

news Briefs

TRAPPER TIMBER SAGA CONTINUES

Seneca-Jones Timber Company, the same company that owns the controversial biomass cogeneration plant in west Eugene, is fighting to log a tract of old-growth forest in the McKenzie River watershed. Local conservation groups Cascadia Wildlands and Oregon Wild, as well as other local activist groups, have long opposed the sale of the trees first proposed in 1998, which provide habitat for red tree voles, the food of choice for northern spotted owls listed as endangered species.

Dan Kruse, attorney for Cascadia Wildlands, and Susan Jane Brown and Pete Frost of the Western Environmental Law Center, filed a memo in support of a motion for summary judgment on Feb. 18. Kruse says the groups are asking the courts to halt Trapper because “the impacts of the sale are significantly different than previously considered, including to spotted owls and red tree voles.”

The court document cites a May 2010 letter from Pacific Northwest scientists involved with the Andrews Experimental Forest, which is located close to the sale and is part of the Blue River Landscape Study, as is the Trapper timber sale.

Trapper is in an “adaptive management area” — federal land that is managed to “encourage the development and testing of technical and social approaches to achieving desired ecological, economic and other social objectives” and is part of a study on the way logging can make forest structures similar to those created by fire.

According to the scientists’ letter, logging Trapper “will not yield stand-level lessons of high value for contemporary logging practices.” The scientists, Fred Swanson, Tom Spies and Sherri Johnson, go on to say, “An important social consideration is that pushing forward with the Trapper Timber Sale may undercut efforts to undertake new discussions with the community about their future engagement with Willamette National Forest lands. We feel that a positive atmosphere for those discussions has greater value than moving forward with a highly contentious timber sale.”

“When your own scientists question the relevance of the project, it’s time to pull the plug,” says Josh Laughlin of Cascadia Wildlands. He says that when the Forest Service agreed to reduce the cost of Trapper’s timber in 2009 to \$0.44 per cubic foot, it was agreeing to sell the valuable old-growth wood to Seneca for less than the typical price of firewood on Craigslist.

The Register-Guard weighed in on the sale in an October 2010 editorial “Not a typical timber sale,” arguing the sale should go through despite the presence of a spotted owl nesting area, and that “loggers, forests and owls alike” would benefit from the science. The editorial makes no mention of Seneca’s involvement in the sale.

The Trapper timber sale is being opposed by activists as well as through the courts. “Cascadia Forest Defenders, Rising Tide and Earth First! are all still prepared to defend this native forest,” says a CFD representative.

Oregon Wild and Cascadia Wildlands have expressed interest in swapping the

same volume of plantation forest timber for the old growth in Trapper, but Seneca has not agreed to such a deal. The Willamette National Forest is preparing a response to the memo to be filed on March 11.

— Camilla Mortensen

BREAKING UP BIG LOADS

Imperial Oil has claimed that the only way it could get its massive Statue of Liberty-sized loads of oil extraction equipment from South Korea to their final destination in the Canadian tar sands was up the Columbia River and through wild and scenic corridors. But that has turned out to be false.

The oil company has begun to break up some of the controversial loads and ship them on the very interstate highways that Imperial, an Exxon Mobil Corp. subsidiary, said it could not use.

Imperial Oil spokesman Pius Rolheiser told *EW* in August 2010, “The modules are too large to be transported on an interstate highway.”

But now the company admits it is reconfiguring 33 of the 207 loads and sending them up I-90 and other interstates from Washington’s Port of Vancouver across the river from Portland.

Critics have attacked Imperial’s shipping plans, not only because of the greenhouse gas issues and toxic pollutants that are the result of oil sands extraction, but also because of fears the company’s plans will turn the wild and scenic river corridor along Highway 12 in Idaho and Montana into a industrial hauling corridor, harming tourism and native salmon. Oregon-based groups have also criticized using the Columbia River, a historic fishing ground for Northwest native tribes, to facilitate dirty oil extraction that they say has poisoned First Nations peoples in Canada.

Trish Weber of All Against the Haul, one of the groups fighting Imperial’s plan, says the reconfiguring of the modules “directly challenges the validity” of the Environmental Assessment and FONSI (finding of no significant impact) that were put out by the Montana Department of Transportation, “as the EA was predicated on the assertion that there is no viable alternate route in existence.” She adds that Idaho’s decision to issue permits for the ExxonMobil loads was based on the same assertion.

The first of a related cluster of megaloads belonging to ConocoPhillips made their way out of the Port of Lewiston in February but have not made it to their destination. The loads have been blocked by weather, and the first load created a number of delays longer than the 15 minutes Idaho permits loads to hold up traffic. Imperial Oil’s first load is due to hit the road March 7. The Columbia River has been closed to barge traffic due to dam repairs, but is slated to reopen March 3. Megaloads can then begin once again to make their way up the river.

Weber says Imperial Oil’s flip-flopping on its ability to break up the loads, “severely damages the credibility of both state agencies in addition to the applicants — not that ExxonMobil had much credibility to begin with.”

An Oregon protest against the heavy haul is planned for Portland’s Kelly Point Park, 9 am, March 20. Contact godowatufti27@gmail.com for more information. — Camilla Mortensen

WHAT WILL PUBLIC HEAR?

Has a “green” university ever been so determined to develop riverfront land? The UO is trying to move forward with the first substantial Willamette riverfront construction project in 20 years just east of EWEB’s property on the south side of the river.

Continuing a lengthy appeals process, the citizen group Connecting Eugene filed a notice of intent to appeal the city’s decision allowing excavation to go forward for a new parking lot that is part of planned development for the Oregon Research Institute at the UO’s Riverfront Research

Happening people

BY PAUL NEEVEL



MARIA PALADINO

“I’ve always been involved in activism,” says Maria Paladino, a labor activist from age 16 who has also volunteered in support of immigration reform, economic justice, women’s issues, queer issues, and pit bull rescue. “Somebody needs to speak for the underdog,” she says. A native of Brooklyn, she moved to Salem in time for middle school, went back East after high school, got married and had two kids. She returned to Oregon after a divorce. “It took me eight years to go to school,” says Paladino, who completed a sociology degree at LCC and the UO between jobs and mom duties. Two years later, in 2000, she began full-time work as a legal advocate at Sexual Assault Support Services, a nonprofit that offers education, support, and advocacy to survivors of sexual violence. “I still do front-line work. It’s been a calling,” says Paladino, who was executive director of SASS from 2007 until last month, when she resigned to become development director for the Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. “The coalition provides training and tech support to member groups across the state.” Learn about SASS programs and volunteer opportunities at <http://sass-lane.org> The SASS 24-hour crisis line is 343-SASS.

LANE AREA SPRAY SCHEDULE

• **Massive aerial spray of western Lane County:** Weyerhaeuser (744-4600, 912-0203) will aerial spray 1,237 acres using 15 different herbicides including Garlon 4 in Low Pass, Horton, Triangle Lake, Greenleaf and Lorane next to Fish, Swamp, Kelly (Coho salmon streams) and Martin creeks; Long Tom River, Crow, Hayes and Poodle Creek starting March 14 (ODF Notice No. 2011-781-00151).

• **Green River area:** Roseburg Resource Company (935-2507) will aerial spray 209 acres with 11 herbicides including Garlon 4 near Green River (Coho salmon; Township 15 South, Range 10 West, Section 25 & 26) starting March 15 (No. 2011-781-00141).

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