

Oregon's Million-Dollar Cut Thanks To Forestry Pollution

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\$1.2 million. That's how much money Oregon won't receive this year from two federal agencies due to its failure to protect water quality from logging in coastal watersheds.

According to Nina Bell of Northwest Environmental Advocates, "the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have said for 18 years that Oregon's logging practices create dangerous levels of water pollution and harm fish."

Bell sent out a press release March 11 calling attention to the funding cut out of a \$4 million pot of money that is a result of Oregon's lack of progress in controlling runoff polluting coastal waterways. Oregon is the first state to lose the money, and the \$1.2 million will go to other states.

Doug Heiken, conservation and restoration coordinator with Oregon Wild, says, "Oregon's forest practices are so outdated that the federal government can't hold its nose any longer and finally took concrete steps to penalize the state by taking away some money."

Oregon Wild and Eugene-based Beyond Toxics are working on statewide ballot measures to stop aerial herbicides sprays and address the problem of clearcut logging on steep slopes above drinking water streams. If passed, the measures would have a "huge effect" on the temperature, turbidity and

pollution that Lisa Arkin of Beyond Toxics says are the result of logging too close to streams and aerial sprays of pesticides.

Under the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Program, all U.S. coastal states are required to control water pollution from sources not covered under the Clean Water Act. According to NOAA, "the program establishes a set of management measures for states to use in controlling runoff from six main sources: agriculture, forestry, urban areas, marinas, hydromodification (shoreline and stream channel modification), wetlands, and riparian and vegetated treatment systems."

A March 9 letter from the EPA and NOAA to Richard Whitman, Oregon's natural resources policy director, says the agencies appreciate Oregon's "expressed commitment to address the gaps" in its Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Program, but the progress "is not sufficiently definite or advanced."

Heiken says, "We would like to think this will spur state action to improve logging practices but we're not holding our breath. The Oregon Board of Forestry (BoF) remains under the thumb of the timber industry. Change will require citizens to take action and hold state leaders accountable."

Arkin adds that the BoF is going to have to change the culture that has been created by forestry interests.

NOAA and the EPA write in the letter that they will be able to renew full funding after the Coastal Nonpoint Pollution program is "approved without conditions."

Josh Laughlin, executive director of Cascadia Wildlands, which advocates for protecting Oregon's Elliott State Forest from logging, says, "The feds yanking their grant money should be a wakeup call for Governor Brown's environmental team and policy makers in Salem."

He continues, "Oregon needs to live up to its green image by instituting streamside buffers that meaningfully protect clean water and wild salmon and setting up an 'Herbicides Anonymous' program to ween Big Timber off the poisons it douses on forestlands across western Oregon."

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Camilla Mortensen is associate editor and reporter at *Eugene Weekly*. She is also a folklorist and a community college and university instructor. She has two horses, an assortment of dogs, and lives in a 1975 Airstream trailer. Sometimes all these details collide in unforeseen ways.

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