

Oregon Environment



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

NEWSLETTER

Summer - Fall 2000

DEQ Outlines Environmental Priorities

“Over the past 30 years, Oregon has made great progress in protecting the environment, but more needs to be done,” says DEQ Director Langdon Marsh.

To focus resources on the most pressing problems, DEQ has set three priorities for protecting and preserving Oregon’s environment.

Priority One: Increase opportunities for Oregonians to prevent and solve environmental problems.

Oregonians care very much about environmental quality. However, many people do not know how they can help prevent or correct environmental problems. Individuals can make a difference if given useful information and opportunities. DEQ is expanding ways citizens and businesses can find resources they need through increased face-to-face contact with our staff around the state and an improved agency web site.

Priority Two: Clean up Oregon’s rivers and streams.

A recent national report ranked Oregon among the top six states in the U.S. showing significant improvement in DEQ’s water quality program. Yet, there is still much to be done to continue this upward trend. Over the next seven years, DEQ will develop plans to improve and maintain water quality in every Oregon watershed.

Priority Three: Protect Oregonians from harmful toxics.

There was a time when we did not fully understand the impacts certain toxic chemicals, such as



A DEQ water quality specialist (right) trains a volunteer to take water quality samples at a local stream.

DDT, could have on us and our environment. Now we know more, and DEQ is committed to reducing the threat of these toxins present in our air, water and land. We are working with communities and even specific neighborhoods to address concerns about hazardous air pollutants. DEQ cleanup projects around the state focus on cleaning soils and groundwater contaminated by past spills or waste mismanagement. We identify toxic discharges or runoff to waterways, and develop ways to limit or remove these threats.

“All Oregonians can be environmental stewards by helping us improve water quality and reduce toxic substances in our environment,” says Marsh.

For more information about DEQ’s environmental priorities, visit our web site at www.deq.state.or.us

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It's the Law

Federal Environmental Laws

The Clean Air Act (1970) Regulates air pollution from industry, vehicles, and other sources.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (1976) Controls hazardous waste from the "cradle-to-grave." This includes the generating, transporting, treating, storing, and disposing of hazardous waste.

The Clean Water Act (1977) Sets the basic structure for regulating water pollution.

The Pollution Prevention Act (1990) Focuses on reducing pollution through cost-effective changes in production, operation and raw materials use.

For a complete list of federal environmental laws, visit DEQ's website at www.deq.state.or.us

DEQ Works with Shipyards to Improve Coos Bay Environmental and Economic Health

A late-1980s spill investigation in the South Slough area near Coos Bay eventually led to the discovery that shipyards in the vicinity were contributing to tin and heavy metal sediment contamination in the area's tidal flats. DEQ, with the help of a federal Environmental Protection Agency grant, soon began working with five area shipyards and other government agencies to reduce shipyard pollution.

Today, the cleanup process continues, and conditions are improving for aquatic life in the slough area.

DEQ staff based at the Coos Bay office provided regular technical assistance to the shipyards, showing them how to properly dispose of materials used in sandblasting and paint removal processes. In addition, DEQ conducted more complete investigations of contamination at



Coos Bay shipyards now follow DEQ guidelines to prevent contamination in the area's tidal flats.

each shipyard site, and drew up cleanup program plans at each. Through cleanup plans monitored by DEQ, the shipyards have been removing contaminated sediments that could harm aquatic life. DEQ guidelines to the shipyards are addressing other environmental concerns.



Biking instead of driving is one way Medford-area residents can prevent unhealthy smog.

Medford Area Prepared to Prevent Smog

Air quality specialists are working closely with residents and businesses in the Medford-Ashland area to bolster DEQ's smog-reducing Clean Air Action Day program for southern Oregon.

Now in its second year, this voluntary air pollution prevention program is the result of collaboration between DEQ, the Medford-Ashland Air Quality Advisory Committee, and the Medford/Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.

In 1998, the Medford-Ashland area exceeded federal air quality standards for ozone on five days during July, August and September.

When a Clean Air Action Day is called in the Medford area (on days when temperatures exceed 96 degrees and winds are five miles an hour or less), DEQ asks local residents to voluntarily reduce smog-producing activities on that day. People do this by driving less and not using gas-powered lawn and garden equipment.

The Medford program is based on the Portland-Vancouver area Clean Air Action Day program, which has been successfully reducing smog for the past ten years.

Upper Grande Ronde River Becomes Statewide Model

Restoration of northeast Oregon's Upper Grande Ronde River Basin is closer to reality now that a new DEQ water quality management plan is in place. DEQ is applying a basin-wide approach to address water quality issues from all pollution sources in the region.

DEQ developed the plan with

a committee of local citizens, landowners, government and industry representatives. All parties benefit from clean water and take responsibility for achieving clean water standards.

DEQ expects the Upper Grande Ronde River Basin plan to serve as a statewide model.



Mitch Wolgamott, DEQ Water Quality Analyst, takes water samples in the Upper Grande Ronde River.



Deschutes County sanitarian Todd Cleveland and DEQ's Bob Baggett work to improve a septic system.

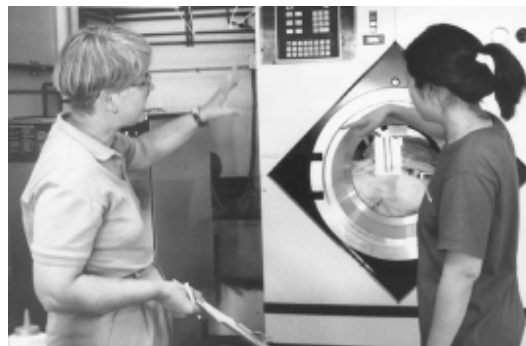
Improving Septic Systems and Water Quality

DEQ is collaborating with Deschutes County officials and the U.S. Geological Survey on a \$5.5 million project aimed at protecting water quality and improving the septic systems of local property owners who live between La Pine and Sunriver.

The project, known as the La Pine National On-site Demonstration, started this spring and will be completed in several phases over the next four years. Recently, workers began installation and evaluation of several types of technologically innovative on-site septic systems that are designed to reduce the amount of nitrate in the area's groundwater. DEQ will conduct water sample analysis and will work with the county to provide permits for the new systems. DEQ and county officials are working closely with local property owners who want to participate in the project.

Statewide Dry Cleaner Program Protects Oregonians from Harmful Toxics

In 1999, DEQ staff visited all of Oregon's nearly 500 dry cleaning shops statewide to provide on-site assistance to help operators monitor and reduce the amount of hazardous waste they are producing. DEQ staff checked equipment to make sure it was functioning properly, and helped instruct owners/operators on how to properly dispose of their shop's hazardous waste. The efforts are expected to reduce the number of instances in which harmful solvents and other hazardous substances contaminate groundwater.



Elaine Glendenning of DEQ (left) shows a Southeast Portland dry cleaner owner how to reduce hazardous waste.

It's the Law

Oregon Environmental Laws

Beverage Container Recovery Act ("Bottle Bill") (1971) To control and reduce litter in Oregon. Caused Oregon to be known as a national leader in recycling. Considered one of the most successful legislative actions ever passed in the state.

1010 Act (1993) Directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture to work with farmers and ranchers to develop area-wide water quality management plans for troubled watersheds.

Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds (1997) Provides programs and activities that Oregonians can do to enhance and restore native salmon population, fish habitat, watersheds and water quality within the parameters of a healthy economy.

Green Permits Program Act (1997) Encourages individuals and organizations to perform activities that "support superior environmental performance by the most economical means."

For a complete list of Oregon environmental laws, visit DEQ website at www.deq.state.or.us **Page 3**

Around-the-Clock Protection

O R E G O N E N V I R O N M E N T

What can I do?

Protect and restore Oregon's rivers and streams

Most water pollution is caused by water running over land and paved surfaces carrying pesticides, fertilizers, oil and dirt into streams, rivers and lakes. Here are some ways you can help prevent runoff.

- Avoid over-watering your lawn or garden.
- Apply fertilizer when the soil is moist and then water lightly to move the fertilizer into the root rather than risk it being blown or washed away.
- Use a car wash or wash your car on the lawn, where grease and grime do not run off into the stormwater drain.
- Don't hose off driveways and sidewalks. Use a broom instead.
- Preserve existing trees, and plant trees and shrubs to help prevent erosion and promote infiltration of water into the soil.

DEQ is always on call to safeguard the quality of Oregon's air, water and land. From a 24-hour spill response hotline to the twice-hourly monitoring of our most vulnerable streams, DEQ protects the environment around the clock.

During a typical day at DEQ, here is what you might find:

12:17 a.m. – Baker City

A Union Pacific freight train derailed near Baker City, spilling several thousand gallons of diesel fuel. Bruce Henderson of DEQ's Spills Response team fields a call from



Union Pacific and alerts cleanup staff in eastern Oregon. DEQ staff and contractors contain the spill to a 400-yard radius and oversee the cleanup.

9:20 a.m. – Elkton

Citizens in the western Oregon town of Elkton want to make sure that an underground storage tank is not leaking gasoline into the community's water supply. Dave Belyea of DEQ's Waste Prevention and Management Division arrives on the scene. Belyea assists the gas station's owner, operator and contractor with the correct placement of the new tank to ensure that no gas leaks into the local water supply.

10:00 a.m. – Medford

In Medford, local television and newspaper reporters gather for the kickoff of Medford-Ashland's Clean Air Action Day program. John Becker, DEQ's Medford-based Air Quality manager, encourages businesses to promote clean air practices to employees. Becker and other DEQ air quality specialists have worked for several months with business groups, including the Medford-Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, to coordinate the voluntary employer program.



11:15 a.m. – Cannon Beach

Children from local elementary schools assemble at Cannon Beach Elementary School to spin DEQ's Wheel of Waste Reduction. Each spin takes the children to a different true/false question about waste reduction. Keri Morin of DEQ's Solid Waste program guides them through questions and helps explain how simple waste reduction actions benefit the environment. DEQ's Wheel is loaned free-of-charge for events throughout Oregon to educate children and adults on how to reduce garbage.



12:30 p.m. – La Grande

In La Grande, Safeway wants to build a new grocery store on a 5.8-acre site that for decades served as an Oregon Department of Transportation truck maintenance shop. The site had been vacant for eight years. DEQ guided an environmental investigation and site cleanup, eventually removing 600 tons of contaminated soil and other contaminated substances. The site is ready to be returned to productive use. Bob Schwarz of DEQ's Environmental Cleanup Division writes a Record of Decision that defines what additional environmental safeguards need to be made as part of the site's redevelopment.

1:45 p.m. – Redmond

The Redmond Fire Department in Central Oregon is concerned about fire hazards from a local citizen's illegal burning. Fire marshals and the local government contact DEQ inspector Frank Messina. Messina contacts the burners to educate them about regulations and offer alternatives to burning. "Most problems are solved just by talking with the public and educating people," says Messina. "Others," he cautions, "require enforcement actions."



Dear DEQ...

Write to DEQ at:
DEQ Public Affairs
811 S.W. 6th Avenue
Portland, OR 97204-1390

4:10 p.m. — Gearhart

A storm front brings 30 mph winds and lashing horizontal rains to the northwest Oregon coast. Larry Brown, a water quality on-site inspector, braves the elements to examine a septic system near Gearhart. Brown makes sure that the recently altered system is no longer a threat to public health.

5:30 p.m. — Tualatin

Sharply tuned scientific instruments along tributaries of the Tualatin River record stream temperature every half hour. DEQ's Larry Caton downloads the recordings onto his computer at the DEQ Laboratory in Portland to monitor heat in the water and to study the effects of shade on the streams. Management of water temperature helps protect salmon and other heat-sensitive fish.



8:30 p.m. — Portland

A Willamette Valley steelworker steps up to a podium before an audience of nearly 50 people at DEQ's Northwest Region Office in Portland. He gives testimony at a public hearing regarding Oregon Steel Mills' new air quality permit. Greg Grunow, a DEQ air quality inspector, listens closely and takes notes. DEQ records, transcribes and responds to all public comment on the permit.

8:57 p.m. — Hillsboro

The last customer at Hillsboro's Sunset Clean Air station places renewal stickers on her license plate before rolling out of the station. Cars and trucks are the number one source of air pollution in the Portland area. DEQ's Vehicle Inspection Program checks car emissions on 600,000 autos and eliminates approximately 10,000 tons of ozone-producing pollutants from the air annually.



I want to thank and compliment your agency for the timely completion of our air quality permit renewal. Your Medford office did an excellent job, working collaboratively with our people to meet all the requirements in an efficient manner.

Howard F. Sohn
Sun Studs, Inc.

I want to extend our sincere thanks to Mike Renz for his assistance during a recent gasoline spill at Beaver Butte Creek on the Warm Springs Reservation. Mike's experience and advice was truly invaluable during the spill. His knowledge of the process that we needed to follow and his helpful attitude made this experience easier for all of us.

Robert A. Brunoe,
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Thank you for all your help, patience and technical assistance for the Port of Portland's in-house hazardous waste management awareness training. The site visit you conducted prior to our hands-on training was very beneficial, ensuring hazardous waste management issues and concerns were addressed.

Quentin Pitts
Port of Portland

Thanks to Eric Clark of the DEQ Salem office for coming to our place of business and helping us with our waste management. I was quite pleased to see that we are doing a good job of handling our waste. You made some suggestions that will help us save money in the long run.

Tad Brown,
Alan Brown Tire Center, Inc.

As a result of our compliance with DEQ and our active participation in Oregon's Voluntary Cleanup Program, WB&D Technologies Inc. was able to successfully decontaminate lead-contaminated soils at the facility, as well as incorporate a new filtration system designed to reduce toxic and hazardous waste emissions.

Doug Lofting,
WB&D Technologies Inc.

Thank you for making a presentation at our Regional Fleet Managers' Meeting. We appreciate the time it took for DEQ to come to speak to our group. The attendees learned a great deal about the importance of proper labeling and storage of materials and waste products. We have greatly increased the amount of recycling in the automotive areas and I expect to see more in the future.

Rebecca A. Hutchins
USDA, Forest Service

We would like to extend our appreciation for the excellent work and assistance that DEQ provided to us on a recently submitted notice of intent to construct and permit application. Our client is a local Salem small business that was under a very tight timeline. DEQ staff assisted us in expediting the paperwork. All of us at Michelin appreciate the professional assistance we received from DEQ.

Sam Gaddis
Michelin Tire Company

Note: Letters edited for length and clarity.

What can I do?

Reduce your exposure to toxics

Some chemicals are classified as toxic because they are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health effects. Here are some ways to help reduce toxic chemicals in our environment.

- *Use alternatives to chemical pesticides whenever possible.*
- *Vehicles are the largest source of many toxic air pollutants. Drive less by reducing trips.*
- *Select less toxic alternatives or non-toxic cleaning supplies whenever possible.*
- *When purchasing household chemicals, buy only the amount you expect to use and apply as directed.*
- *Take toxic materials, such as weed killers and paint thinner, to a hazardous waste collection center for proper disposal.*

DEQ Enforcement Report Details Fines Levied Against Polluters

DEQ issued nearly \$1.5 million in civil penalties during 1999 for environmental law violations.

Penalties reflect violations in three basic areas of environmental regulation: water quality, air quality and the safe management and disposal of hazardous or solid wastes.

DEQ relies on a range of strategies to assure compliance with environmental laws. The air, water and waste programs each conduct regular inspections to confirm proper operation at regulated facilities. Many permit holders must monitor water discharges or air emissions, and regularly report results to DEQ for analysis. The agency may initiate enforcement actions based on inspections or reports from permitted industries.

DEQ may also take action based on public complaints. For example, the agency may first learn

of storm water and opening burning violations through the complaint process. "We take public complaints very seriously, and do our best to respond to those which pose environmental or human health threats," says Les Carlough, manager of DEQ's Statewide Enforcement Program.

"We take public complaints very seriously, and do our best to respond to those which pose environmental or human health threats,"

*-Les Carlough
Enforcement Manager*

Other programs within DEQ put strong emphasis on providing technical assistance and guidance to individuals and businesses working to meet environmental requirements. "In a perfect world, enforcement would not be necessary," says Carlough.

Issuing penalties remains an important part of the overall compliance effort as long as some individuals and businesses ignore or attempt to avoid environmental regulations. "Penalties deter

others from violating by sending a message that violations will not be tolerated. Also, it's only fair to the majority of businesses that work hard to comply with environmental regulations," Carlough says.

To review or download a copy of the 1999 DEQ Enforcement Accomplishments Report, visit DEQ's website at www.deq.state.or.us or call (503) 229-6232.



DEQ staff inspect and provide technical assistance to facilities that store hazardous waste. One third of DEQ civil penalties are for improper hazardous waste storage.

Test Your Knowledge

O R E G O N E N V I R O N M E N T

The Great Environmental Knowledge Quiz

Are you environmentally savvy? Test your knowledge on environmental issues by taking this test, prepared by the *National Environmental Education & Training Foundation*.

- How is most of the electricity in Oregon generated?**
 - By burning oil, gas, coal and wood
 - With nuclear power
 - Through solar energy
 - At hydroelectric power plants
- What is the most common cause of pollution of Oregon's streams and rivers?**
 - Dumping of garbage by cities
 - Surface water running off yards, city streets, paved lots and farm fields
 - Trash washed into the ocean from beaches
 - Waste dumped by industry
- What percentage of the world's water is fresh and available for use?**
 - 1%
 - 5%
 - 10%
 - 33%
- There are thousands of waste disposal areas – dumps and landfills – in the U.S. that hold toxic waste. The greatest threat posed by these waste disposal areas is:**
 - Chemical air pollution
 - Contact with farm animals and household pets
 - Contamination of water supplies
 - Human consumption through contaminated food
- Many communities are concerned about running out of room in their community trash dumps and landfills. What is the greatest source of landfill material?**
 - Disposable diapers
 - Lawn and garden clippings, trimmings, and leaves
 - Paper products including newspapers, cardboard and packaging
 - Glass and plastic bottles, and aluminum and steel cans
- Some scientists have expressed concern that chemicals and certain minerals accumulate in the human body at dangerous levels. These chemicals and minerals enter the body primarily through:**
 - Breathing air
 - Living near toxic waste dumps
 - Household cleaning products
 - Drinking water

Answers: 1d, 2b, 3a, 4c, 5c, 6d

Information & Resources

General Information

(503) 229-5696
(800) 452-4011 in Oregon
(503) 229-6993 TTY
www.deq.state.or.us

DEQ Headquarters

811 SW Sixth Ave.
Portland, OR 97204-1390

Regional Offices

Portland	(503) 229-5263	La Grande	(541) 975-1129
Baker City	(541) 523-7998	Medford	(541) 776-6010
Bend	(541) 388-6146	Pendleton	(541) 276-4063
Coos Bay	(541) 269-2721	Roseburg	(541) 440-3338
Eugene	(541) 686-7838	Salem	(503) 378-8240
Grants Pass	(541) 471-2850	The Dalles	(541) 298-7255
Hermiston	(541) 567-8297	Tillamook	(503) 842-3038
Klamath Falls ..	(541) 883-5603	Warrenton	(503) 861-3280

Clean Air Stations & Hours

By inspecting exhaust emissions, DEQ identifies vehicles that need maintenance because they produce more air pollution than they should. The inspection procedure is designed to ensure that emission control systems in cars and trucks are working properly.

General Information
(503) 229-6235

Clackamas Station
9350 SE Clackamas Rd.
Mon-Sat (except Wed)
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.;
Wed only, 9:00 a.m. to
9:00 p.m.

Gresham Station
1200 SW Highland Dr.
Mon-Sat, 9:00 a.m. to
5:30 p.m.

N.E. Portland Station
7701 NE 33rd Dr.
Mon-Sat, 9:00 a.m.
to 5:30 p.m.

Scappoose Station
52751 NE First Street
Tues, Thurs, Sat
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Sherwood Station
14962 SW Tualatin-
Sherwood Rd.
Mon-Sat, 9:00 a.m. to
5:30 p.m.

Sunset Station
5130 NW Five Oaks Dr.
Mon-Sat (except Wed)
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Wed only, 9:00 a.m. to
9:00 p.m.

**Medford-Rogue
Valley Station**
3030 Biddle Road
Mon-Sat, 9:00 a.m. to
5:30 p.m.

Visit DEQ on the Web!

www.deq.state.or.us

Classroom Resources
for Teachers

Clean Air Station
Locations, Directions,
and Hours

Information about DEQ's
Environmental Priorities



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