

Timber: Three possible initiatives seek to restrict logging

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Even so, only 25 percent said that clearcutting was acceptable compared to 45 percent who found it unacceptable.

About 24 percent had a neutral opinion and 6 percent said they didn't know, which is a sizable amount of people who can be swayed in an election, said Mike Cloughesy, the institute's director of forestry.

On the ballot?

Public perceptions of forestry practices could impact Oregon's timber industry in 2016, as three prospective ballot initiatives seek to restrict logging and aerial spraying of herbicides this year, he said.

Educating people about legal requirements to protect waterways and wildlife, as well as practices that reduce soil disturbances, can improve their perception of clearcutting, said Cloughesy.

The industry may also consider using techniques to make clearcuts less jarring aesthetically, he said. "It's important that we do visual management."

It's not always economically feasible to harvest trees in way that's pleasing to the eye, but the added investment

can be worthwhile in areas that are highly visible to the public, according to experts at a recent timber industry conference on visual management.

Photos of denuded hillsides and landslides have commonly been used by environmental groups in campaigns, such during elections for Washington's Commissioner of Public Lands, said Gordon Bradley, a retired University of Washington forestry professor.

"This imagery is not without consequence," he said.

'Eye of the beholder'

Though it's often said that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," research has shown that people have similar preferences and dislikes for certain landscape features, Bradley said.

A guiding principle is to "minimize discordance" between the harvest area and the surrounding landscape, he said.

Clearcuts that have geometric shapes with straight lines and sharp corners are more likely to contrast with the organic, undulating shapes of the hills and horizon, Bradley said.

Irregularly shaped clearcuts that complement the scenery and emulate natural mead-



Mateusz Perkowski/Capital Press

Multiple ages of trees grow in Oregon's Coast Range. Forestry experts say the visual impacts of clearcutting can be reduced to improve public perceptions of the industry.

ows are less visually grating, he said.

"Squares stand out, but so do triangles," Bradley said. "You want what you're adding to the landscape to fit."

Reducing the disparity between the clearcut and surrounding forest can also be accomplished by "feathering" the edges, or leaving enough trees around the border to cre-

ate a transition to the unharvested area, he said.

Another possibility is to leave enough trees throughout the harvest area so the change in color and texture isn't as pronounced as with a clearcut, Bradley said.

Research has shown that people tend to rate harvest areas as visually acceptable even when up to 70 percent of the trees have been removed, he said. "There's a significant amount of activity that can take place on the landscape."

Challenges

From the operational standpoint, retaining trees within a harvest area complicates logging and timber extraction, said Loren Kellogg, a retired Oregon State University forestry professor.

Pulling logs out with a cable is challenging when you have to circumvent trees, particularly on steep slopes where safety is already a concern, he said.

Visual management generally involves more time and planning, he said.

"All this stuff is going to cost more to do it," Kellogg said. "The person doing the work has to get compensated for it."

Retaining trees and managing multiple ages within the same stand also has implications for growth, said Doug Maguire, an OSU forestry professor.

As more trees are left on the landscape, their shade slows the regeneration of the next generation of forest, he said. Widely dispersed trees are also more prone to being knocked over by wind.

"It depends on how much productivity you're willing to trade off," Maguire said.

Greenwood Resources, which owns forests in Northwest Oregon near coastal resort communities and scenic highways, evaluates each logging site based on its exposure to the public, said Mark Garrigues, a forester with the company.

The harvest plans are analyzed to determine whether they'll disrupt the natural contours of the skyline or otherwise affect the "viewshed," he said.

While these considerations haven't stopped any operations, they do allow foresters to modify their plans to reduce visual impacts, Garrigues said. "We're not trying to hide what we're doing, we're just trying to take other views and perspectives into account."

Gearhart: 'We're a small community with limited resources'

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Jesse said numbers are slightly more than \$250,000 for those 10 employees, or \$25,400 a year per employee, averaging \$12.21 per employee hour of work.

"We're a small community with limited resources," Jesse said. "Out of the total budget, it's a huge amount of money."

The plan, contracted with Citycounty Insurance Services, "does have the best rate for the type of plan we have, but it was made to be a Cadillac plan, so we're going to be making adjustments," Sweet said.

The employees' health care plan is set to expire at

the end of the year and would be reviewed then, he added.

Other increases

The planning budget sees increases as a result of transportation system planning, park master planning and legal fees, Sweet said.

"That's in anticipation of some of the short-term rental conversations we're having now," Sweet said.

Building inspection fees will jump by more than a third in anticipation of new rules on short-term rentals, with a part-time administrative assistant planned to handle some duties.

The City Council is in the midst of public hearings on

registration and licensing of transient properties — those rented for less than 30 days — which could be adopted this year.

Part-time Building Official Jim Brien will be used as a consultant in the first year before considering money for a full-time code enforcement officer, Sweet said.

"Until I know what normal is, I don't want to hire someone," Sweet said. "I've put aside \$40,000 in code enforcement. It depends if the council allows 35 permits, or allows everybody to do it or somewhere in between. If we go to zero permits, we'll have to figure out how to find funding, but that's for con-

versations later. I'm basing this on our best guess at this point."

City revenue is derived from property tax, franchise fees for companies such as utilities and transient rental tax dollars, Sweet said. He anticipated about \$140,000 in vacation rental income based on the 73 short-term rental properties tallied by the city.

"If the number goes to zero, we'll have to discuss that," Sweet said.

The city receives \$200,000 from condos and hotels, he added.

Nonprofit support

Gearhart's budget includes funds for a wide variety of

Clatsop County nonprofits, including social services, environmental management and hazard mitigation.

A budget line of \$10,000 addresses a mapping of sensitive areas such as wetlands and fens. The North County Land Conservancy will inventory land in Gearhart and provide information on how they perform and what the city can do to maintain them, City Administrator Chad Sweet said. "It's not regulatory, but when there is an incursion in these areas, the city can do what it needs to repair them."

The city will provide support of \$2,000 for the Oregon Badge Foundation in honor

of Jason Goodding, the Seaside police officer killed in February.

The budget also includes expenditures for the Seaside Youth Center, Animal Control, the South County Food Bank and the Harbor.

Hazard mitigation reserve funds increase from \$5,000 to \$10,040, to be used on signs, cache storage, maps or projects with the city's Community Emergency Response Team.

The budget was unanimously approved by the City Council and the Budget Committee and will be presented for a reading at a future City Council meeting for a vote by the council alone.

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Join us Thursday, April 28 from 3pm to 6pm for our Hiring Event at the Public Coast Brewery located at 264 Third Street in Cannon Beach.

Occasionally other companies make telemarketing calls of classified ads. These companies are not affiliated with The Daily Astorian and customers are under no obligation to participate. If you would like to contact the attorney general or be put on the do not call list, here are the links to both of them
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