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February 26, 2013

Testimony to the Oregon House Land Use Committee in support of HB 2201

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am Bruce Chapin and live at 9965 Wheatland Rd. N Salem, Oregon 97303. I am the third generation to farm in the Mission Bottom area north of Keizer and serve as Chairman of the Oregon Farm Bureau Aggregate Committee. From 2004 to 2007 I represented OFB in the aggregate/agriculture consensus process set up by the Governor.

In 2004 the members of the consensus process were loaded onto a bus and the aggregate industry hosted a tour of several Willamette Valley aggregate mining sites from Portland to Corvallis. One of the stops we made was at the Green and White site South of Corvallis. Here we were shown a successful example of an aggregate mine that could be reclaimed back to farmland. The first picture is of the Green and White reclaimed area.



The area shown in the picture was an open pit gravel mine that was reclaimed back to farmland. In the distance on the right one can see a combine is harvesting grain where a gravel pit once was.

The second picture shows how the area was being concurrently reclaimed. Construction rubble seen on the far side of the lake was being used to fill in the lake after the aggregate had been extracted.



This was not a reclamation administered by DOGAMI. This reclamation was being directed by the land owners who insisted the land had to be reclaimed back to productive farmland.

All aggregate sites have to be reclaimed to a beneficial use. The permitting rules require that for sites inside the EFU zone that mine class 1 and 2 soils, the beneficial reclaimed use must be either a farm use or fish and wildlife habitat. The third picture shows what a typical DOGAMI reclaimed site looks like. As is required by DOGAMI the banks are sloped for safety reasons and then seeded to grass to stabilize the soil. In a few years more aggressive vegetation often takes over like Himalaya black berries as is seen in this picture.



This site was not reclaimed to fish and wildlife habitat site but instead it was reclaimed to a farm use. The difference between being classified as a farm use and wildlife habitat was that some of the water was used for agricultural irrigation. Many people might think that a site that is “reclaimed to farm use” would look like the first Green and White picture but this picture demonstrates how misleading the phrase “reclaimed to farm use” can be.

I encourage you to support HB 2201. It will establish meaningful reclamation of future permitted sites on our best soils.

Respectfully,

Bruce R Chapin