

'MARGINALIZED VOICES'

Eugene Human Rights Commission involves community to battle discrimination

Funding a summit for Eugene's marginalized communities is among the many goals for the city in the recently published "Marginalized Voices in Eugene" report by the Eugene Human Rights Commission.

The report, approved by the HRC last month, explains how the commission's Anti-Discrimination Work Group sought to understand discrimination in the city and provide tangible goals to make a change. According to Ken Neubeck, former chair of the commission, it was time for "outreach to marginalized, vulnerable communities in Eugene, focusing on many groups that haven't ever been approached before."

The commission formed ten different focus groups that met over the course of a year. The groups — African American, African American/Biracial Youth, Asian American, Latinx, Latinx Families, Muslim, Native American/Alaska Native, Pacific Islanders, LGBTQ and Trans — were made up of community members in Eugene.

Kris Galago, an attendee of the Pacific Islander focus group, is a native Hawaiian. Galago, her Samoan husband and their two children say that they encountered discrimination for the first time in Eugene. "I never knew I was a person of color before coming here," she says. "In Hawaii, people don't judge others by the color of their skin, so we had never encountered racism before."

Neubeck and Bonnie Souza, co-chairs of the project, wanted to involve the community from start to finish. "We wanted to emphasize the voices of people from these ten communities, and through this process, we have," Neubeck says.

The groups met for dinner and discussion. They were asked the same questions, ranging from "How do you feel about living here?" to "When you have experienced discrimination, hate or bias, what do you think could be done to help you?"

Discussion flowed freely. "It was very refreshing to hear that other marginalized communities in Eugene are experiencing the same things as us," Galago says. "It brought validity to our argument that the way we are treated here isn't right."

When all the focus groups had concluded, Neubeck and Souza found eight themes — micro-aggressions, intersectionality, isolation and need for safe space, to name a few — that ran common among each group. According to the report, "the themes and statements collectively serve to demonstrate how it feels to be a member of a marginalized group in Eugene."

"There were forms of discrimination that many groups had in common and forms that were unique to each group," Galago says. "In this community, we just aren't being heard."

In a final meeting in May, attendees from nearly all of the focus groups came together and looked over the report to ensure its accuracy and to create recommended goals for the city.

"We need the people in our community to say that, yes, discrimination is a real problem and we want to create a change," Neubeck says. "The report itself is only a jumping-off point to making that change, to helping people from marginalized communities to feel safer, more included and a part of the community as a whole."

According to the report, short-term goals include requiring city staff members to "systematically reach out to marginalized communities each year to find out what events they would like to see occur, what events they would like to participate in and if/how they would like to showcase their presence to the broader community."

Long-term goals include establishing a "centrally located, city-owned, multi-cultural center that provides a home base where members of marginalized communities — young and old — can gather, meet, teach, provide information and celebrate their cultural traditions."

Last week, the city released the "2016 Hate and Bias Report," saying that 82 bias crimes and non-criminal incidents took place last year, up from 59 in 2015. According to the report, "results indicate race continues to be the leading motivating factor for reported hate and bias activity."

After receiving and reviewing both the Hate and Bias report and the Anti-Discrimination report last week, Mayor Lucy Vinis says that city representatives feel the report is "timely, powerful and important — now more than ever."

"People shouldn't be waking up in our community not wanting to leave their homes because they're afraid of what might happen to them on the streets," Vinis says. "If life is okay as you know it, that doesn't mean that it is for everyone — this report shows that."

Mayor Vinis says the short-term goal to implement a "rapid response policy" for city officials to respond to hate crimes and harmful activities in the community can likely be a first step.

The Anti-Discrimination Work Group plans to meet with city council to discuss each goal in turn, making sure this report doesn't get ignored. Galago says she hopes to get more involved with the Work Group to help find a solution, despite being a victim of the problem.

"For now, we will continue to face issues being racialized and discriminated against — we are still fighting the battle," Galago says. "There are small victories but there are bigger challenges, and we need to be heard so we can all move forward." ■

LANE COUNTY AREA SPRAY INFORMATION

Roseburg Resources, 541-679-3311, plans to spray 122.1 acres in Douglas and Lane Counties with a long list of chemicals on their lands south of Veneta and in the Ox-bow Burn area. See ODF notification 2017-781-08835, call Dan Menk at 541-935-2283 with questions.

Franklin Clarkson Timber Co LLC, 541-214-1435, plans to spray 1641.9 acres south of Blue River and north of Dexter Lake with imazapyr, triclopyr, Crosshair, Foam Buster, Grounded, MSO Concentrate and/or No Foam. See ODF notification 2017-771-08761, call Brian Dally at 541-726-3588 with questions.

Weyerhaeuser Company, 541-746-2511, plans to spray 559 acres in the greater Marcola area with imazapyr. See ODF notification 2017-771-08670, call Brian Dally at 541-726-3588 with questions.

Giustina Resources, 541-485-1500, plans to spray 21.7 acres south of Dexter Lake near Noisy Creek with imazapyr. See ODF notification 2017-771-08646, call Tim Meehan at 541-726-3588 with questions.

Giustina Land & Timber Co, 541-345-2301, plans to hire Northwest Reforestation Services LLC, 541-520-6215, to spray 36.7 acres near Marlow Rd with imazapyr, glyphosate, and/or Forest Crop Oil. See ODF notification 2017-781-08749, call Dan Menk at 541-935-2283 with questions.

Weyerhaeuser Company, 541-746-2511, plans to spray 19 acres near Low Pass with imazapyr and other chemicals. See ODF notification 2017-781-08698, call Robin Biesecker at 541-935-2283 with questions.

Weyerhaeuser Company, 541-746-2511, plans to hire Northwest Forest Management Services LLC, 541-520-6215, to spray a total of 130.3 acres near Moke Rd, Rust Rd, and Low Pass with imazapyr. See ODF notifications 2017-781-08456, 2017-781-08511 and 2017-781-08512, call Robin Biesecker at 541-935-2283 with questions.

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ACTIVIST ALERT

After relentless advocacy, the 82,500-acre Elliott State Forest in the Oregon Coast will remain in public ownership. To celebrate this environmentalist victory, Cascadia Wildlands, Mountain Rose Herbs and Thinking Tree Spirits are hosting a **Victory Celebration** for the Elliott State Forest from 6 to 10 pm Saturday, July 29. Musical entertainment includes Soul Vibrator, Tony Riedl's La Famille and Norma Fraser Reggae Band, and there will be cocktails, food carts and face-painting for kids. It's free and open to the public and will be held at Thinking Tree Spirits, at 88 Jackson Street.

On Saturday, July 22, there will be a protest **in solidarity with the #DisruptJ20 defendants**. These are the 214 protesters who were mass-arrested on inauguration day for "felony rioting." The protesters face up to 75 years in prison for exercising the constitutional right to free assembly and free

speech. The protest coincides with the Saturday Market and will take place at the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza on the corner of Eighth Avenue and Oak Street from 10 am to 5 pm.

This Sunday, July 23, there will be a **Buy and Trade Swap Meet** for the unneeded. Those participating will have a blanket on the pavement of the plaza, and will display items they no longer need and swap for those others no longer need. The event will take place 3 to 6 pm in the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza at Eighth Avenue and Oak Street. Those lucky enough to have housing already are encouraged to donate goods for this event, either by dropping them off in plastic bags at the plaza between 1 and 3 pm on Sunday, or calling or texting Wayne Martin, 831-601-0022, to pick up items from your home. Volunteers are also needed to help the event run smoothly.