maintain and repair complete water pumping systems. Contact our professional staff by phone, e-mail, or visit our office.

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CJ County Bldg.
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MONDAY, JULY 6
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WEDNESDAY, JULY 8
LEMON HERB CHICKEN
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