

ording to Brandon Trelstad, OSU campus sustainability coordinator.

This year's election had a higher than usual turnout. A total of 3,532 students voted; about 2,100 students participated in ASOSU elections each of the previous three years.

"I think that means this is a voter turnout issue," Trelstad said. "At OSU it's not common to have a question like this on the ballot.

Usually students are just voting for candidates to fill various positions on campus. To have a measure on the ballot, I believe, increased voter turnout."

To get the proposal on the ballot, students belonging to an ASOSU environmental affairs taskforce gathered 1,700 signatures, 700 more than needed, Trelstad said.

The Oregon State Board of Higher Education will consider the fee proposal at its June 8 meeting at Oregon Institute of Technology's campus in Clackamas, according to Diane Saunders, spokesperson for the board of higher education.

If approved, the fee will be capped at \$8.50 per term but could be less if a plan to let faculty, staff and alumni contribute also goes through, Trelstad said. "The fee collection could begin in the fall 2007, and it should be in October sometime when we start buying the renewable production."

— Bryan Andersen

HOUNDING COUGARS TO DEATH?

The Oregon House recently passed a bill that allows the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to manage local cougar populations through appointing hunters using hounds.

House Bill 2971 has stirred up debate not only because it permits hounding, but also because it allows the use of bait to hunt bears. Exactly what qualifies as bait isn't specified. The bill is now in the Senate.

According to animal welfare and conservation groups, the bill is an attempt to roll back Measure 18, an initiative passed by Oregon voters in 1994 that bans hounding and bear-baiting. "Legislators should respect the will of voters, who overwhelmingly supported Measure 18," stated a letter signed by 17 top wildlife officials sent to Oregon lawmakers last month. "Voters passed the ban not only because they believe hounding is unsportsmanlike but because they support conserving a diversity of wildlife in the state."

In 1996, 57 percent of Oregon voters rejected a measure to overturn the bear and cougar initiative.

Supporters of the bill



say there is a growth in the cougar population that has led to increased conflicts with humans, pets and livestock. They say it gives ODFW the tools it needs to manage cougar populations, and many argue that hounding is the most effective way to hunt.

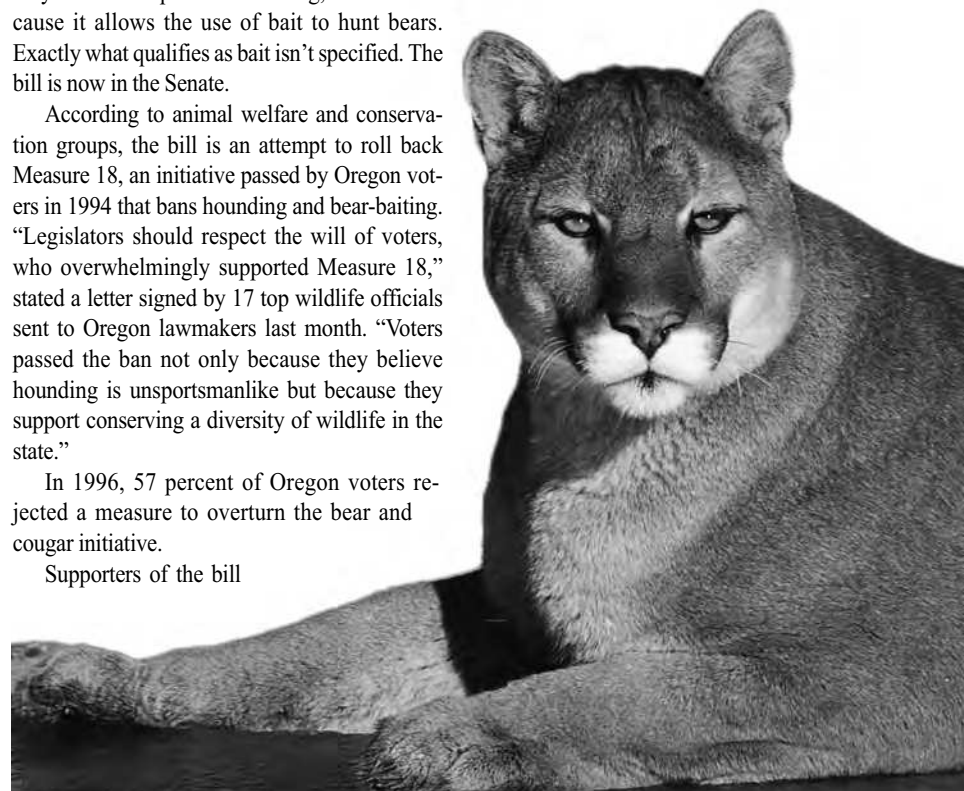
The ODFW estimates that the cougar population has nearly doubled in the last decade. Under the current cougar management plan, the ODFW strives to maintain the cougar population at 3,000.

Lynn Sadler, president and CEO of the Mountain Lion Foundation, opposes the bill, claiming it is designed to appease hunters. "What it really proposes is randomly shooting cougars whether or not they have been involved in conflicts with humans or livestock," Sadler said. "The bill provides additional recreational opportunities for hunters and does not target cougars that pose a threat."

According to Sadler, the assertion that cougar numbers have increased is based on speculation because there is no scientifically accurate method to count them.

Sadler has been touring Oregon over the last few days. If you missed her free presentation and training for volunteers in the Eugene area, you can still catch her at 7 pm Thursday, May 24 at the First United Methodist Church in Portland.

— Erin Rokita



• **Springfield is tossing a big wrench** into a decades-old and somewhat workable joint planning process with the city of Eugene. House Bill 3337, pushed by Springfield city government and business interests, would allow Springfield to control its own urban growth boundary, and it would also force Eugene to do an expensive and premature buildable lands inventory (BLI). This is an outrageous insult to Eugene, and it's a blatant power play by the Chamber of Commerce and Home Builders Association to override state and local land-use planning for the purposes of profits. Is this what the people of Springfield want? City planning dictated by developers?

This bill sailed through the House earlier on a 50-5 vote, and we hope it gets shredded in the Senate, but even Democrats and the governor can't seem to see the bill's flaws and implications. On the table are compromise amendments and splitting the issues. What are the flaws? The forced inventory could be an unfunded mandate, for starters, and doing it early means there might be no technical grants available to help with the cost. Separating the UGB is an even bigger fiasco. If Eugene and Springfield dissolve the Metro Plan and can't plan their city boundaries together, there's not much point in the Eugene-Springfield Transportation System plan (TransPlan) or the Metropolitan Planning Committee or the Joint Planning Commissions Committee or even the Lane Council of Governments. Or maybe that *is* the point. Regardless, this bill sets a dangerous precedent for other cities in Oregon that are trying to think beyond their city limits on how they deal with regional issues. And the split could be in conflict with state and federal laws and could endanger federal highway funds for Springfield.

The politics involved in this issue are fascinating. Backroom deals involving the chair of the Senate Environmental and Natural Resources Committee are rumored. Floyd Prozanski sits on that committee, but he is not the chair. He's reportedly squabbling with Terry Beyer, who introduced the bill in the House, and Beyer has sworn to not compromise. Strategies are being hashed out that might negate or sidetrack the legislation. The Chamber of Commerce is urging its members to support the bill. Eugene's city attorney has been asked to look into whether or not the Legislature can legally dictate local policy, particularly if it discriminates against only one jurisdiction. As we near press time, Prozanski was working on an amendment that would keep the UGB intact but require Eugene to do the lands inventory, but the intact bill is now headed for the Senate floor. Eugene city councilors were trying to delay Senate action until they can weigh in on amendments. Meanwhile, Eugene and Springfield are more than a decade behind on completing their Goal 5-mandated inventory of natural resource lands. It's a big mess.

In the end, what Springfield is attempting might make sense for Springfield in the short term, but in the long haul Springfield will find itself with higher taxes to pay for sprawl, more traffic and even more livability issues associated with planning in a vacuum. Livability, more than buildable land, is the key to economic vitality.

• **The West Eugene Collaborative** (aka WE Group) held its first public meetings over the weekend (see news brief last week) and saw a good turnout representing a broad collection of businesses, environmental interests and government agencies. The group is addressing current and predicted transportation issues in west Eugene. This process is an follow-up to the collaboration and assessment that helped resolve the West Eugene Parkway conundrum last year. The same two facilitators from the Osprey Group, Dennis Donald and John Huyler, were on hand to guide the discussions. This is democracy in action: tackling complex issues by drawing on the knowledge and talents of local stakeholders. Information about the WE Group, minutes of previous meetings and notifications of future public sessions are available at www.orconsensus.pdx.edu/WestEugeneForum.php The site includes email addresses for members of the public to weigh in.

• Residents across the Willamette from Mount Pisgah are hearing **beeping sounds at night** coming from the park. The sounds begin at dusk and last well into the night. Staff at the Arboretum have no explanation for the sound but say they have had several phone calls about the phenomenon.

• **David Kelly isn't running** for public office (at least not that we are aware) but the insightful and outspoken former Eugene city councilor is still plugged into the politics and culture of Eugene and Lane County. His "Eugene Scene" radio interview show is now thankfully two hours later at 9:30 am Saturdays on KOPT (1600 AM). It's unnatural to have eyes and ears open early Saturday mornings. He also joins Brian Shaw in a live KOPT call-in show from 8:25 am to 9 am Thursdays.