



Leadership
For a
Clean and Just
Oregon

FALL
2014



Photo by John Tarantino

Beyond Toxics NEWSLETTER

No more “business as usual” for pesticide sprayers by Lisa Arkin



A few of the Cedar Valley residents who suffered chemical trespass visited Salem to give testimony for a forestry pesticide use hearing. From L to R: Pam and James Aldridge, Jim Sweeney, John and Barb Burns. Photo by Lisa Arkin

In early November 2013, I received several calls from Gold Beach residents in southwest Oregon. They reported dozens of neighbors, including older adults and small children, were made sick from direct exposure to poisons from an aerial pesticide spray. From those calls, our rural advocacy partnerships blossomed into a shared vision. In just one year, Beyond Toxics and courageous rural Oregonians are advancing a statewide movement to end pesticide trespass.

The people exposed and sickened were outraged that state agencies hid vital information about the herbicides sprayed on their properties. The media was inspired to investigate; the Oregonian reported that agencies literally “blew off complaints” about a pattern of problems. A number of stories appeared in national and regional media about our research and the plight of pesticide-exposed Oregonians.

As a result legislators are discussing introducing a pioneering bill to protect homes and all streams and headwaters from aerial pesticide drift. We will need our members and allies to

stand up to the heavy fist of chemical corporations who are already attacking what we know are common sense goals.

The findings from our groundbreaking report, *Oregon’s Industrial Forests and Herbicide Use: A Case Study of Risk to People, Drinking Water and*

Salmon, are informing the public and legislators.

Beyond Toxics is simultaneously engaged in legal work on this issue. With the guidance of the Crag Environmental Law Center, a Portland

non-profit law office, seventeen Curry County residents recently filed a lawsuit. Not your “run-of-the-mill” tort claim, this is a constitutional challenge to Oregon’s Right to Farm and Forest Act, a law that grants immunity to pesticide sprayers. This unfair law allows sprayers to evade responsibility for chemical trespass.

We’ve come a long way in one year. The new year will see Beyond Toxics advocating on your behalf to fight for justice in the courts and help pass better environmental laws in the Legislature.

“**Pesticide applicators mix their own “chemical soups” of herbicides that contain 2-5 active ingredients and adjuvants, despite a lack of understanding about synergistic effects of multiple chemicals combined and released into the environment.**”

~ A finding from the *Industrial Forests and Herbicide Use* report



Dr. Tyrone Hayes and Lisa Arkin at the *Herbicides and Health Conference*.

Nearly 500 people flocked to the *Herbicides and Health Conference* in Eugene, co-sponsored by the UO Environmental Studies Department, the Oregon Humanities Center and Beyond Toxics. The keynote speaker, Dr. Tyrone Hayes (Integrative Biology, UC Berkeley) described his research on the herbicide atrazine, which is one of the top chemicals sprayed on Oregon’s industrial forests. Atrazine can...

- Can turn male frogs into females by blocking testosterone;
- Is strongly linked to cancer and birth defects;
- Is persistent in water and wreaks havoc in natural habitats.

The findings from labs around the world, including Dr. Hayes’, make a strong case for putting environmental health before chemical trespass.



Weed Pull events continue with great success

by Christine Cameron

Christine Cameron, Beyond Toxics staff, tackles scotch broom to protect the Siuslaw watershed.

We are happy to celebrate our 8th season of keeping Highway 36 (near Triangle Lake and Triangle Lake School) pesticide-free! Herbicides, typically sprayed on roadside shoulders, can run-off into streams and rivers when it rains. Our program seeks to protect streams in the Siuslaw watershed, which is home to endangered salmon. Did you know that the Siuslaw Watershed was once Oregon's second largest salmon fishery? We are thankful to our community of friends and supporters who have helped us in these efforts.

Join us for our next Weed Pull event in May 2015 and help us continue making a difference in our communities. Call us if you'd like to sign up to help with this exciting project to keep rural streams and rivers clean for salmon and drinking water: 541-465-8860.

Volunteering leads to protecting drinking water

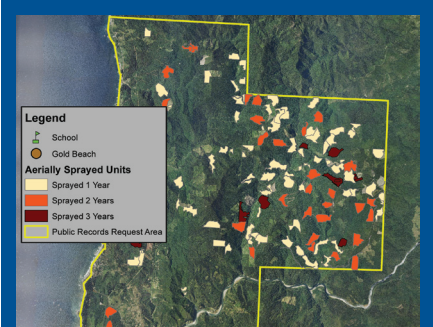
by Laurie Bernstein

Upon retiring from working as a fisheries biologist for the US Forest Service, I knew I wanted to assist with a cause in which I believed. Of course, it was important to me to work with fun people and be able to ride my bike to do it! I told friends I was available and wanted to be open to whatever came my way. Eventually I was asked if I knew how to use GIS, which, indeed I did because I had analyzed data and written many environmental analyses. Beyond Toxics had the software and was looking for help using it. Bingo! I love using GIS mapping to visually display information through a creative process. Mapping is also a powerful tool to help understand environmental impacts. Now I create maps, analyze data and write reports for Beyond Toxics using my mapping skills.

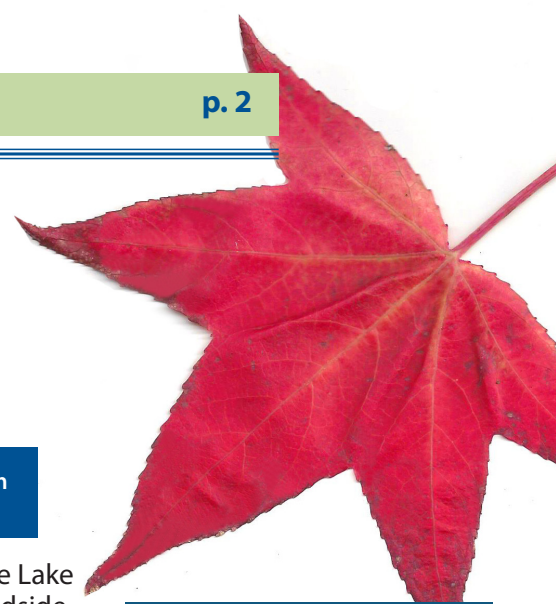


Laurie Bernstein, 2014 Volunteer of The Year

Beyond Toxics is an amazing nonprofit organization that works on important environmental and social justice issues. The amount of successful work that comes from such a small staff is truly astounding. Working with Lisa on projects has been a joy. The ex-government worker in me reels her in by letting the data do the talking without adding adjectives and opinions. Her activist experience teaches me how to think bigger and take more risks, resulting in excellent collaborative research, presentations and detailed analyses. I am proud to be connected with such a productive and dedicated group.



Example of Laurie's GIS map showing frequency of aerial sprays near the Rogue River.



YOU CAN HELP DONATE TODAY

Former Board President pledges a double-down match: perfect for year-end giving!

As the year rapidly comes to a close, it's a great time to consider making a donation. Shawn Donnille, past Board President of Beyond Toxics and VP of Mountain Rose Herbs, has generously offered to personally match your donation (up to \$2500). When you give during our year-end campaign your generosity is doubled! Our work has a direct and powerful impact. We can't do what we do without your support.

You can visit our web site: www.BeyondToxics.org and click on the red DONATE button in the top right corner and check the Matching Gift, or drop a check in the mail to us.

Thank you! Your generosity is appreciated.

Pollution-free soils for healthy gardening: Beyond Toxics teams up with EPA to test soils

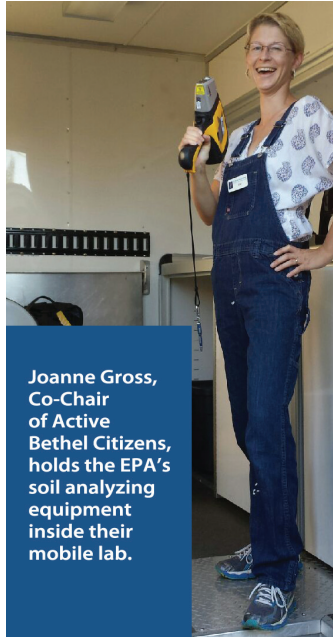
by Lisa Arkin

On Sunday, October 19, folks on their way home from church noticed the large US EPA Hazardous Materials Response mobile lab truck parked at Clear Lake Middle School. A number of them stopped by to ask, "OMG! Is the EPA here for an Ebola outbreak!?"

The EPA came to West Eugene not for a disease response, but for an environmental health project. It all began with concerned mothers in West Eugene talking with our environmental health organizer. These mothers asked a simple question: *With all the air pollution in the area, is the soil in my garden safe for growing food?*

The EPA brought their mobile hazardous response lab as part of a Beyond Toxics project to promote healthy gardening for working class families.

Neighborhoods in parts of West Eugene are located in the industrial corridor where the air is more saturated with chemical and particle pollution. Typical air pollutants found in residential areas are associated with a variety of health risks including asthma, headaches, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.



Joanne Gross, Co-Chair of Active Bethel Citizens, holds the EPA's soil analyzing equipment inside their mobile lab.

Children in West Eugene have a high rate of asthma, one of the highest in the State.

Over the past four years, Beyond Toxics conducted many community interviews and meetings in Spanish, door-to-door surveys, community presentations, and other initiatives. Our 2014 solution-oriented approach featured the My Garden – West Eugene project. This was an innovative collaboration between the US EPA, the Active Bethel Citizens neighborhood association and Huerto de la Familia, a non-profit helping Latino families get training and experience in growing organic produce. Our shared goal was to find out if soils are safe for growing food.

In the weeks leading up to the event, Beyond Toxics and our partners distributed 250 citizen sampling kits and conducted surveys. Residents who brought soil samples to the EPA mobile hazardous materials lab received a free soil analysis. Arsenic, lead, chromium, and cobalt were four contaminants of concern.

Whether we are taking you on an environmental justice bus tour or challenging weak regulatory action, Beyond Toxics is your clean air advocate.

The Art of Being a Doctor: Listening, studying & involvement

by Lauren Herbert, MD



I am a pediatrician and pediatric infectious diseases specialist. In my role as a doctor and a Board Member of Beyond Toxics, I traveled to visit the community members in Cedar Valley, Curry County who were exposed to herbicides from an aerial forestry spray. As a physician, I have learned the importance of really listening

to my patients, and not trying to make them fit into my preconceived ideas. I listened to the people in Cedar Valley. It was clear that they were sprayed directly with herbicides, and developed acute symptoms as a result. I was disturbed that state and local agencies had shown very little response to their requests for help. Their experience was so different

from the prompt and thorough response that our local public health department provides when I report an infectious disease.

I believe that one of the key reasons the response was so different was because public health officials believe the herbicides to be safe, based on data provided by the EPA. They therefore discounted the validity of the people's reports, without investigating them. However, I am concerned there is not enough information to determine the safety of these mixtures. There is no data on the medical effects of these aerosolized mixtures, which contain not only several herbicides, but also petroleum oil and surfactants.

We need more studies to determine safety of these mixtures. Until then, Oregon should change its laws to provide more protection. I've been involved with helping Beyond Toxics work with the Lane County Medical Society and Oregon Medical Association to support legislation to protect people and drinking water from aerial herbicide spray.

The Quick and Feisty Report Beyond Toxics in 2014

Nearly 100% of all our income goes straight to accomplishing environmental protection work.

- Worked with legislators to hold state agencies accountable for protecting our homes, schools and drinking water from pesticide drift!
- Worked with the media to expose the hazardous practice that helicopter pilots mix batches of herbicides and petroleum oil, which are then sprayed over streams, schools and homes.
- Launched the *Save Oregon's Bees Campaign*.
- Served rural residents in eleven counties to address chemical trespass, including filing a lawsuit to challenge pesticide sprayer immunity.
- Secured the Oregon Attorney General's ruling that state agencies can't keep pesticide records secret.
- Co-hosted the *Herbicides and Health Conference* with the University of Oregon featuring biologist and environmental justice advocate Dr. Tyrone Hayes.
- Hosted *Bee Fest!* to celebrate Eugene's adoption of the nation's first ban on bee-killing pesticides.
- Filed a complaint to the US EPA Office of Civil Rights to investigate increasing levels of chemicals and fine particulate air pollution in West Eugene neighborhoods.
- Organized the *Give Bees Some Love Valentine Day* rally in front of Home Depot in Eugene, part of a national project to get big retailers to label plants pre-treated with neonicotinoid pesticides.



Mayor Kitty Piercy, wearing bee antennae, accepts an award for "America's Most Bee-Friendly City" on behalf of Eugene. City Councilor George Brown applauds.



P.O. Box 1106
Eugene, OR 97440
Phone: 541-465-8860
info@beyondtoxics.org
www.beyondtoxics.org

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Beyond Toxics weaves social justice and human rights advocacy into environmental protection policies.