

## BOUNDARY CHANGES BAD FOR WATER?

“We all live downstream,” says River Road resident Carleen Reilly. She’s worried that Lane County’s efforts to take control of the “urbanizable” land around Eugene and Springfield will result in increased air and water pollution.

Reilly was among a number of residents who spoke about their concerns over the proposed changes to the Metro Plan at the March 13 joint meeting of the Lane County commissioners and the city councils and mayors of Eugene and Springfield.

Until now those lands have been under joint control of the cities and the county. The Metro Plan (aka the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan) has historically acted as a “check and balance” on land use decisions. When Delta Sand and Gravel attempted to expand its gravel mining operations, nearby neighbors objected, citing noise, dust and groundwater issues. Lane County agreed to the expansion, but the city of Eugene voted against it in 2008. Because of the Metro Plan, the gravel mine’s 72-acre planned growth was held at bay.

Reilly, who is co-chair of the River Road Community Organization and secretary for the Santa Clara-River Road Outreach and Learning (SCRROL) project, says, “There’s a whole lot of problems with water and air and the shaking of earth” with gravel mining near communities, “the same things they are experiencing with Parvin Butte.” Parvin Butte is the epicenter of a county controversy over a gravel mine in the middle of a rural community.

Reilly worries that with current funding cuts for county and city supported agencies, the Lane Regional Air Protection Agency will not be able to monitor and enforce clean air.

Residents aren’t the only ones concerned about the effects of the proposed Metro Plan changes on the environment; the League of Women Voters, Friends of Eugene and other local groups also weighed in with worries about the plan.

The changes would mean the county, which has no drinking water protection plan, would be in sole charge of the lands that contain almost 80 percent of the water production for the Springfield Utility Board (SUB). Unlike the county, Springfield does have a water protection plan. According to county documents, SUB’s fundamental concern is that if the Metro Plan boundary is altered “the city will no longer have a deciding vote on land use actions that may have an impact on its water source.”

County Commissioner Rob Handy, who has concerns about the proposed Metro Plan changes, says, “When it comes to water resources we all have an absolute interdependency and obligation to each other.”

The county is looking at several options for dealing with the SUB well issue. The first option is to leave the wells out of the county’s control, but that would “reduce the total area which the county is seeking autonomy over by approximately 76 percent,” according to county staff.

Another option would be to have the county adopt a drinking water protection plan. But that isn’t feasible at this time according to county staffers, who write that such a plan would be a long-term solution, “which is well outside the scope of the proposed boundary adjustment work.” Another concern noted by county staff is that “given the controversy that arose” the last time a water protection plan was attempted, “timing for such a proposal may not be optimal.”

The third option would be an intergovernmental agreement that would allow input from the city of Springfield on proposals that could impact water quality. SUB has indicated it would be OK with that option. But the county notes, “This option would not provide autonomy to the county on a full range of issues outside of the Metro Plan boundary.”

If and when this planned changed to Springfield’s urbanizable land goes through, the controversy is not over. The next step for the county is to try to control the lands around Eugene. “This is going to impact the whole region,” Reilly says.

Comments on the plan are due by 5 pm March 27. More information can be found at [wkly.ws/13n](http://wkly.ws/13n)

— Camilla Mortensen



DARLA CLARK AND SOME OF  
HER RESCUED HORSES

PHOTO BY JAMES JOHNSTON

## HORSE SLAUGHTER BACK IN OREGON?

They eat horses don’t they? Well, not so much in the U.S., but Hermiston, Ore., could become the location of a new horse slaughter plant that would export meat to countries such as France and Japan that see nothing wrong with eating Mr. Ed.

Local horse rescuer Darla Clark of Strawberry Mountain Mustangs outside of Roseburg says while the humane aspect of horse slaughter has gotten the most attention, environmental and economic aspects need to be considered too.

No horse slaughterhouses have operated in the U.S. since 2007. Oregon has not had an equine abattoir since 1997, when the Cavel West slaughter plant in Redmond was burned by eco-saboteurs. It was never rebuilt.

But when the 2012 Federal Agricultural Appropriations Bill was signed into law last November, it lifted a congressional ban on funding domestic horse meat inspections, opening the way for horse slaughter to resume in the U.S. at taxpayer expense. An Oregon horse trainer, Dave Duquette, is organizing the pro-slaughter effort in Oregon.

According to an article in the *Confederated Umatilla Journal*, Duquette wants Northwest tribes to develop a cooperative and own 51 percent of the operation. The article quotes Scott Fairley, a regional coordinator for Gov. John Kitzhaber’s office, as telling Duquette, “It will be challenging but we’d all love to work with you to make this a success.”

Duquette’s proposal says the plant would butcher up to 200 horses a day, would create jobs and have a horse rescue component.

“American investors would be wiser to invest in an eight-track tape manufacturing plant,” Clark says. She says slaughter jobs are rarely “good” jobs, and the plants cost cities more than they benefit.

“Non-horse owners need to know it’s going to affect them, too,” Clark says. “If USDA funding is appropriated for the inspectors, that’s your tax dollars. I look at it as another big corporate bailout.”

She says the horse industry should breed fewer and better animals and not look to taxpayers to pay for slaughtering the industry’s excess horses.

Clark points to a *Forbes* article that says, according to tax records, the now-defunct Belgian-owned Dallas Crown horse slaughterhouse in Texas paid only \$5 in federal taxes on a gross income of over \$12 million. The plant incurred hundreds of environmental violations — at one point the blood from the horses overwhelmed the wastewater system and backed up into local residents’ bathtubs — and cost the city thousands in legal fees.

Duquette’s plan calls for treating the wastewater from the slaughterhouse using sludge ponds. The proposed Hermiston slaughterhouse is not far from the Umatilla River, Clark says, and that waterway flows into the Columbia. “Oregonians especially, we are so proud of our state, the wildlife, our river, our fish, I can’t believe they’d want that,” Clark says.

For more information, find Oregonians Against Horse Slaughter on Facebook.

— Camilla Mortensen