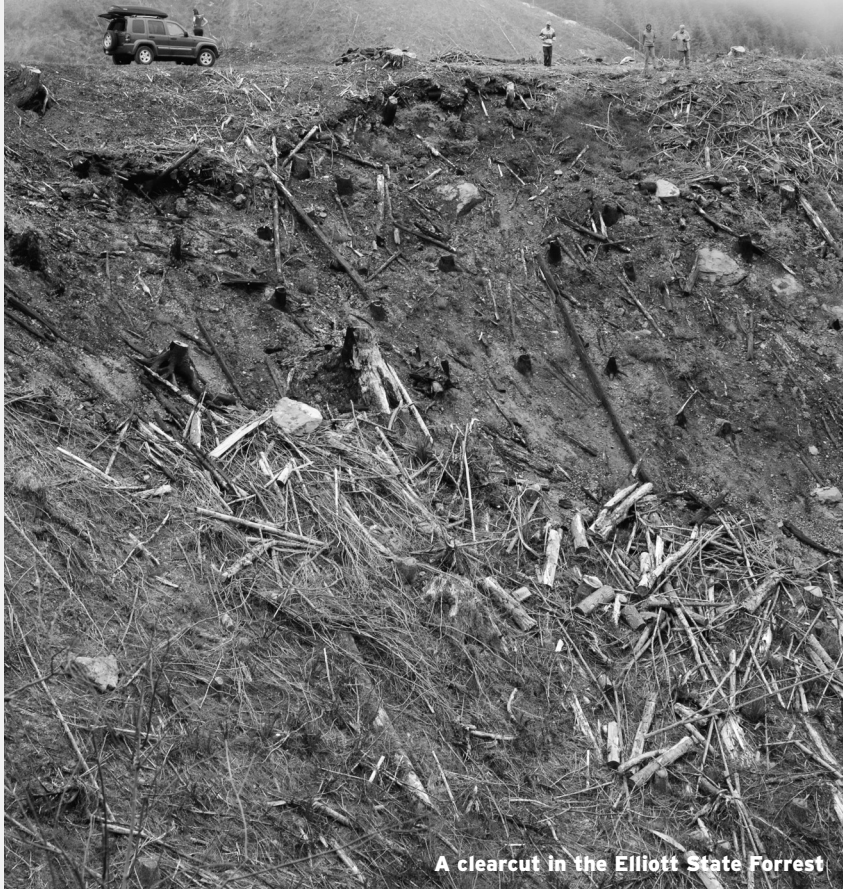


# news Briefs



A clearcut in the Elliott State Forest

PHOTO BY CHUCK GRIFFIN

## CLEARCUTS LOOMING ON STATE LANDS

The management of Oregon's state forests and efforts to increase logging and clearcutting on them came under fire at a recent Oregon Board of Forestry meeting. Opponents fear an increase in logging will harm recreation and spotted owls and other Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed animals that use the forests.

OSU's Institute for Natural Resources reviewed the Department of Forestry's science in its evaluation of forest management plans and a strategy for dealing with "species of concern," including northern spotted owls, voles, amphibians, salmon and steelhead in the Tillamook and Clatsop state forests. The department's plan called for an increase in logging that would bring old growth habitat to as low as 30 percent of the forest.

Ivan Maluski of the Sierra Club, who attended the April 29 meeting, said the science review found that the state "did a really good job figuring out how to get the cut out," but did not do as good a job taking into account issues like habitat and recreation. The department, he said, was criticized for not taking the "best available science" into account.

The INR science report "revealed a real bias for timber production" in the way the state forests are managed, Maluski said. He said the proposed plan "short-shrifted the assets these forests provide" to rural communities in terms of profit from recreation.

The Elliott State Forest near the proposed Devil's Staircase Wilderness also came up for discussion at the Board of Forestry meeting. Josh Laughlin of Eugene-based Cascadia Wildlands testified at the meeting and asked the board to wait on its rulemaking process for the new forest management plan. Laughlin said the plan would have severe impacts to ESA-listed coho salmon, spotted owls and marbled murrelets.

The new state plan for the Elliott would move from preserving 64 percent of the older forest habitat to only 30 percent, Laughlin said. He said scientists have found the plan for managing riparian areas (near streams) to be faulty. Cascadia Wildlands is calling for thinning, land exchanges and using carbon credits to leave trees standing rather than clearcutting.

The board voted 5-2 to implement the state plan that would increase clearcutting.

The public can submit written comments on the Elliott plan, which would take effect in January 2012. The comment period ends Aug. 1. For more information or to submit a comment, go to the Board of Forestry's website at <http://wkly.ws/129> — *Camilla Mortensen*

## STORMY CITY BUDGET

The city of Eugene is weathering a fiscal "perfect storm" of recession, expiring library levy, increasing retirement costs and dwindling reserves, but it's boosting police spending, Eugene City Manager Jon Ruiz told the City Council this month in his annual proposed budget.

Ruiz projects that the city will dip into the red in two years at the current spending trend. But rather than closing fire stations, pools, park restrooms, reducing library hours or cutting jail beds, "I recommend we monitor the economy for another year" to see if city property tax revenue, which dropped 3 percent last year, picks up.

The extra year, Ruiz wrote, "also allows time for the City Council to consider new revenue sources....The rate at which the gap between expenditures and revenues is growing, coupled with the importance that citizens place on our services and the improbability of rapid economic recovery, requires that we explore new revenue sources to fund city services that the community needs."

With property tax increases restricted by state law and the recession, the city has increasingly pursued a strategy of jacking up fees and fines. "User fees are the fastest growing source of revenues for the entire budget," Ruiz's proposed budget states. In the past decade, fee revenue has grown at about twice the rate of property tax revenue. The city now collects almost twice as much revenue in fees/fines as it does in property taxes.

To help balance the budget, Ruiz proposes across the board cuts of 2 percent in department general fund spending. But some spending areas will get more money.

Employee retirement (PERS) spending will increase by a third to 14 percent of wages. Health benefit spending will increase by 8.7 percent. Most employees will get a 2 percent raise. Firefighters will take an extra 7 days off instead of a raise.

The Police department is the most rapid area of increased city spending. The police budget has increased 51 percent in the last decade and now consumes more than a quarter of the city's general fund.

Last year the city used "urban renewal" financing to divert \$5 million from state school funding and local governments to add 7 police officers to arrest homeless people downtown. This year Ruiz proposes renting 10 more jail beds at \$35,000 each to imprison the homeless people the new officers are arresting.

In addition, the city last year spent \$15 million to move the police headquarters out of downtown to Country Club Road across the river. This year, the city will

boost the police budget by \$116,000 a year to pay the higher upkeep cost of the big new building.

Other added city spending includes \$94,000 for a new climate and energy analyst and \$800,000 for a new automated carwash for airport vehicles. — *Alan Pittman*

## IMPROVING SCHOOL LUNCH

School lunch: pizza, tater tots, "meat surprise" and unidentifiable glop ... That's what a lot of Eugeneans might remember from childhood, but the group Eugene Coalition for Better School Food is working with Eugene 4J Schools to make sure that glop is only a memory — and for higher nutrition standards in the future.

Together with the School Garden Project, Farm to School and Lane Coalition for Healthy Active Youth, ECBSF is hosting a talk by Daniel Marks, who is a pediatric endocrinologist and director of the Oregon Child Health Research Center at OHSU. "Do You Know What Your Kids Ate Today?" will focus on the way nutrition impacts kids from conception to adulthood, according to Ann Magee of the ECBSF steering committee. A panel following the Thursday, May 19 presentation will also feature an assistant 4J food service director and a local teacher, among others.

ECBSF created an ambitious list of goals for the 2010-11 school year, including making nutritional information accessible to parents and the elimination of high-fructose corn syrup and artificial flavors and preservatives. The 4J district has agreed to provide ECBSF with its entire trove of recipes and plans to incrementally reduce some of the worst health offenders.

Magee says that while she'd still like to cut out unhealthy food additives, she's pleased that the provider of 4J school food, Sodexo, has been willing to open a dialogue and compromise toward healthy goals. "Although they have not agreed to meet with our goals, they have been willing to work with us, provide information and they agreed to measurable improvements year by year."

Bring questions and ideas to the Jefferson Arts & Technology Academy at 6:30 pm Thursday, May 19. — *Shannon Finnell*

## WETLANDS MONTH

Most people are probably unaware that May is American Wetlands Month. But Willamette Resources and Educational Network (WREN) is doing its part to get people involved and keep the celebration aqueous with local events for Eugeneans to check out.

On Saturday, May 7 WREN hosted a citizen scientist "Wetland Monitoring and Data Collection Day," which started with an educational session giving participants background information on the importance of wetlands and wetland invertebrates in the Northwest — those little creepy-