

Oregon lawmakers urged to boost noxious weed spending by \$1M

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Bureau



Courtesy Oregon Department of Agriculture

Poison hemlock is a common noxious weed in Oregon. House Bill 2043 would appropriate \$1 million from the general fund to carry out the Oregon Department of Agriculture's noxious weed programs.

SALEM — Oregon farm groups are urging lawmakers to boost noxious weed control funding by \$1 million, arguing the investment will prevent even costlier future battles against invasives.

House Bill 2043 would appropriate \$1 million from the general fund to carry out the Oregon Department of Agriculture's noxious weed programs in the 2017-2019 biennium.

"It's penny-wise and pound-foolish to cut ourselves short now," said Peter Kenagy, a Benton County farmer who testified in support of HB 2043 at a Feb. 7 hearing before the House Agriculture Committee.

Under Gov. Kate Brown's proposed budget for the next biennium, ODA is slated to cut its biocontrol program for invasive weeds, which relies on predatory insects to suppress unwanted plants.

Eliminating the weed biocontrol position, which is currently vacant, would save the ODA \$250,000 at a time when state agencies are under financial pressure due to a looming \$1.8 billion state budget shortfall.

"If we don't keep funding these things, we're going to pay for it later," Kenagy said. "Cutting money out of the budget for this, we'll pay for it and our kids will pay for it."

Representatives of the Oregon Farm Bureau, the

Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Oregonians for Food and Shelter and the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts also testified in favor of the bill.

Noxious weeds are estimated to cost Oregon's economy about \$83 million per year, said Katie Fast, executive director of the Oregonians for Food and Shelter agribusiness group.

Lawmakers should not consider adding new natural resource programs until "base programs" such as noxious weed control are funded, Fast said.

Invasive species don't recognize boundaries and the problem with noxious weeds will get worse if ignored, said Michelle Delepine on behalf of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts.

"This isn't something you

can just put on hold," she said.

Aside from weeds that already afflict Oregon farmers, the state is facing an incursion of new invasives, such as the flowering rush that's been found growing along the Columbia river, said Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena.

The weed spreads by pieces of root breaking off and traveling downstream, with the populations in Oregon and Washington thought to have originated in Montana's Flathead Lake, he said.

Flowering rush threatens to clog up irrigation systems and disrupt ecosystems to the detriment of native fish.

"We need all the help we can get," said Hansell.

During the Feb. 7 hearing, the House Agriculture Committee also heard testimony on several other bills:

- House Bill 2327 would

require the recipients of grants from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to obtain liability insurance for projects aimed at improved water quality and riparian habitats. The cost would be covered by grant funds, so the added expense wouldn't be borne by recipients.

The bill would also repeal statutory language related to a "healthy streams partnership" that's no longer operational and add a representative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a non-voting member of OWEB's board, among other provisions.

House Bill 2254 would allow individual containers of Oregon fresh produce to be unlabeled if they're headed for export to foreign markets. Under current law, all such containers must be labeled for sale, which imposes an added burden for exporters. The change would allow foreign buyers to label Oregon farm goods when they arrive in another country.

House Bill 2255 would update Oregon's milk-related statutes to align with federal rules for pasteurized milk safety, because current statutes are outdated and don't conform with the federal requirements.

House Bill 2256 would clarify that nutritional supplements are regulated as food by the Oregon Department of Agriculture, which will ensure the agency has the authority for potential enforcement actions.

Walden to host pair of town hall meetings

East Oregonian

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Oregon) will hold a pair of town hall meetings Friday in Umatilla and Morrow counties, following up on a telephone conference Monday that drew more than 4,000 people who listened in on the call.

Walden will meet with constituents at 11:30 a.m. at Weston Memorial Hall, 204 E. Main St. in Weston, before heading west for a town hall at 2:15 p.m. at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Center, 2 Marine Drive in Boardman.



Walden

The majority of questions during Monday's teleconference were about healthcare, and how Republicans plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

Walden also addressed President Donald Trump's recent order temporarily banning refugees and immigrants from seven Muslim-majority countries, and Trump's proposal to build a wall along the Mexican border.

Friday's meetings are open to the public. For more information, contact Walden's office at 202-225-6730.

PENDLETON

City council open to a veterans memorial

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

An effort to turn an unused decorative fountain at Highway 11 and Southeast Emigrant Avenue into a veterans memorial received some early support from the Pendleton City Council at a meeting Tuesday.

Although the idea for the memorial started with a proposal from Korean War veteran Ken Garrett to dedicate a Southeast Court Place bridge, conversation seemed to revolve around a separate proposal from Veterans of Foreign Wars "Let 'er Buck" Post 922.

The post's vision involves two components — repurposing the Highway 11 fountain for a veterans memorial and renaming the section of Court Place in front of the VFW hall "Veterans Way."

VFW member Johnny Blagg presented one of the concepts, which would remove the irrigation from the fountain and install new landscaping and a 40-foot flag pole surrounded by emblems representing the five branches of the military.

Blagg said his rough estimate for the project is \$20,000.

Councilor Neil Brown said the fountain was high maintenance and hadn't been in use for several years.

Blagg said the VFW was still in the early stages of planning the memorial and there was another member who was looking into the possibility of erecting statues at the fountain site.

While the council was verbally supportive of the Highway 11 memorial concept, the new street name didn't get as much traction.

Brown mentioned that other buildings on the street, namely the Pendleton Woolen Mills, might oppose changing their address.

Additionally, "Veterans Way" would conflict with an ordinance that requires

streets that go from east to west have historic names in alphabetic order.

City manager Robb Corbett said he would look into the street name issue and help facilitate the VFW project.

The council took no action on the memorial concept.

The council did take action on several other issues.

The council unanimously voted to accept the city's 2016 financial audit.

Among accounting firm Dickey and Tremper's findings was that the interfund loan paid to the airport was still too large.

"We recommend that the city review repayment of the old outstanding loans and if the airport will require additional subsidy or perhaps other revenue sources or rent payments for public facilities on airport property," the audit states.

Councilors unanimously approved \$370,609 for a "combo truck" for the public works department.

Public works superintendent Jeff Brown said the truck is equipped with a vacuum that is used to clean the city's sewer system.

The council amended some of the uses in the central mixed use zone, which now has land-use regulations for food trucks.

City planner George Clough said 3 or 4 people were in the queue to open food trucks in Pendleton, but the city didn't have any rules for them to follow.

The council unanimously approved declaring 19 lots it owns at Sunridge Estates surplus, a move that allows the city to sell them.

The city had local improvement district liens on the properties and obtained them when Umatilla County foreclosed on the properties.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 8

ADULT OPEN GYM, 6 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Half-court basketball. Adults only.

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-8100)

BABY BOOGIE & TAPPIN' TODDLERS, 10-10:45 a.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave, Hermiston. (541-567-2882)

CONVERSATION PROJECT: HOMELESS IN THE LAND OF PLENTY, 11 a.m., Blue Mountain Community College, 975 S.E. Columbia Drive, Hermiston. Ryan Stroud hosts. Free and open to the public. (Allison Timmons 541-289-2832)

STORY TIME, 11:15 a.m., Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. (541-567-2882)

STANFIELD SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Stanfield Community Center, 225 W. Roosevelt, Stanfield. Cost is \$3.50 for seniors, \$6 for others. (541-449-1332)

PENDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

ADULT BEGINNERS' COMPUTERS, 3-4 p.m., Pendleton Public Library meeting room, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Registration is required. Classes tailored to the needs of the attendees. (541-966-0380)

VEGAN/SUSTAINABLE LIVING POTLUCK SUPPER, 7 p.m., location varies, location varies, Pendleton. Bring a vegan dish and recipe. Gluten-free friendly group. Call to RSVP and for driving directions. (541-969-3057)

THURSDAY, FEB. 9

ADULT OPEN GYM, 6 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Half-court basketball.

Adults only.

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-8100)

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME, 10:15-11 a.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Stories and activities for young children. (541-966-0380)

PRESCHOOL STORY AND CRAFT TIME, 10:30 a.m., Milton-Freewater Public Library, 8 S.W. Eighth Ave., Milton-Freewater. (Lilli Schmidt 541-938-8247)

PENDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

BOARDMAN SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St., Boardman. Cost is \$4 for seniors 55 and over or \$5 for adults. (541-481-3257)

HERMISTON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Hermiston Senior Center, 435 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Cost is \$4 for adults, free for children 10 and under, \$4 for Meals on Wheels. Extra 50 cents for utensils/dishes. Bus service to Senior Center by donation. (541-567-3582)

SENSORY STORY TIME, 12:30 p.m., Boardman Public Library, 200 S. Main St., Boardman. For children from birth to age 4. (541-481-2665)

SKILLS FOR LIFE, 3-5 p.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Gym activities and life skills for middle and high school students. Registration requested. (Danny Bane 541-379-4250)

ARTIST'S RECEPTION: WHITNEY MINTHORN, 5:30-7 p.m., Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. Meet Whitney Minthorn and view his artwork and commercial projects in the East Oregonian Gallery. Refreshments available by donation. Free admission. (Roberta Lavadour 541-278-9201)



PART-TIME DRIVER

Part-time driver needed to deliver East Oregonian publications throughout Eastern Oregon. Must be able to lift up to 50 pounds, have a valid driver's license and a good driving record. Shifts vary but will regularly include Tuesday nights.

Duties may include non-driving work if extra hours are desired. Drug test, driving record and criminal background checks will be completed before hire.

Pick up an application at 211 SE Byers, Pendleton or e-mail resume and cover letter to hr@eomediagroup.com

HERMISTON



Photo contributed by Maureen Roy Photography

Kids in kindergarten through fifth grade are invited to participate in a Missoula Children's Theatre production of "The Princess and the Pea." Auditions are Feb. 20 at the Hermiston Conference Center.

Missoula Children's Theatre to stage 'Princess and Pea'

East Oregonian

A kingdom of snow has the prince looking for a proper princess to share the throne during an upcoming Missoula Children's Theatre presentation in Hermiston.

Parts are plentiful in "The Princess and the Pea," as residents of the kingdom include Winter Wind Workers, Blizzard Bringers, Icicle Sharpeners and Snow Smoothers, who are ruled by the Storm King and the Snow Queen. Presented by Desert Arts Council, kids in kindergarten through fifth grade are invited to participate.

Auditions are Monday, Feb. 20 from 3-5 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference

Center, 415 S. Highway 395. There is no charge to participate. Rehearsals are Tuesday, Feb. 21 through Friday, Feb. 24 from 5:15-7:15 p.m., also at the conference center.

The week-long rehearsals will crescendo with a pair of performances, which are Saturday, Feb. 25 at 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. at the conference center. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for students.

Tickets are available at the conference center, Hermiston Parks & Recreation, 180 N.E. Second St., or via www.desertartscouncil.com/tickets.

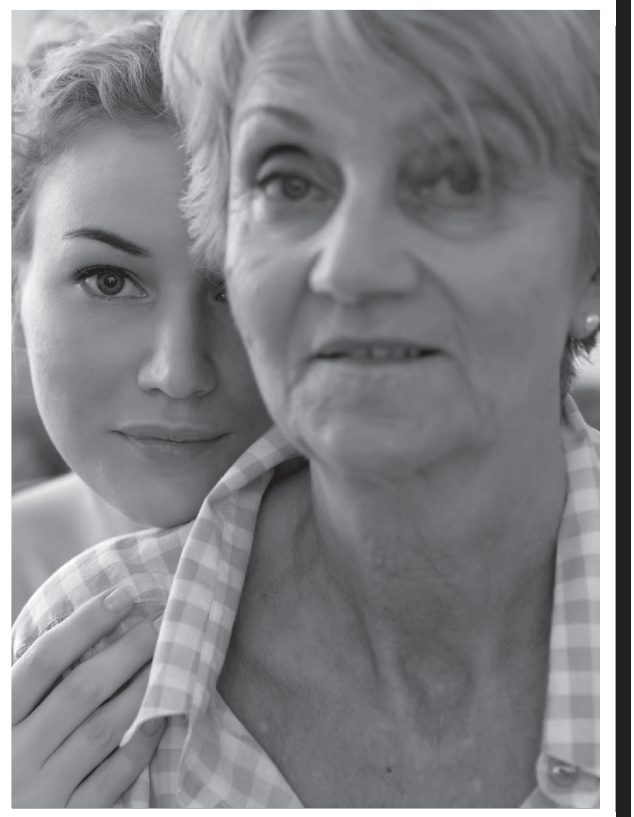
For more information, contact 541-667-5018 or parksandrec@hermiston.or.us.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

Mom has always been so patient, but now when I ask her questions she gets angry.

IT'S NOT LIKE HER.



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