

CELILO FALLS, COMMUNITY RIGHTS EXPLORED AT PIELC

In March of 1957, the gates of The Dalles Dam on the Columbia River closed and Celilo Falls, 8 miles upstream, was covered up within six hours. A March 6 Public Interest Environmental Law Conference panel explored the environmental damage stemming from the flooding of the falls and discussed solutions.

Paul Cienfuegos, an activist with Community Rights PDX, raised the possibility of a community-rights approach to the issue. "I think it's time for communities along the [Columbia] River, up and down the river, to start imagining what a right-to-water ordinance might look like," he said.

He singled out other communities that have passed similar ordinances to protect rivers, including Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Spokane, Washington. The ordinances in these cities, Cienfuegos said, enshrine in law the right of a community to clean water and the right of a river to be free of pollution.

In Pennsylvania, a body of water — the Little Mahoning River — is actually being sued by the Pennsylvania General Energy Company (PGE) over fracking wastewater disposal, Cienfuegos said. PGE is suing to reverse a local ban on fracking, and last November, the river joined Grant Township as joint

defendants in the case when the Little Mahoning River watershed filed a motion of intervention, according to a press release from the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund.

Treoth Bullock, of the Celilo Falls Education Fund (CFEF), pointed out that pollution of the Columbia River is an ongoing issue.

When the Bonneville Power Administration proposed lowering the water to expose Celilo Falls in 2005 for the bicentennial of Lewis and Clark's expedition, the local tribes — including the Nez Perce, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Yakama — were uninterested.

"The tribes said 'No,'" Bullock said. The reason they refused, he explained, was that exposing the falls did nothing to address the decline in water quality.

Aurolyn Stwyer of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs spoke of the history of human settlement at Celilo. She says oral histories include accounts of the great floods that inundated the Columbia River basin more than 12,000 years ago.

"We were one of the largest trading posts on the continent," she said, adding that archaeologists have traced the origin of an ancient bag discovered near Celilo to the area around modern-day Wisconsin.

Cienfuegos argued that a community-rights ordinance for the Columbia River offers the potential to recognize the legal rights of local people because it disrupts traditional lawmaking. "We're following in the footsteps of the American suffrage movement, which was illegal," he said. — *Daemion Lee*

SLANT

• **Help wanted!** Look at these job openings in Eugene and Lane County. Tom Turner is heading to Florence, so we need a new Lane county sheriff. General Manager Ron Kilcoyne of Lane Transit District announced this week that he is leaving that hotspot after a new GM is found. The big slot, UO president, is still open. School District 4J just hired a new superintendent. Could be that this is normal turnover for the age of the shrinking attention span. Could be that this is a tough place for public servants.

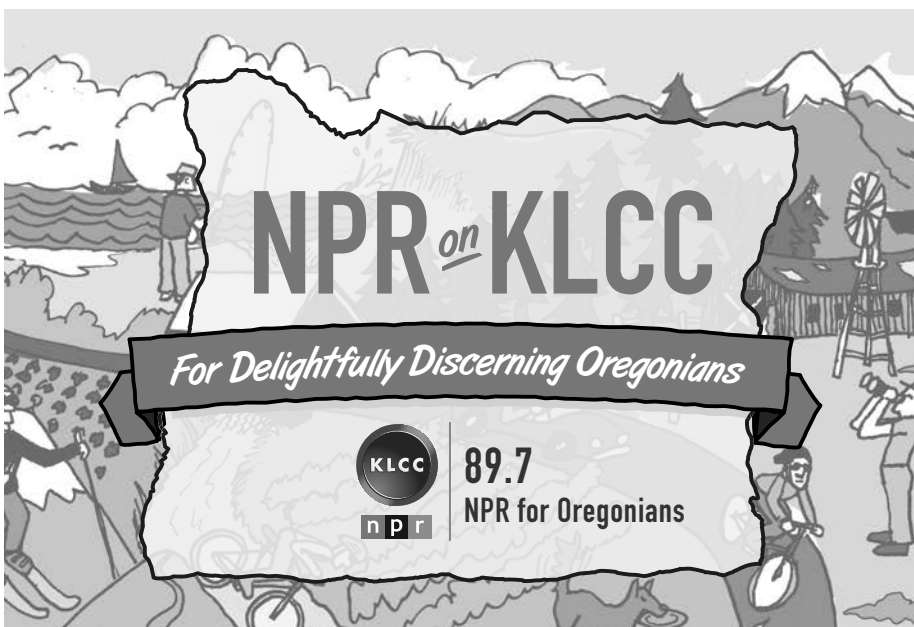
• **The "travelers" are arriving** in Eugene early this year, thanks to warmer, drier weather. Joining our local homeless population on the streets are many mostly younger people who could be described as "low-spending tourists." They don't fit into tidy categories, but we hear from local cops that the travelers sometimes need to "learn the rules" about unleashed and aggressive dogs, public urination, trespassing, etc. The city tried "sidewalk commerce permit" trespass rules in 2014 to discourage the poor and homeless from loitering in front of businesses, but the permits were legally indefensible and have been dropped. Interfering with a business, such as harassing customers on private property, is still illegal.

Sgt. Larry Crompton supervises the EPD Downtown Team and says cops are trying to "minimize undesirable behavior" downtown, while also recognizing that loitering, busking and panhandling are constitutionally protected. EPD is now tracking complaints in a computer database to identify trends and hot spots. Expect to see more cops in parts of downtown this spring and summer. Crompton says he's also concerned about the type of tourists he expects to flock to Oregon when marijuana is legalized in July. Pot smoking and drug dealing in public will still be illegal, but will the weed tourists know that? Meanwhile, we're happy to see more people choosing to live, work and play downtown, adding bustling urban life to what in the past has been a dreary scene.

• Don't forget about **Chefs' Night Out**, the delicious annual fundraiser for FOOD for Lane County that gets underway at 6 pm Tuesday, April 7, at the Hult Center. A slew of Eugene's finest restaurants, bakeries and breweries take over three floors of the Hult, offering up their finest wares for an evening of sampling. Tickets are \$65, with early entry tickets available for \$90; call 682-5000.

• Congrats to Eugene **Mayor Kitty Piercy** who has been named recipient of this year's Marilyn Epstein Pro-Choice Champion Award for "going above and beyond in advocating for women's and reproductive health care issues." She will accept the award at the 2015 Courageous Voice Breakfast with Texas State Sen. Wendy Davis May 5 in Portland. Piercy has a long history working on women's and family issues in the Oregon Legislature and with Planned Parenthood. She is the first municipal leader to receive the award. Previous winners were State Rep. Mary Nolan (2011), Secretary of State Kate Brown (2012), State Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (2013) and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (2014). Find the May 5 event on Facebook.

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