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LWV to address aerial spraying

The League of Women Voters has been working with Beyond Toxics, a Eugene-area awareness group, forestry representatives and legislators to develop a process to notify Oregon residents when aerial spraying will occur near them.

Meetings to demonstrate the new online notification system, called FERNS, will be held at noon March 13 in the Port Orford Library; at noon March 14 at the Chetco Community Library in Brookings; and at 5:30 p.m. at Gold Beach City Hall. Each meeting is expected to last about an hour.

Coast Range Forest Watch's Janet Moore will present the new program, and the public is encouraged to attend.

The program is the result of Beyond Toxics Director Lisa Arkin, who has advocated for years for the health of people in the path of aerial spraying of chemicals on timberlands. The issue got local play three years ago when residents of Cedar Valley, northeast of Gold Beach, were illegally sprayed with chemicals from a helicopter at a nearby timber farm.

Many became ill with respiratory and skin problems. A dog's death and a horse's blinding is blamed on the spraying, and deer and birds are just recently reported to be starting to return.

Coast Range Forest Watch's goal is to foster an honest discussion about the factors that influence this ecosystem and the people who depend on it. Through educational events and community science, their mission is to provide scientifically sound information to managing agencies and residents, the league wrote in an announcement about the meeting.

Its most recent campaign is “Spray-Free Coast,” in which it hopes to increase awareness about the use of herbicides by industrial forestry and their effects on watersheds and people.

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