

• **Another sneaky action** by conservatives on the Lane County Commission. Conservationists around the country have been sending recommendations on BLM wilderness expansions to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar as he prepares to submit a final report to Congress in mid-October. With this process in mind, our elected county leaders quietly sent a letter to the BLM Aug. 18 calling not only for no more wilderness in Lane County, but also for freeing up potential wilderness lands for "active management," i.e. roads, logging and mining. Commissioners Bozievich, Leiken and Stewart voted in favor of the letter with Handy and Sorenson objecting. A *New York Times* story Sept. 7 noted that "Republicans in the House have resisted putting new lands off limits to oil and gas, timber and mining developments, citing high unemployment in the West. In some cases, local officials indicated that no new wilderness is needed." If we had heeded these same old arguments in earlier times we would have no wilderness and no national parks today.

This action involved no public hearing, no public input, and Lane County is now on record with Congress opposing any future protections of pristine parcels in the Cascades, foothills and Coast Range.

Bad policy, bad process.

• **UO President Richard Lariviere** made an arrogant mistake in giving hundreds of his administrators pay raises while tens of thousands of other state workers are being told to suffer pay cuts and furloughs in the name of budget-balancing shared sacrifice. Splattered on front pages, Lariviere's big mistake will cost the state plenty in opposition to government revenue and resentment of the haughty Ivory Tower. We understand the competitive justification for pay raises for long-underpaid faculty – that means better professors and instructors for students asked to pay ever-rising tuition bills. But not raises for administrators. In this economy, they are easily replaced with overqualified people. We don't buy Lariviere's argument that he should be able to do whatever he wants with UO money that doesn't come directly from the state taxes. Should state DMV administrators be able to give themselves big pay raises because most of their budget comes from fees and not taxes?

• This weekend is the big **Furthur Festival** at the Cuthbert, and we hear on the streets that EPD will be cracking down on unlicensed vendors who will be in Eugene for the three-day Grateful Dead culture music festival. Cops have reportedly been handing out notices at the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza reading, "It is unlawful to conduct sales in this area without a permit," and numerous citations have been written. Vendors have been told they can't even give away their art or merchandise and accept donations. Bartering? Nope. Just want to display your art on a blanket? Not allowed. Coincidentally, the city's crackdown on local and visiting street vendors is coming just before the "Charter for Compassion" goes before the City Council in October.

• Kudos to the City of Eugene for a fun, healthy and green **Eugene Sunday Streets** last weekend. Thousands of kids in carts, dancing grandparents, bicyclists, strolling couples, hula hoopers, slackliners and many more Eugeneans enjoyed the event that closed three miles of 5th Avenue downtown with loops at either end. This is exactly the kind of active transportation promoting, community building, fat burning, business boosting, pollution reducing event that Eugene has been starving to have for decades. We hope the city will continue its can-do attitude and repeat the event next year and even expand it to multiple weekends and routes like in many other cities. How about a Sunday Streets down south Willamette? Between downtown and the UO via 13th? A Sunday Streets/bridge pedal closing I-105 and the Ferry Street Bridge for human fun and a good cause?

• The front-page furor in both Portland and Eugene mainstream media about the **NCAA investigation** of Oregon football feels like rearranging the deck chairs on you know what. So far we know that the UO paid a "street agent" \$25,000 to help with recruiting, a transaction that has attracted the interest of NCAA investigators. Like many NCAA violations, that's a peppercorn compared to issues laid out by Taylor Branch in "The Shame of College Sports" in the latest *Atlantic* magazine, echoed in the *Wall Street Journal* and bouncing around the talk shows. Branch proposes paying the players. Does that make sense when they already get enviable benefits and national attention?

• **Getting in enough hiking** and wildlife watching this summer? Now is the perfect time: Mosquitoes are few and snow-bound high trails are finally clear. This year we actually got off our butts and took a hike and lodge tour with the Obsidians, a venerable hiking and mountaineering group. Signing up for Obsidians hikes is much easier now at www.observians.org instead of at the YMCA bulletin board. Also check out Oregon Wild, Cascadia Wildlands, Sierra Club, Audubon, McKenzie River Trust, Altair, Forest Web, UO Outdoor Program, Volkssport, Nearby Nature, Friends of Buford Park, Campbell Center, meetup groups, the city of Eugene, Willamalane and we've probably missed a dozen others.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugeneweekly.com

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