

Roadkill

Herbicides are not the only way to control roadside vegetation.

Next week the Board of County Commissioners will pass an ordinance limiting the use of herbicides to a "last resort." Our ordinance will be the most progressive of its kind in Oregon. Here are the highlights:



1) Say it, don't spray it. Under the new ordinance, county staff must provide compelling reasons before the Board of Health will authorize the use of herbicide on county roadways. The Board of Health won't allow any herbicides unless staff shows that alternatives have proven ineffective. By the way, who is the Board of Health? It's actually the county commissioners. Years ago the commissioners decided we should give ourselves another name when we're talking about health-related matters. Just padding our resumes, I guess.

2) An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of glyphosate. The new ordinance will decrease our reliance on herbicides by increasing the use of preventative measures. But desk jockeys like me aren't known for our imagination. How do we control vegetation without poison? Hmmm, let's see. Could we pave all the roadsides? Could we chain up a goat every 50 feet? Could we block out the sun? Fortunately there are wise people with the Northwest Coalition Against Pesticides (a group based here in Eugene) who have identified viable preventative measures: planting native vegetation, controlling weeds with new high-tech machines, etc.

3) Pick your poison. In the rare circumstances when herbicides are necessary as a last resort, the new ordinance will require staff to choose from a list of herbicides approved by the Board of Health. Once again, that's the BCC incognito. I'm glad that elected officials will retain the ultimate control in deciding whether certain herbicides can be used in Lane County. We're making a list, we're checking it twice, and we're gonna find out which chemicals are naughty and nice.

4) She blinded me with science. Aimee Code of NCAP has provided us with helpful scientific research on the effects of herbicide. Oregon also has some impressive expertise in our public university system. Lane County's new ordinance will require periodic consultation with the experts to update our understanding of the harms (and benefits) of herbicides. You can't just rely on the research provided by the chemical industry. In the 1960s, the manufacturers of DDT arranged for their own employees to eat a huge quantity of DDT in order to prove it wasn't harmful to humans. Remember that the next time you think you have crummy job.

5) Take five. Every year, we'll take 5 percent away from the total road-miles where herbicides may be used. This annual goal will help us to achieve a stepwise reduction over time. We won't lose sight of the forest through the trees – or the weeds, as it were.

By the way, the exercise of updating our herbicide policy has given me renewed appreciation for the great staff in Lane County's Public Works Department. They've already been more cautious than staff in most other Oregon counties. The new ordinance will require some adjustments in their practices, but I think in the long run, county staff will find it to be workable. The only one who may be disappointed is the guy who drives the spray truck. Like the Maytag repairman, he shouldn't get much sympathy when he's idle, because that's a sign our system is working well.

Tom Lininger is the county commissioner for the East Lane District. Rumors that Tom ate huge quantities of DDT when he was younger are greatly exaggerated. For more information on roadside spraying, see EW's award-winning report in the www.eugeneweekly.com archives of April 18, 2002.

closed, you have a responsibility to do a better job in covering local music, arts and culture. You can start by featuring events taking place at venues like The Museum of Unfine Art, the Jawbreaker, Mother Kali's and MECCA. Covering these venues would foster a more informed, vibrant, forward-thinking vision of how our community could be.

Marc Moscato
Eugene

EDITOR'S NOTE: It should be noted that My House got Calendar listings for every event, and sometimes photos, at zero cost to Mr. Moscato.

A LITTLE RESPECT

I live at 563 Coburg Road, right behind the construction site. I just wanted to write a letter in regards to the respect and courtesy that I feel McKenzie should show to its neighbors at 555 Coburg Road (namely the Woodlands Apartments).

These people start at 7 am every morning, running their cranes and tractors and 18-wheelers and loaders. They wake us up every morning at 7 am sharp, running their machines in reverse, resulting in multitudes of those beeping back-up sounds.

But they quit every day at 3 pm! Why should they have the right to wake up the entire apartment building that we live in, and the nearby ones, and still quit at 3 pm? Couldn't they start at 8 am and go until 4 pm?

And, on another note, they do the same thing on many Saturdays. When will we ever get a day of peace and quiet, or be able to sleep past 7 am? Don't we have a right to a peaceful and restful place of residence, or do we need to put up with the disrespect of McKenzie and the other crews working on that site?

Tony Delap
Eugene

NEIGHBORS FROM HADES

What happened to the good old days when you could count on your neighbors for anything? Where did the Welcome Wagons go? Smiling handshakes with greeting hellos, nice to meet you? Where did the casseroles, light conversation and cups of sugar go?

My neighbors are the Hounds of Hell, the teenage kid next door stole my daughter's bike, plays loud rap music with his gangster wannabe's that hang out like crows on their front porch.

And don't get me started on the Monster Truck neighbor next door who has to start his Beast on Wheels three times a day, just to see if it still runs. Let's forget about the go-cart-with-no-helmet-driving kids, the four wheeler, and the trailer that is always block-

ing the second driveway we are always fighting over.

Now I know you're asking, where do I live? Which is another issue — right on the line of Eugene and Santa Clara, in a very nice and way too small townhouse complex with no parking. Yeah, we are all renters but do we have to act like we are? I would hate to see how these people treat strangers...

I am fed up and I know I'm not alone. What, were these folks brought up in a barn? Now, please keep in mind I am not some over-the-hill lady. I'm just 31 and a member of the generation that is not going anywhere. But I do have manners, and I want more from my community — if you can call it that.

Looking for a three-bedroom, two-bath with good neighbors!

Lisa Caimi
Eugene

FIRST DIGS

Let me offer a clarifying response to the letter submitted by Dean McKenzie, past President of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) Eugene Society about The Archaeology Channel's International Film and Video Festival recently organized by our organization, Archaeological Legacy Institute (ALI). First, many thanks to Mr. McKenzie for attending the Festival and for his laudatory remarks about the event. His opinions carry great weight.

Responding to our claim that this was the first archaeological film festival in North America, Mr. McKenzie pointed out that the AIA Eugene Society has had at least two events where archaeological films were shown. These events were important contributions and are not to be minimized or discounted. ALI is certainly not the first to hold public showings of archaeological films. Archaeological films have been shown in many places over the years. We meant instead that we are the first in North America to hold an international juried competition of such films, patterned after festivals now held regularly by a network of organizations in Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey. We invited film-makers worldwide to submit their works to this competition and received an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response. Of more than 70 films submitted, we accepted 64 entries from 19 countries and screened 20 films from 10 countries at the McDonald Theatre during July 16-19. Awards selected from our jury and audience went to film-makers from France, Germany, Greece, and the U.S.

I respect the AIA and am in fact an AIA

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