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— Shannon Fimmell

NO SCORE ON ENVIRONMENT IS A BAD SCORE

Lane County's green credentials haven't just slipped lower under the current conservative board majority, they've disappeared altogether.

In 2010 the Lane County commissioners voted to protect the environment 10 out of 12 times, according to the Oregon League of Conservation Voters Environmental Scorecard.

In 2011 under a new, conservative county majority there were not enough votes on the environment to score the Lane County

commissioners at all, the OLCV says. The Eugene City Council was also impossible to score, according to the OLCV.

The lack of votes "raised some flags for us," says Ashley Miller, Mid-Willamette organizer for OLCV. On the 2010 card, County Commissioners Rob Handy and Pete Sorenson earned scores of 100 percent. Together with then-commissioner Bill Fleenor, the two commissioners constituted a green majority that the OLCV says protected "farms, forests, clean water and clean air."

While Handy and Sorenson continue to hold their pro-environment stances, the new conservative majority of Sid Leiken, Jay Bozievich and Faye Stewart appear to be preventing the commission from voting openly on environment issues at all.

The OLCV says, "While we have environmental champions on both the commission and the council, issues such as water quality and land use often won't be

voted on because there aren't enough commissioners or councilors to advance the issue."

Miller says the OLCV scorecard committee found issues were often wrapped into the "consent calendar" and voted on as a package. This made it impossible to distinguish whether a vote was for or against any particular item. "In the end, there simply weren't enough clear environmental issues that actually made it to a vote," she says.

"Important environmental issues are not coming in front of the council and the commission," she says, and that's something citizens need to be aware of.

The green group says it will continue to work to elect more pro-conservation candidates to office as well as to help voters hold them accountable.

Both Handy and Sorenson, who are known for their green voting records, face challengers in the May primary election.

— Camilla Mortensen

PARTIAL VICTORY ON PARVIN

Attempts to turn rural Parvin Butte into a gravel mine have turned the once peaceful hill and the town around it into a morass of legal and political controversy. In the latest twist, the decision to allow mining on Parvin Butte in Dexter without a site review was reconsidered by the Lane County hearings official on March 6, resulting in a partial victory for the Parvin Butte neighbors.

Rural residents of Dexter and Lost Valley have been working to protect the butte for more than a year. They have concerns that include not only the dust, traffic and noise that will affect humans, but also the effects the mining will have on a nearby salmon stream. If they can't stop the quarry mining, the neighbors have fought to at least have input into how and when the mine would operate via a process called site review.

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