

NOT SO FREE FOR LUERS

Eugene eco-saboteur Jeff "Free" Luers was freed from prison briefly Oct. 2 after becoming eligible for Oregon's new earned-time early release program for state prisoners. However, within an hour of his freedom, the release was rescinded. Luers was taken back to prison shortly after arriving in Eugene.

"At least we got a good lunch into him," says Lauren Regan of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, one of the attorneys on Luers' case. "It was a bit of an emotional roller coaster for him and his loved ones," she says. Luers' friends and family had only hours with him before he was returned to prison.

Luers' original 22-year sentence for burning three SUVs on Romania lot was reduced to 10 years in February 2007. He was due to be released this December after serving nine and half years, but HB 3508, which passed earlier this year, allows a 30 percent reduction of sentence for certain offenders.

Regan says in order for Luers to have been released, the victims of the crime, the DA, judge and the Department of Corrections must all have agreed to his release. "Nobody thinks this kid needs to spend the next two months in prison," says Regan. She adds, "He was already signed up for college classes."

Luers had given away many of the belongings he had acquired while in prison to his fellow inmates, Regan says, but upon his return, his things were back on his bunk, a sign she says of the high regard the prison guards and fellow prisoners have for him.

When he found out he would be returning to prison, Regan says Luers joked that if anyone wrote a book about his life, this latest turn would make another interesting chapter. But Regan also pointed out that returning to prison after a brief taste of freedom could make the next two and a half months the most difficult of his sentence.

Regan and the CLDC will be looking at public records to find out what went awry that sent Luers back to prison. Regan says she believes that Luers is eligible for release before the Dec. 16 projected date, and she will be exploring legal avenues.

A vegan benefit dinner for Luers will be held Nov. 7 at the Morning Glory Café with 6:30 pm and 8 pm seatings. RSVP to www.clcdc.org or call 687-9180. Cost is \$18-20 donation, or gift card of equal or greater value; suggested gift cards include: REI, McKenzie Outfitters, Kiva, PRI, or Wandering Goat. — *Camilla Mortensen*



REWILD AT THE PARK

Get wild, make fire and throw (pseudo) sharp objects at the ReWild Eugene Festival this year from 9 am to 3 pm Oct. 10 at the Wayne Morse Family Farm. This free event is tailored to teach the public about wilderness skills and to introduce both adults and children to a better connection with nature, not as an abstract concept but by getting their hands a little dirty.

The day's events will include friction fire-making with rope and wood, animal tracking, a medicinal plant walk and even sword throwing, which is like a round-robin game of catch ... with swords. Matt Bradley, co-founder of ReWild with Anna Bradley, says that these swords aren't as dangerous as one might think.

"What we've got are Kendo swords. They're called Shinai and they're bamboo with no edges. The only real danger in our swords is getting whacked by a piece of bamboo," he said. For children and those worried about their hand-eye coordination, Bradley will have balls instead of swords.

Bradley says that the purpose of this exercise, and the other activities planned for the festival, is bringing people closer to an intuitive mindset and awareness of their surroundings in a fun way. This awareness can also engender a mindfulness of nature, according to Bradley: "If you have a relationship with the trees in front of you, or the squirrels and raccoons that live underneath your porch, then you don't have to live out in the woods to have those experiences. And once you create personal relationships between people and the world they live in, I think that's the most powerful thing we can do to promote environmentalism in the world." — *Shaun O'Dell*

Lane Area Herbicide Spray Schedule

A massive herbicide spray program is being proposed by the **Bureau of Land Management** to control invasive species and noxious weeds: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM lands in Oregon are due on Dec. 1. Call BLM, Ken Denton, EIS Team Leader at: (503) 808-6443 or call the BLM Eugene District Office at 683-6600. View documents at: www.blm.gov/or/plans/vegreatmentseis/

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news Briefs

DEVIL'S STAIRCASE ONE STEP CLOSER

The Devil's Staircase, a waterfall in the middle of a pristine Coast Range forest, looks like it's getting closer to being preserved in its untamed and untrammelled state. The wet and wild old-growth forest is the subject of a proposed Wilderness Area by coalition of environmental groups, including Eugene's Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics (FSEEE) and Cascadia Wildlands.

Rep. Peter DeFazio is the sponsor of the House version of the bill, HR 2888, which would create the wilderness, while Ron Wyden is the sponsor of the Senate version, S 1272.

On Sept. 24, the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands, had a hearing on several proposed Wilderness Areas, including the more controversial Red Rock Wilderness in Utah. Conservationists were delighted that not only did BLM Director Robert Abbey support the proposal, but the Forest Service's Deputy Chief of the National Forest System, Joel Holthrop, surprised them by suggesting that Forest Road 4100, which that bisects the proposed wilderness, be decommissioned and allowed to become a hiking and horse trail.

Holtrop also said that the older stands of Douglas fir, western hemlock and red alder in riparian areas are "underrepresented in the National Wilderness Preservation System." He added, "These older stands provide critical habitat and support nesting

pairs of the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet, which are listed as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act."

Andy Stahl of FSEEE who also testified before the committee said the area provides habitat for native salmon species, including coho, steelhead, Chinook and cutthroat trout as well as Roosevelt elk, black bears and Pacific giant salamanders.

Stahl said the support from the BLM and the Forest Service bodes well for the possibility of the wilderness proposal making it through the House and Senate and to President Obama's desk. Laughlin said Cascadia Wildlands expects "smooth sailing as the proposal inches one step closer to creating Oregon's next Wilderness."

There will be a hearing before the Senate's Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests on Oct. 8.

To learn more about the proposal, go to www.devilstaircasewilderness.org or to Cascadia Wildlands' annual Hoedown Sat. Oct. 10, dance, and learn about Devil's Staircase and other projects, www.cascawild.org or 434-1463 — *Camilla Mortensen*

DOG OWNER CALLS FOR SPECIAL PARK

A 13-pound Havanese named Lola was killed at Amazon Dog Park Sept. 1 by a 125-pound bull mastiff, and the small dog's owner is now calling for creating a separate enclosure for off-leash small dogs at Amazon Park. Renee Hart has already collected more than 300 signatures and is targeting 1,000 signatures before the petition is delivered to the City Council. She says she is trying to create something positive from the tragedy.

Recalling the attack, Hart says the mastiff "charged at her from behind in a completely unprovoked attack. I believe he saw her as prey."

Hart this week says the incident is getting so much publicity that she wants to "clear up aspects of this story, especially relating to the owner of the mastiff. While I

believe she made a horrible mistake bringing it to the park, she doesn't deserve some of the vilification I've read."

Hart says a group of people nearby came to help, and the mastiff's owner was screaming for her dog to stop. "I had my hand wrapped around Lola's leash so tight it cut into my finger," she says. "I wouldn't, couldn't risk trying to jump in to stop the mastiff. My 4-year-old was in the park. She was losing her dog. I couldn't risk her losing her mother too. A man jumped over the dog fence; he pulled Lola out of the mastiff's mouth."

Hart says the woman who owned the mastiff told her, "It was the most violent thing I've ever seen."

"People were crying,

