

NATURAL RESOURCE FLYER

An update for members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly.

Changes at the Agencies

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ): Lang Marsh resigned as the Director of DEQ effective October 1. Lang has been director for the last six years, and has carried the state through numerous difficult and controversial issues. He has been a leader in development and implementation of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. The Environmental Quality Commission plans to hire a new director prior to the legislative session. Lydia Taylor, Director of Operations for the agency, will serve as Acting Director until a new director is hired.

Division of State Lands (DSL): The State Land Board announced last week that Ann Hanus will be the next Director of the DSL. Ann comes most recently from the Department of Forestry where she was Assistant State Forester in charge of Resource Planning. Ann replaces Paul Cleary, now Director of the Water Resources Department. Steve Purchase is currently serving as Acting Director of DSL.

Department of Forestry: In other Forestry news, Roy Woo was hired in July as Deputy State Forester to replace retiring Mike Beyerle. Roy faced a baptism by fire, picking up quickly to manage fire issues for the state during the worst fire season the West has seen in 50 years.

Federal Agency Changes: In outside news, both National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Director Will Stelle and Environmental Protection Agency Regional Director Chuck Clark have resigned over the last few months. Replacements in these positions are not expected until early next year.

For more information, contact Paula Burgess at (503) 378-3548.

Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds

Columbia River Channel Deepening Project: The National Marine Fisheries Service withdrew its Biological Opinion for the deepening project on August 25, reinitiating consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers. Four reasons given for the withdrawal include the need to thoroughly assess new information which has become available since the biological opinion was issued in December 1999, allow time to reach agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers on the specifics of studies and monitoring requirements, clarify expectations for completion of restoration work and make any necessary changes to terms and conditions in order to protect listed species and their critical habitat. This withdrawal will affect the ability of both states to issue 401 water quality certifications for the project within the statutory timeframes.

For more information, contact Louise Solliday at (503) 378-3589, ext. 823.

Total Maximum Daily Loads: A Water Quality Management Plan and proposed Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of pollutants for the Tualatin Basin have been released for public review and comment by the Department of Environmental Quality. The public comment period is open through October 27, 2000. A public hearing will be held on October 17 at 7 p.m. in the Tualatin Hills Parks & Recreation District Nature Park Interpretive Center, 15655 SW Millikan Blvd, Beaverton.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has initiated a project called CLAM (Consolidated Listing and Assessment Methodology) to look at the methodology states use to develop their lists of impaired waterbodies required by Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Apparently there is wide variation in the criteria states use for making listing decisions. EPA will look at how states interpret their standards, develop protocols for monitoring, develop criteria for the use of data (i.e. how many samples needed to determine impairment), etc. EPA will also look at how states have designed monitoring programs and their current use of resources. EPA has hired a contractor, Ross & Associates, out of Seattle to facilitate the project, which will start with a series of workshops this fall.

For more information, contact Stephanie Hallock at (503) 378-3589, ext. 832.

Healthy Streams Partnership: The Partnership has elected Rich Angstrom, Jr. of the Concrete and Aggregate Producers Association as Chair and Tracy Bosen of the Umatilla Basin Watershed Council as Vice-Chair. Terry Witt of Oregonians for Food and Shelter made a presentation on behalf of the Partnership to the Joint Legislative Committee on Stream Restoration and Species Recovery on August 14th summarizing activities to date. The Partnership will tour the Umatilla Basin on September 28-29.

For more information, contact Stephanie Hallock at (503) 378-3589, ext. 832.

Permit/Consultation Streamlining: The state continues to pursue two solutions to problems associated with delays in project approvals under the Endangered Species Act. First, the Division of State Lands (DSL) has submitted a final Biological Assessment to the Corps of Engineers and both the National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service for a Statewide Programmatic General Permit (SPGP) for fill and removal activities in Oregon. The Services are expected to complete consultation on the permit this fall, with the expectation that the permit could be issued by the Corps to the state around the first of the year.

Second, the state has sent a letter to EPA asking that DSL be designated as a non-federal partner for the purposes of initiating consultation with the Services on state assumption of the Clean Water Act Section 404 program. Depending upon the results of the consultation, this could be the first step in transferring 404 authority from the Corps to DSL.

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Congressional Update

Steens Mountain: The Steens Mountain legislation is at a critical juncture in the legislative process. The Governor's office continues to work with the Oregon delegation and the Secretary of Interior to write a bill that provides strong protection for the ecological values of the Steens area and assists local landowners in maintaining their economic viability.

Salmon Recovery Funding: The Governor has worked to continue federal funding for salmon restoration projects that will be distributed through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

Last year Oregon received \$9 million. Both the Senate and House bills include funding for Oregon and the Northwest this year; differences in the bills will be worked out in a conference committee during September.

The Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA): CARA is currently waiting for floor action in the Senate. Under the Senate version of the bill, it is estimated that Oregon would receive in the neighborhood of \$53 million annually, for fifteen years, for conservation uses throughout the State. Currently 41 Senators, including Senator Wyden, have signed onto a letter asking the Senate leadership to schedule CARA for floor action.

West Coast Groundfish: Fishermen will receive \$5 million of community assistance funds from the FY 2000 supplemental appropriations bill. The three states (Oregon, California and Washington) have agreed to a 35%, 35%, 30% split of the funds with Washington getting 30%. In Oregon, the funds will go to the already established Groundfish Disaster Outreach Program. The Groundfish Disaster Outreach Program was established by Oregon Sea Grant to help support fishermen and their families who are affected by the changes in the industry. The Oregon delegation is also working to secure funding in the FY 2001 budget for increased groundfish research and to establish an observer program.

For more information, contact Kevin Smith at (202)

Umatilla Chemical Weapons Disposal Facility

The Oregon State Police have assigned Bureau Commander Beverlee Venell to Pendleton to oversee emergency preparedness activities for Oregon Emergency Management. Commander Venell will serve on a local area Governing Board which has been established to address deficiencies in management of the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) identified in an independent evaluation completed in spring of 2000. The Governor has asked for an interim report on community emergency preparedness related to the chemical weapons stockpile by the end of the year, and final preparedness to be in place by June 2001. The chemical weapons incineration facility is schedule to begin test burns of surrogate nerve agent in October 2001.

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