



The Homestead

January 2010

Valsetz Panel Discussion Draws Record Crowd

At our annual meeting in May we hosted a panel discussion on the Valsetz Reservoir and Dam Project. Four panelists spoke on areas of their expertise. Austin McGuigan, Polk County Planning Director, described the county's proposal for a feasibility study. The Valsetz option for additional water was considered in the 2004 review conducted by the county but was dismissed because the property owners at that time were not interested. Since then the property has changed hands and the new owners are willing to consider the possibility of rebuilding the dam and reservoir that were removed in 1988. The county obtained a \$160,000 grant from the Department of Water Resources. A report on the feasibility study should be available at the end of the year-long project.

Mark Millikan spoke about the current operation of the Buell-Red Prairie Water Cooperative. They

Citizen Notification of Land Use Applications

Polk County now provides a signup service for citizens to receive notification of pending land use applications. These notices are provided via e-mail to citizens who register for the service. Registration is valid for a single calendar year. To sign up, check Polk County's web page for the Community Development/Planning Department (<http://apps.co.polk.or.us/ComGroupReg/>). Enter your name, e-mail address, the community you live in, the name of your citizen group, a password, and agree to the statements in the disclaimer box then press the "submit" button. To view the names of citizen groups who have already signed up for this service in your community, select a community and press the "List Citizen Groups" button. You will begin receiving notifications for your community within five business days. Sign up now to get notification of land use applications in your area during 2010.

currently have sufficient water but need to install a system to remove contaminants.

Barry McPherson, retired from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife spoke about the importance of considering economic, ecological, cultural, spiritual, and intrinsic values before deciding if the Valsetz dam and reservoir is the best solution to meet water needs. A transcript of his comments are posted on our website. Native fish and fisheries could be adversely affected by the dams. North America is in an era of removing dams to ameliorate negative impacts on the environment and on ecological systems. The proposed dam would transfer water between basins and involves risks to both basins. Conservation of water has been underutilized and needs to be better implemented before we look to other sources. Chuck Willer of the Coast Range Association discussed ecological issues and a Coast Range report on the Siletz Watershed.

A diversity of questions and opinions were expressed by members of the audience. Our intent in hosting

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Measure 49 Update

Measure 49 Prevents Large Subdivisions on Resource Land in Polk County

In November 2007, Oregon voters approved Measure 49, which modified Measure 37. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) is authorized under Measure 49 to evaluate existing Measure 37 claims. At the end of June 2008, DLCD received approximately 4,600 Measure 49 Election Returns (landowners' choices from the options made available in Measure 49). DLCD began issuing Preliminary Evaluations at the end of July. DLCD must complete the supplemental reviews by July 2010. To date DLCD has completed preliminary review of over 70% of the Measure 49 claims submitted.

Polk County property owners submitted over 350 Measure 37 claims and most received waivers of land use laws applied after they acquired their property. Under Measure 49, county property owners submitted 217 claims and 204 of these were for the "Express Option" for 1-3 new dwellings. To date DLCD has completed preliminary review of over 60% of the Polk County claims. What effect did Measure 49 have on the original Measure 37

claims? About 25% of the original claims requested 10 or more dwellings on farm and forest zoned property. Measure 49 allowed a maximum of three dwellings for the Express Option. Polk County had many Measure 37 claims requesting 10 or more dwellings and a total of 1521 new dwellings were proposed by these property owners. Under Measure 49 the number of allowed new dwellings for these particular property owners was reduced to 85. Voters did not intend to approve multiple large subdivisions in Oregon's farm and forestland when approving Measure 37. Measure 49 was successful in allowing property owners additional dwellings on their property while at the same time protecting resource land for farm and forest use.

We would like to thank all members who assisted in the Yes on Measure 49 campaign. This Measure has indeed been successful in limiting new residential development in rural Polk County to levels appropriate for farm and forestland, and to levels that can be accommodated by current water supplies, schools, fire control and transportation systems.

National Cemetery for Polk County?

The U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs is seeking to build a new cemetery within the next few years that would serve southwest Washington and northwest Oregon. Polk County officials are actively lobbying for development of a 277-acre parcel of farm land off Zumwalt Road southwest of Monmouth.

The Willamette National Cemetery in Portland was established in 1950 and has nearly 130,000 interments. This 269-acre cemetery will run out of space by 2018. Criteria considered before selecting a site include: proximity to veterans, available utilities and water, topography, aesthetic appearance, and proximity to major highways or roads.

There are some problems and concerns about the Zumwalt Road site. Currently there is inadequate water for a cemetery. Monmouth officials believe that in theory the town's effluent reuse system could be used to irrigate the property. An additional three miles of pipeline would be needed and the reuse system would need improvements to treat the waste water to

a higher level. The sewer utility currently transports 70 million gallons of treated water to a poplar farm just south of Monmouth. The cost of infrastructure improvements and who would be paying the costs has not been discussed to our knowledge. Commissioner Propes arranged a special meeting with local vets and U.S. Representative Schrader last September to discuss the project. Local farmers were not invited but learned of the meeting and went to express their concerns. Elkins Road – the primary route to the site - has more farm equipment than passenger car traffic.

We hope that the county maintains an open government policy in its efforts to review this and other projects in Polk County. All citizens should be notified of special discussions such as a cemetery or building new dams. To only invite proponents or opponents could lead to a biased discussion and ground swell of opposition at the end of the decision-making process.

“Big Waste of Time” Bill Passed

(Adapted from an article by Jim Just from Goal One Coalition’s Newsletter).

The Big Look bill (HB 2229) was approved in 2009. There wasn’t much of anything good in the bill drafted by the Task Force. There was nothing left in the bill after the Land Use Committee’s work that could be considered either “big” or a “look” at Oregon’s land use planning program.

The Task Force’s proudest accomplishment was the adoption of “overarching principles”:

- (A) Provide a healthy environment;
- (B) Sustain a prosperous economy;
- (C) Ensure a desirable quality of life; and
- (D) Equitably allocate the benefits and burdens of land use planning.

The bill is crystal clear that these four principles are “aspirational” only - they expressly have no legal impact whatsoever. Additionally, the land use planning program should, but is not required to, help communities achieve sustainable development patterns and manage the effects of climate change.

You read that right - the planning program is not meant to help us live within our energy or other resources or to head off climate change. At most, it “should, but is not required to, figure out how to live with the consequences of climate change. That’s the best the Land Use Committee could do

to address the most consequential issue of our time (the Task Force didn’t even try).

The Task Force’s controversial proposal to allow two or more counties to adopt their own definition of farm and forest lands is gone. It was replaced by a provision to allow counties to legislatively revisit their inventories of farm and forest land and redesignate them “nonresource” if they fail to meet the Goal 3 definition of “agricultural lands” or the Goal 4 definition of “forest lands.” Of course, counties can do this already, either legislatively or quasi-judicially. There’s a long and complicated technical fix to the existing regional problem solving process. There’s a pretty meaningless provision saying that local governments “should consider directing” infrastructure investments to further compact urban development. There’s a “content neutral” review of land use laws and regulations to reduce complexity. This is not much to show for four year’s work and is a definite failure to come to grips with the extraordinary challenges before us.

Chair Nolan’s admirable and even astounding achievement was to get some bill out of committee while making the folks who were involved in this project feel good about the end result. That was magic.

Signature Drive for OSU Extension Service Tax District Surpasses Goal

The Chief Petitioner’s Committee surpassed its 8000 signature goal to qualify the OSU Extension Service Tax District initiative for the May 2010 ballot. They had 160 volunteers gathering signatures and they collected more than enough valid signatures to qualify for the ballot. The Board of Commissioners held their first public hearing on December 15. Karen Lippsmeyer, Jim Classen, and Roger Fletcher spoke in favor of the petition. The City Resolutions of support are in the record. The Commissioners voted to approve the petition. A Political Action Committee (PAC) will focus on education, advertising and getting out the vote. To contribute funds see the PAC website: www.save-polkcountyextension.com

The OSU Extension Service provides programs

such as 4H, Master Gardeners, Master Woodland Managers, seed certification for farmers and Families and Community Health. These programs are valuable to the farm and forest resource economy of Polk County and to preserving and maintaining the health and livability of our communities. Join us in supporting tax funds for the OSU Extension Service in Polk County. Vote yes in May.

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this panel discussion was to inform the public of proposed projects and to encourage an open discussion between county officials and staff and concerned citizens. We will continue to report on this and other projects as more information is available.



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Our Mission Statement

Who are the friends of Polk County, Oregon, and what is our purpose?

Mission: Friends of Polk County, Oregon, seeks to protect farm and forest lands which form the base of Polk County, to maintain the health and livability of our communities in the face of increasing population, and to preserve the quality of life we presently enjoy.

Implementation:

These objectives will be achieved in part through involvement in the following activities:

- Preservation and enhancement of the statewide land use planning system by, for example, contact with individual legislators, testifying at committee hearings, and providing information to the media.
- Monitoring local land use decisions at the county and city level to ensure compliance with regulations and ordinances.
- Organizing opposition to proposals, regulations, and decisions not consistent with our objectives.

- Improvement and strengthening of local land use regulations through participation in citizen's advisory committees and planning commissions.
- Education of the public about land use issues and their importance to livability, the local farm and forest economy, and the cost and efficiency of local government, through media contact, work shops, and forums.

Winter/Spring 2010 Calendar

Jan 16 Well Monitoring Training
3-1/2 hour Saturday Session

Jan 21 FoPC Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
Independence Public Library

Feb 18 FoPC Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
Independence Public Library

Mar 18 FoPC Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
Independence Public Library