

BAD BAGS BAN

The problems with cheap plastic bags don't end with environmental ramifications, according to Environment Oregon's Sarah Higginbotham, and that's why businesses and members of the recycling industry are joining environmentalists to support a Eugene ban on plastic grocery bags. The City Council voted unanimously (with Councilor Mike Clark absent) on Feb. 27 to draft a plastic bag ban ordinance.

The EPA reported that less than 5 percent of plastic grocery bags were recycled in 2010. Most of those that were recycled were shipped to China, where Higginbotham says they're processed in a way that is toxic to workers and

the environment. Those that aren't recycled often find their way to the ocean, where they are particularly dangerous to marine wildlife.

When people put plastic bags into recycling, the bags often gum up the combing machines and cause the system to shut down so they can be cut out. The Association of Oregon Recyclers found that plastic bags — 0.1 percent of their recycling volume — caused up to 30 percent of their labor costs.

The price of plastic bags is currently built into the cost of groceries, so Higginbotham says that it's fair to say that even people who already use reusable bags are paying for the widespread use of plastic — to the tune of 444 plastic bags per person per year in Oregon.

When people look at the list of ways plastic bags cause problems, Higginbotham says, they begin to see the topic as a common-sense lifestyle issue. "We don't need them," she says. "They've only been around for about 30 years and it's unnecessary."

— Shannon Finnell

COUNTY WILL PURSUE PARVIN

The top of Parvin Butte, which sits in the middle of the rural community of Dexter, is now almost completely leveled, according to neighbor Arlen Markus.

But the Dexter/Lost Valley community 20 miles outside Eugene has hope that residents won't be woken up at 8 am in the morning by the sounds of their scenic butte being ripped and torn into gravel by Lost Creek Rock Products: Lane County has asked Hearings Official Gary Darnielle to reconsider his Feb. 14 ruling that gravel mining could continue at the butte. The hearings official is a neutral party.

According to information from the county, "Lane County maintains that a site review for mining operations at Parvin Butte is necessary given the impact to neighboring residents, including increased traffic, noise and proximity to area homes." A site review allows neighbors affected by the mining to have input on these issues.

OSU SETS TRAPS

OSU has "deactivated" the snares it put around its sheep farm after Eugene-based Predator Defense and OSU neighbors protested the lethal traps that they say have caught and killed everything from raccoons to coyotes to a baby fawn.

Neighbors say traps have been within 200 feet of at least one home, and well within the range of children, dogs and cats.

The snares, which were set by the USDA's Wildlife Services, "wantonly destroy predators and target anything coming through that fence," according to Brooks Fahy of Predator Defense.

Neighbor Pamela Darcy has lived near the OSU sheep farm since 1982. She says her dog has been caught in the traps and alleges that in the past an OSU shepherd killed a puppy for wandering under the fence and also killed another neighbor's dachshund, "all in the name of protecting the sheep." She wonders why the school has not made more use of the llamas that once effectively and nonlethally patrolled the fence.

OSU says that last year at least 12 lambs and ewes were killed in a single night in a suspected coyote attack.

But Fahy argues that the school should explore nonlethal methods, such as trained guard dogs and guard llamas, and better fencing before turning to what he calls the "cruel" method of snaring and trapping.

"These animals suffer," he says. "I don't think we can overstate that. They linger and die over a period of days or chew their feet off."

Also, he says if a coyote can kill 12 sheep while snares are set, the method isn't working.

Fahy says ironically, while one department uses Wildlife Services, which he calls a "rogue agency," to trap and kill predators, OSU scientists in another department publish studies on how predators are a necessary part of a healthy ecosystem.

While OSU has removed the traps, Fahy says he has not been assured that the lethal methods won't be brought back.

Fahy questions what having a government agency set traps teaches students. "It's beyond belief they are having Wildlife Services doing the work for them," he says, adding, "It indoctrinates the students: 'If you have a problem, call the government.'"

Fahy has worked with Congressman Peter DeFazio to end federal funding for Wildlife Services, which kills predators through means such as trapping, aerial gunning and poisons.

— Camilla Mortensen



A raccoon killed in one of OSU's snares

PHOTO COURTESY: PREDATOR DEFENSE

ACTIVIST ALERT

- A public meeting on the Lane County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan will be at 10 am Thursday, March 1, at Lane County Public Works, Training Room 3. The plan is also at www.lanecounty.org/prepare and comments can be submitted online or by email to prepare@co.lane.or.us. To receive emergency text alerts directly to a cell phone, visit <http://www.lcog.org/alertme>

- Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich will be available to meet with members of the public at 10 am Thursday, March 1, at the Eugene Eagles Aerie #275, 1375 Irving Road in Santa Clara, and at noon the same day at the Junction City Moose Lodge, 427 Front St. in Junction City.

- Paul Pierson and Jacob Hacker will be speaking on "The Politics of Inequality" at 4 pm Thursday, March 1, at the Knight Law Center on the UO campus. Pierson and Hacker, both former Eugene residents, recently published *Winner Take All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer — and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class*.

- Almodena Bernabeu, an international lawyer who works with the Center for Justice and Accountability in San Francisco, will present the 2012 Bartolomé de las Casas Lecture in Latin American Studies, "Fighting Impunity in National Courts: Human Rights and Transitional Justice in Latin America," at 7 pm Thursday, March 1, in the Knight Library Browsing Room at UO. Bernabeu's lecture addresses

critical issues in the efforts to prosecute human rights violators in Latin America.

- Mayor Kitty Piercy's new campaign office is at 443 W. 11th Ave. and an office party is being planned for Saturday afternoon, March 3, according to Jake Foster, Piercy's campaign manager. Office equipment and supplies are needed, along with volunteers. Call 632-4442 or email casey@kittypiercy.com

- Oregon Common Cause will hold a public meeting and discussion about Citizens United at 2 pm Sunday, March 4, at the EWEB meeting room. Speaker will be former Common Cause executive director Janice Thompson.

- Conversations On the Forest, the second in a monthly series on the lumber industry and regional economics, will be from 6 to 7:30 pm Monday, March 5, at Cosmic Pizza, 199 W. 8th Ave. in Eugene. This session's topic will be "Trees, Trucks and Taxes — Where does the Money in Timber Come From, and Where Does It Go?" Panelists include Kevin Matthews, Commissioner Rob Handy and forestry consultant Roy Keene. See conversationsontheforest.org

- Sen. Lee Beyer and Rep. Phil Barnhart will be available to members of the public at 7:30 am Tuesday, March 6, at Creswell Coffee, 116 Melton Road in Creswell; at 6:30 pm Monday, March 12, at Aunt Dings Restaurant in Waltherville; at 7:30 am Tuesday, March 13, at Randy's Main Street Coffee in Brownsville; and at 7:30 am Wednesday, March 14 at Jake's Café in Harrisburg.

- Eight state lawmakers from Lane County will be holding a town hall on foreclosures from 6:30 to 8 pm Wednesday, March 7, at Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Ave. in Eugene.

- Matt McRae, climate and energy analyst for the city of Eugene, will discuss what can homeowners, builders, and designers can do to help reduce the negative effects of climate change and increase resiliency locally, at 7 pm Wednesday, March 7, at BRING's Planet Improvement Center 4446 Franklin Blvd. Glenwood.

- Public comments on Waldo Lake power boats and float planes can be submitted from March 1 to April 10, when a public meeting of the Oregon Marine Board will be held in Eugene. Written comments can be submitted to [osmb.rulemaking@state.or.us](mailto:rulemaking@state.or.us) or to June LeTarte, Rules Coordinator, OMB, P.O. Box 14145, Salem 97309-5056.

- A UO symposium on "Gender Equity and Capitalism" will include author and economist Nancy Folbre of the University of Massachusetts Amherst as keynote speaker for International Women's Day. Her talk will be on "Women's Gains, Mothers' Losses: Capitalism and the Care Penalty" at 7 pm Thursday, March 8, at 110 Knight Law Center.

- Charles Eisenstein, author of *Sacred Economics*, will be on a speaking tour in Oregon: March 8 in Corvallis and March 10 in Eugene, followed by an all-day workshop March 11 in Eugene. More details next week or at www.unifyingcascadia.info