

PUBLIC HEARING

The Oregon Department of Transportation will hold an informal public hearing to discuss proposed improvements to U.S. 30 from Fern Hill about two miles to the John Day River Bridge.

Where: Kern Room
Columbia River Maritime Museum
1792 Marine Dr.
Astoria

When: Wednesday, March 3, 1993
4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Testimony will be recorded by court reporters. No formal speeches will be given. ODOT officials will be on hand to answer questions and provide information. Written testimony will be accepted at the hearing or can be mailed to Molly Cary, ODOT Region 2, 2960 State St. S.E., Salem OR 97310.

All written testimony must be received by March 17, 1993.

Individuals with disabilities who may need help at the meeting may contact ODOT Administrative Service, 308 Transportation Building, Salem, OR 97310, phone 378-2900, or call the ODOT telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) at 373-7727, during regular business hours. Please make requests at least two days in advance of the meeting.

ODOT Silences Environmentalists: Format for March 3 Hearing Eliminates Public's Speeches

Robert C. Stricklin, Clatsop Plains

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) will hold an informal open house style public hearing beginning at 4:00pm on Wednesday, March 3 at the Maritime Museum in Astoria, about the \$5.6 million project to reconstruct 3 miles of Highway 30 from Fern Hill to the John Day River Bridge between mileposts 88.1 & 91.1. The hearing will continue to 8:30pm, but attendance will likely diminish by 6:00pm.

The Fern Hill -- John Day project is the first of four Clatsop County highway projects exceeding \$80 million scheduled to be built during the next five years, the designs of which have not gone through the public hearings process. The other projects are the \$30 million Astoria bypass, \$27 million Seaside "parkway", & the little known \$20 million Clatsop Plains freeway.

The March 3 hearing will be the first opportunity most of us have had to see ODOT's plans for this project. ODOT's strategy in dealing with the public is to keep a low profile until its political ducks are in a row. Though open public involvement in the design process is mandated, ODOT tries to have project designs as nearly as possible set in stone before the general public is informed. ODOT wanted to skip the Fern Hill - John Day public hearing altogether, but under protest scheduled the upcoming hearing.

To eliminate outcry of dissenting viewpoints ("grandstanding by a vocal minority") ODOT has devised an extended informal "open house" hearing format statewide that fragments the public & eliminates the open expression of ideas before a seated public assembly. Posters and maps are displayed around the room. To discourage assembly and round table discussion, all but a few chairs are removed from the hearing room. Friendly ODOT representatives will stand around the room to talk with you. You will be able to step aside to speak to a court reporter instead of, not additional to, speaking before assembled citizens. As part of a fragmented and quieted public, you will miss hearing and building on the ideas of others. ODOT may or may not bring multiple copies of the Environmental Impact Statement for on the spot review. Probably not.

Before attending, try to take a fresh look at the unmodernized remainder of old Highway 30, the object of much unquestioning public consternation, and the strikingly beautiful countryside through which it winds. What would you recommend be done to improve the road for commuters, tourists & all of us without degrading the environment? What would be destroyed in the path of ODOT's preferred alignment, soon to be unveiled to us? Would ODOT's un-preferred alternative design -- that neither of us has yet seen -- be less destructive of farmlands and other resource lands?

See you at the hearing, such as it will be! The process of public involvement must be improved so environmentally sensitive less devastating alternative designs can be developed with the help of an informed public. ODOT's management need not fear involvement from a fully informed public. The public anger they seek to suppress directly results from the suppression itself.

Conserve Clatsop County's dwindling resources!

If you support opening public processes to increased citizen involvement & seek long term reversal of the environmental degradation of Clatsop County (& neighboring areas of the Upper Left Edge & Lower Columbia), and you would like to be added to a mailing list with others who are similarly inclined, you may leave your name and address on Robert Stricklin's answering machine at 861-3277.

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Sand Dollars, the exoskeleton of some poor legless sea creature are often found washed in with the tides. They can range from a few millimeters across to palm-sized.

The Pussy Willow, certainly Nature's fuzziest means of pollination, is almost out of season by now, but can still be found in the lower wet areas around streams and marshes.

Some American Coots have been seen off our own Youngs Bay Bridge swimming among the ducks. Coots make a variety of strange calls and can usually be held accountable for any unaccounted-for noises in the swamp.

In memory of Arvid

Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed.
Francis Bacon

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UPPER LEFT EDGE MARCH 1993 3