

June 4, 1991

NOTES

Informal Meeting to Discuss Watershed Problems held at Corbett Water Dist.

Present: CWD Lawyer, Peter Mersereau; CWD Engineer, Gil Meigs
Board Members: Pete Place, Henry Schwartz, Edith Mastne; Peter Grant
Oregon State Health Division Rep: John Straughan
USFS Reps: District Ranger Dick Hardman, Connie Athman, hydrologist,
and Doris Tai, public affairs specialist.
CWD Staff: Vance Hubbard, Randy Stark, Marc Caldwell; Carol Quinn

District Objective: To persuade USFS to close Camp A Loop Road to vehicular traffic. This road and its side roads cross portions of the Corbett Water District Watershed. Camp A Loop offers access to individuals for shooting and target practice, for illegal dumping; and for four-wheeling by off road vehicles. The District's main concerns are for possible contamination of the water by lead leeching into the ground and water from the massive amounts of shells in the area, by the threat of hazardous waste being dumped in the area, and by erosion caused by ORVs.

Mr. Hardman addressed the group concerning several subjects. The Camp A Loop Road is part of the Mt. Hood Nat'l Forest administered by the Forest Service and owned by the public. Forest Service policy is to keep public land open and available for public use as much as possible. At this time there is some logging going on in the area so the log trucks and equipment need access. When this timber sale is complete, some of the side roads will be closed. He advised the District that they would be notified when and where future logging would be allowed within the watershed area. They will send us a loop sale map.

The USFS is concerned about the garbage dumping too. The recent ORV rally which was sanctioned and supervised by the FS was a public service project by the Sand Fleas Club to help clean up the area. Nearly four tons of garbage were picked up which barely made a dent in what is there. There were approximately 56 vehicles involved and before approval was given, the FS obtained references and recommendations as to their being a responsible group. Garbage including some car batteries, anti-freeze, oil containers, two 55 gallon drums of rifle shells and litter was picked up. Dumpsters were provided. The FS maintains that it was the heavy rain storm not the ORV rally that caused increased turbidity to the District's water. This increased turbidity was monitored by the daily testing that is done. In the future they will contact the District before such events are planned. The Job Corps also conducts a clean-up along the Camp A Loop Road yearly, which they recently did.

Some time ago the District asked the Forest Service to put up signs indicating the watershed area. They responded that they did not have the budget for putting signs up, but the CWD could do so as long as the signs met their standards. However, they neglected to notify us of their standards as requested. They will forward this information to the District right away. The signs can be reflective metal or routed wood. The FS would like to review the wording and placement, but the CWD would be responsible for installation and maintenance. The District asked the Forest Service to post no dumping signs with penalties included. Mr. Hardman noted that when the FS discovers who did the dumping, they are cited. At this time there are daylight patrols by a Level 4 FS law enforcement officer who is authorized to carry a gun and has the same authority as a police officer. He patrols between the Columbia Gorge, Bullrun and Larch Mountain, being on Larch Mt. approximately two days out of five. Level 2 FS employees (there are about 5 or 6 in the area) are authorized to cite for violations of regulations including illegal dumping. In the summer an additional deputy sheriff is contracted by

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the FS to patrol the area between the Gorge and Larch Mt. He is in the vicinity three or four days a week. Occasionally, there is a Mult. Co. deputy who is in the area on regular patrol as well. Gene Sweet is the USFS Level 4 officer. He is in a brown 4WD vehicle with light bar.

Ms. Tai advised the group that the proposed shooting range is no longer being considered within the watershed area. There are some other sites on Larch Mt. being considered but the site in the watershed is not an option. There are several organizations interested and if such a shooting range is built, it should cut down on the shooting problem on the Camp A Loop Road. The District will be kept informed of plans and progress.

Mr. Hubbard showed the group a short video he had filmed on the Camp A Loop Road visualizing the muddy roads, the extensive litter and dumping problem, and the shooters and shooting activity. It appears there is quite a public safety factor involved as it is dangerous especially on the weekends to be in the area when there is so much shooting going on.

Mr. Straughan advised the group that the Oregon State Health Division would support any measures and regulations to help insure clean water. OSHD requires testing of a long list of toxic chemicals, including lead content. Regulations are calling for increased testing for additional contaminants.

Mr. Hubbard stated that the new Water Treatment Plant would not filter out toxic chemicals. Therefore, even with the treatment plant, the threat from hazardous materials dumping and lead leeching still remains.

The Forest Service has designated the area as a Special Emphasis Watershed. They do have the authority to close the road if it is necessary. However, Mr. Hardman again emphasized that policy is to keep the area open for the people to conduct activities unless otherwise regulated. There is no law against setting up a target and shooting. Their position is that they would like to clear up the problems with education and signs. If that doesn't work, perhaps other measures would be considered. The closure of the Bullrun Watershed is a result of an act of Congress. Approximately 20-25 per cent of the Mt Hood Nat'l Forest is special emphasis watershed for approximately 18 water suppliers. The Dalles watershed is closed, but most of the rest are open.

The USFS was requested to check into lead leeching - how long it takes, etc. and the CWD was asked to identify the areas of most concern. The FS asked that communication between CWD and themselves be maintained and perhaps regular meetings would be scheduled to resolve problems.

Follow-up There was another accident in the watershed on June 8, at 1:45 a.m. with a car ending up in a creek - no apparent leaking. The sheriff's dept. has been having several calls/problems within the last few days with teen-age drinking parties going on in the area. It seems that the night of June 8, they ended up baricading Camp A Loop road to keep vehicles out. The sheriff's department would possibly be interested in closing this road also if the parties continue to be a problem.