

facing this coastal community.

Efforts by the Australian-owned Oregon Resources Corp. to set up chromium mines in the Seven Devils area of Coos County threaten the county with potential exposure to hexavalent chromium, the same chemical that became famous in the movie *Erin Brochovich*. A proposed liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline could also put the bay and surrounding forests in danger.

“What we do with land use is going to make or break our future,” said Cameron La Follette of the Oregon Coast Alliance.

Chromite mining operations near Coos Bay began in the mid-1940s. The mines were eventually closed, but the aesthetic reminder of these operations is the barren patches in the middle of thick, lush forested hills.

The other lasting reminder of those chromite mining operations is the prevalence of the carcinogenic isotope hexavalent chromium in the nearby water. It has been measured at 9 parts per billion in surface water in the region and 7.8 parts per billion in the groundwater. At 11 parts per billion, it becomes dangerous to fish. All four proposed mines are near Threemile and Fivemile creeks and are a mere two miles from the ocean. Due to increased concerns about the effects of hexavalent chromium in drinking water, EPA released new guidelines in January to guide utilities in testing for the chemical.

The proposed LNG pipeline would require clear-cutting through 3,035 acres of forestland to connect from Malin, Ore., to Jordan Cove near Coos Bay. Jody McCaffree, executive director of Citizens

Against LNG, said that the pipeline could result in 5.6 million cubic yards of dredged materials in the water. Coos Bay is Oregon’s largest commercial producer of shellfish.

“We need to move from extraction to sustainability,” McCaffree said, pointing out the economic benefits of recent environmental actions in the region, such as recovering metals from the Coos County landfill dump.

All three panelists emphasized the need to develop a water monitoring system and find a baseline for Coos Bay.

— John Locanthi

SMALL FARMS YIELD MORE IN CUBA

Not all movements towards sustainable small-scale farming are the products of an organic, idealistic viewpoint — some are created out of sheer necessity. Humberto Rios Labrada, winner of a 2010 Goldman Environmental Prize (aka the “Green Nobel”), spoke about the transformation of farming in Cuba at the March 5 keynote speech at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba had to drastically change its agricultural system as it no longer had access to petroleum, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, heavy machinery and other staples of agrochemical farming.

Labrada, nicknamed the “Seed Man,” started a collaborative effort between

scientists who championed the agrochemical farming strategies and farmers to decentralize the farming industry. Unable to maintain and run large-scale farming operations, Cuban agriculture had to switch to smaller, traditional methods, and yields increased. Under the older system, one hectare would yield enough food to feed six people per day. Labrada showed examples of smaller farms producing enough food to feed 30 people per day from a single hectare.

Cuban universities drastically changed their agriculture curriculum towards a “dynamic education” program that actively engaged farmers in the process of educating and cultivating a functioning system.

A musician as well as a scientist, Labrada sang a song, showed a music video, and showed photos of artwork to illustrate how farming and seeds had become an important part of Cuban culture. Labrada encouraged farmers to mix seeds in order to develop truly Cuban (and productive) crops. — John Locanthi

MOVEMENT TO AMEND TAKING OFF

Former Green Party presidential candidate David Cobb spoke at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference March 4 and said the national campaign to shelve the Citizens United case is gaining momentum and the petition he’s

circulating has already surpassed 105,000 signatures. He spoke at a panel on “Green Politics & the Green Future,” organized by Corvallis resident Blair Bobier of the Pacific Green Party.

Cobb is associated with Democracy Unlimited and Move To Amend and speaks nationwide on the need for systematic change in U.S. politics and policy. “The U.S. is a racist, sexist, classist society, and we are destroying this planet,” he said, “and transnational corporations have hijacked our food system.”

One big change he is calling for is the elimination of “corporate personhood,” or the power that business and industry have grown to wield over public policy. Move to Amend would put an amendment to our Constitution before the American people to “make all corporate rights subject to the democratic process.” He said, “people have rights and governments have duties,” but the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that corporations have many of the same rights as individuals, including free speech, which in turn includes unlimited campaign spending.

Cobb doesn’t expect reforms to come from the courts or Congress. “Change has to start at the local level,” he said, “and we need to start with resolutions by local groups to build discourse, and make it a core political issue, and even a litmus test for candidates.”

“We need a mass movement that takes itself seriously,” he says. For a copy of the petition, email Cobb at david@duhc.org or visit <http://movetoamend.org>

— Ted Taylor

ACTIVIST ALERT

- Noted innovator and author **Stewart Brand** will speak at 7 pm Thursday, March 10, at the LaSells Stewart Center at OSU in Corvallis. Brand is the creator of the *Whole Earth Catalog*, founder of The WELL, the Global Business Network, and the Long Now Foundation, and is the author of several books. See <http://wkly.ws/11h>

- Jewish author **Richard Forer**, a former AIPAC member with ultra-Orthodox relatives in Israel, will speak at 7 pm Thursday, March 10, at the UO Chiles Hall, Room 128, on the topic of his new book, *Breakthrough: Transforming Fear into Compassion – A New Perspective on the Israel-Palestine Conflict*.

- A roundtable discussion on **Immigrant Rights** featuring Rogers Smith, Hiroshi Motomura and Dan Tichenor, is planned for 5:30 pm Thursday, March 10, at 175 Knight Law Center at UO.

- A **workers solidarity rally** to “help

create a Wisconsin-Oregon connection” will begin at 4:45 pm Friday, March 11, behind the Hilton in downtown Eugene. A march will proceed down Oak Street to the Free Speech Plaza at 8th and Oak for brief remarks. The march will then continue to state offices at 165 E. 7th Ave. to support AFSCME and SEIU members in their current contract bargaining talks.

- Oregon House and Senate **committees on redistricting** are beginning public hearings around the state. The first will be from 11 am until 2 pm Friday, March 11, at Tillamook Bay Community College, Room 214, in Tillamook. Local hearings are planned for 10 am to 1 pm Saturday, April 16, at UO in Eugene, and from 3:30 to 6:30 pm at Linn Benton Community College in Corvallis, locations to be announced. Find more information at <http://wkly.ws/11g>

- A public hearing on the six-story **Casanova Center expansion** next to Autzen Stadium is planned for 5 pm

Wednesday, March 16, at the Atrium Building’s Sloat Room across from the downtown bus station. Construction will be paid for by donor Phil Knight, but the nearly \$100 million football facility and Nike museum will cost the UO an estimated \$1 million to \$2 million a year to operate and maintain.

- **Project Homeless Connect** is preparing for its fifth annual event March 17 at the Fairgrounds. Organizers are collecting coats, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, sleeping bags and backpacks, along with personal hygiene products. Donations may be dropped off at any St. Vincent de Paul store. Checks can also be sent to United Way of Lane County, 3171 Gateway Loop, Springfield 97477.

- The **invasion of Iraq** March 19, 2003 will be remembered by a demonstration and procession of coffins at noon Saturday, March 19, at Central Park on Monroe Street in Corvallis. Wear black.

LANE AREA SPRAY SCHEDULE

- Eastside aerial spray: Weyerhaeuser will aerially spray 82 acres using one or more of 11 different herbicides including ester of 2,4-D next to Richie Creek near Leaburg and near the EWEB Canal (Eugene’s water supply) in Section 11 of Township 17S, Range 1 East starting March 12 (ODF Notice No. 2011-771-00166); and 50 acres near the Mohawk River tributaries in Section 30 of T16S, R1W starting March 15 (771-00170).

To comment on Weyerhaeuser aerially spraying toxic herbicides near Eugene’s water supply, call Marvin Vetter, stewardship forester at ODF in Springfield at 726-3588; Debbi Dalrymple at Weyerhaeuser at 746-2511 or 988-7502; and Gov. Kitzhaber at (503) 378-4582.

Compiled by Jan Wroncy, Forestland Dwellers: 342-8332, www.forestlanddwellers.org

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UO Health Assessment Study

The Motor Control and Cognition Lab at the University of Oregon is investigating the health outcomes of long-term practice of Tai Chi, sitting meditation, or aerobic fitness (five or more years, three times per week for 30 minutes per session). We are testing citizens in the cities and outlying areas of Eugene and Springfield, Oregon. **If you have been generally sedentary for five or more years we’d also like to test you.** We can pay \$10 for four hours of testing done at your convenience. We will provide you with a Health Status Report and any information gained from the overall study. Email thawkes@uoregon.edu for further information.