

DELTA PONDS TO GET FRESH WATER FLOW

The city of Eugene is planning a \$6.2 million project to better connect the isolated Delta Ponds in north Eugene with the Willamette River. Improved water flow will allow better fish access and water quality through the old ponds left by gravel mining. The project north of Valley River Center also includes expanding and improving the existing trails, parking areas, interpretive signs and viewing areas.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is paying for most of the work. State lottery funds will contribute \$250,000 and the city will kick in \$450,000, including \$200,000 from a 1998 parks bond measure. McKenzie River Broadcasting has donated land and easements and six Rotary Clubs have volunteered labor. Removing invasive species will begin this fall with construction scheduled for next summer. — AP

FIRE STATIONS SOLD

The city of Eugene auctioned off three surplus fire stations this summer and sold two. Old Dominion Carstar had the high bid of \$198,987 for Station #2 in the Whiteaker neighborhood. Paul Nicholson of Paul's Bicycle Way of Life had the high bid of \$276,001 for Station #6 on Coburg Road. No one bid on Station #4 at 9th and McKinley in west Eugene. — AP

SLANT

• Where will the McKenzie-Willamette/Triad medical center land in the Eugene area? Too early to tell, but one rumor has the hospital eyeballing the old armory site on 13th Avenue west of the Fairgrounds. Nice spot, but likely too small. Meanwhile the Eugene Planning Commission is quietly wrestling with whether to create a hospital zone overlay map, or simply open the entire town, including residential areas, to hospital sites. We hear a surgical center is also looking to build in Eugene. Complicating the zoning rules process is the disclosure that several members of the Planning Commission have business interests associated with hospital construction. City attorney Glenn Klein has been asked to give his opinion on whether they should recuse themselves from voting on the zoning. Klein will probably say "No problem," since Oregon's conflict of interest rules are notoriously weak. But we say full disclosure is in order, and those with conflicts should abstain from voting. Such precautionary actions build credibility for local government.

• Cynics in our crowd question the effectiveness of Peg Morton's vigil and fast this week on the steps of the state Capitol building (see news story this week). So what are the cynics doing to protest relentless state budget cuts to human services and education? Peg and her colleague, Michele Darr of Salem, are camping on the steps surrounded by

cardboard cutouts of Oregonians who have died or been near death because services have been cut off. Decision-makers cannot avoid the 72-year-old Eugenean and her younger friend powerfully making their statement beneath these words carved on the exterior of the Capitol: "A free state is formed and maintained by the voluntary union of the whole people joined together under the same body of laws for the common welfare and the sharing of benefits justly apportioned." Peg and Michele invite you to join them.

• The Springfield City Council balked this week at taking a meaningful stand on the USA PATRIOT Act, citing some of the usual arguments (It's none of our business, etc.), and one councilor, Stu Burge, even voiced his support for the act, which has been denounced nationwide as an unprecedented affront to our basic constitutional rights. Even the Justice Department, which enforces the act, is admitting this week that 34 complaints of civil rights abuses are likely substantive. Granted, it is a distraction and even expense for local governments to draft resolutions on national issues, but the PATRIOT Act and other

absurd White House initiatives have local as well as state and national implications, and if we the people don't challenge these atrocities, who will? Congress? The Oregon Legislature?

• Non-white motorists refer sarcastically to being stopped for "driving while black" (or Hispanic) but another kind of police profiling gets less attention: driving while hippy. One Santa Cruz resident named Freeman tells us he was pulled over on I-5 on his way to the Oregon Country Fair and harassed with petty traffic tickets just because of his counterculture appearance and his funky old van.



"Tons of police were all up I-5 targeting hippies going to the fair trying to shake them down for weed," he says. "I don't drive through the South any more because of this kind of prejudice. I hope Oregon doesn't take the same route." Too late. Cops will be cops, and until they get more enlightened leadership or experience more public outrage, they will continue to abuse their power and harass people unlike themselves, whether it's hippies, pierced and tattooed punks, dark-skinned people, or leftist protesters on Eugene streets. Tell us *your* stories.

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