

NEWS

HEADWATERS OF THE AMAZON SAVED, AGAIN

Saving the Amazon sounds like a project for South America, not south Eugene, but local conservationists and land use advocates have long been fighting proposed development in the headwaters of Amazon Creek in Eugene's south hills. They say the creek is Eugene's primary watershed, covering about 60 percent of the city's area. This week Southeast Neighbors announced that an independent land use hearing official in Eugene has rejected a proposal to construct the 75-lot Deerbrook PUD (planned unit development) in the sensitive Amazon headwaters.

According to Dan Snyder, attorney for Southeast Neighbors, this is the fourth time developers have sought to construct homes on the property, located south and west of Martin Street at West Amazon Drive. He says that there are too many inherent problems with developing the property, from the presence of the headwaters to the steep slopes. Snyder says another key point is that "it is the Amazon headwaters, an outstanding natural resource that the city should be protecting, not turning over to the developers to turn into upper-scale homes."

Kevin Matthews of Southeast Neighbors says the group won on the issue of not allowing development on slopes greater than 20 percent, but he notes that other problems with the site, in addition to possible earthflows (a type of landslide), include public utility easements and protected-stream corridors. Matthews says, "It's pretty obvious that 75

lots and a whole bunch of units on this site would increase the stormwater flows in Amazon Creek." It's not adequate for the developer to say they will meet the code later, he says. The Eugene staff report on the PUD lists Martin and Leslie Beverly, West Creek LLC and South Park Associates LLC as the applicants, and the property has also been referred to as the Beverly property. Matthews says city staff had conditionally approved the intensive development.

This is the first time a developer has tried to use something called "needed housing" provisions in the Eugene land use code. The provisions say that only clear and objective standards can be applied to a development application. In his findings supporting denial of the application, the hearings

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- KEVIN MATTHEWS, SOUTHEAST NEIGHBORS

official found that a code provision prohibiting development on slopes greater than 20 percent is indeed clear and objective. The developer used a different measurement to argue that the slopes were less than 20 percent. The way the developer measured by averaging the 26-acre site, "you could put a mountain in the middle and the slopes would be less than 20 percent," Snyder says.

Another issue the hearings official ruled on is that the developer changed the application from a 75-lot application to a 47-lot application, Snyder says. He says that runs afoul of community involvement criteria for the code as Southeast Neighbors didn't have input on the substantially different 47-lot application.

The area is known as the headwaters "keystone," according to Matthews, because it is the last remaining undeveloped place where an ecological corridor can be saved and restored that connects the Amazon Creek headwaters natural areas with the Amazon Greenway that winds through the heart of the city. — *Camilla Mortensen*

DEFAZIO TAKES SHOT AT 'WAR ON COAL'

The fight over transporting coal is heating up not only in Eugene, which faces the possibility of coal trains coming through town, but in Washington, D.C., as well. "The Republicans were in full election mode," Congressman Peter DeFazio says of the recent House vote on the "Stop the War on Coal" bill.

The dramatically named bill is actually a collection of bills, four that have already been passed, and a new one that DeFazio says strips the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from being able to put new regulations on the coal industry and keeps the federal government from regulating coal mining on public lands. DeFazio says he does not expect Stop the War on Coal to pass in the Senate.

DeFazio, who was criticized over the summer for not opposing proposed coal exports through Oregon, attempted to introduce an amendment to the House bill that he calls a "reasonable amendment to an unreasonable bill." The amendment would have directed the EPA to do a study and report back in six months on coal dust and ways to mitigate the dust such as surfactants, covered cars or even whether or not coal dust is even a problem. The amendment, which the congressman says got 169 votes, seven of them Republican, was voted down.

DeFazio says the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail company has initiated an action because the company alleges coal dust, particularly in early stages of transport, affects the rail bed as it fills in the ballast rocks under the tracks, which then can't shed water, destabilizing the tracks and leading to derailments. However, because the BNSF railroad is in litigation, the company told DeFazio its studies on coal dust are proprietary, and it won't release them.

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Construction has begun on the **Nobel Peace Park** in Alton Baker Park and the project is being coordinated by Paddock Construction. Many other local businesses and organizations are involved, including PDG Design Group, SSW Engineers, Schlesinger & Associates, EWEB, Knife River, Eugene Sand and Gravel, Farwest Steel, Mid-Valley Gravel, Oasis Fencing, Willamette Graystone, Wildish Construction, Graybar/Kim Lighting, SeaReach Ltd., Laser Image, Rexius, Native Grounds Nursery, Friends of Trees, Eugene Rotary, Wellspring Friends School, Peace Village School and the UO Service Learning Program. Board members are John Attig, Tana Mason, Donna Reitz, Pat Anderson, Evelyn Anderton, Dan Bryant, Jean Carley, Bill McConochie and Nancy Newman.

GreenLane's "People, Planet, Profit & Pints" mixer will be from 5 to 7 pm Thursday, Sept. 27, at Ninkasi for members and those interested in joining the business networking group. The next luncheon will be from noon to 1 pm Wednesday, Oct. 3, at the Eugene Hilton, followed by a free mixer from 5:30 to 7:30 pm Thursday, Oct. 11, at the UO College of Business. See greenlane-sbn.org for details.

Sol Botanicals is a new business at 383 W. 3rd Ave. in Eugene. The business, owned by Felicia Parra and her family, had its grand opening Sept. 22, and calls itself an "herbal apothecary offering locally crafted herbal goods and organic smoothies and tea." Products include the line of Mama Rose's Naturals, "created by the loving hands of Rosetta herself," and new products include herbal chocolate, hop flowers, medicinal mushrooms and skin care formulas. The website is still a work in progress, but a Facebook page is up and the phone number is 485-9430.

Eugene Yoga is doing something different this fall with "Yoga for Large Bodies" and "YogaMind for Women with Eating/Body Image Concerns." "As a mother of three grown daughters I am very much aware of the challenges women face daily," says Director Diane Butera. "Our culture is one that promotes unhealthy body images." The studio is at 3575 Donald St. Visit eugenyoga.ur or call 520-8771.

Lane Council of Governments has a 15-member advisory panel called **Lane Economic Committee** and vacancies are coming up this winter. Find an application at lco.org or call 682-7450.

KRAVCHENKO HONORED BY UO SYMPOSIUM

Svitlana Kravchenko literally wrote the book on human rights and the environment. The widely lauded UO law professor died of a heart attack in February of this year at the age of 62, but she will be both honored and remembered this week as two UO law journals and the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide join to present "New Directions for Human Rights and the Environment: A Symposium Inspired by Svitlana Kravchenko," to be held free and open to the public Friday and Saturday, Sept. 28-29, at the Knight Law Center, 1515 Agate St. in Eugene.

Kravchenko was outspoken about her belief that climate change needs to be viewed through a human rights lens and was one of the first people to write scholarly articles showing ways to do that, say conference organizers Michele Peterson and John Bonine, who was Kravchenko's husband.

The topic is timely as national Supreme Courts across the world are increasingly bringing human rights perspectives into environmental cases and the U.S. would do well to follow suit, organizers say. In the Philippines, for example, it was decided that the right to a safe and healthy environment is so fundamental that it would exist even if the Philippines Constitution did not declare it — which it does. Similarly, the Supreme Court of India has recognized a "right to water" as being implicit in its Constitution.

The event will feature guest speakers from Brazil, Israel, Tanzania, Denmark and more, who conference organizers say are some of "the most advanced scholars in the world on human rights and the environment." Topics will range from the impacts of hazardous waste on human rights to the relocation of communities affected by climate change and much more. Conference registration, information and schedule can be found at www.law.uoregon.edu/ cal — *Shelley Deadmond*

