



THE ADVOCATE

League of Women Voters of Ashland

APRIL 2009

P.O. Box 1296, Ashland, Oregon 97520
www.ashland.or.lwvnet.org info@ashland.or.lwvnet.org

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS, A
NONPARTISAN POLITICAL ORGANIZATION,
ENCOURAGES INFORMED AND ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT, WORKS TO
INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF MAJOR PUBLIC
POLICY ISSUES, AND INFLUENCES PUBLIC
POLICY THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.

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LWV Oregon: www.lwvor.org
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MEMBER MEETING:

Wednesday, April 15, 12:00 noon
WATER STUDY CONCURRENCE

Ashland Public Library, Guanajuato Room

This is our member-only concurrence meeting to approve the updated Water Position – the culmination of our two-year study. You received the report, you've read it, and you're ready to discuss the new position. (See Position Statement on p. 2)

If you have questions, please call Kate Culbertson at 488-8693 or Susan Rust at 482-3259.

We look forward to seeing you there!

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, April 30

11:30 a.m. - Lunch; 12:00 Noon - Meeting
Ashland Elk's Lodge, 255 E. Main Street

JOHN FORSYTH, M.D. will speak on
"HEALTH CARE REFORM - 2009:
IS IT STILL POSSIBLE?"

Including the following topics:

- a brief review of our current situation, especially the extent of unnecessary human suffering and the polarization of our society by *health outcomes*;
- a brief review of the *spectrum of strategic proposals* for health care reform, both in Oregon and the U.S. (many parallels!);
- A brief review of the status of current legislation, both in Oregon and the U.S.;
- The three main views of the *possibilities* for health care reform;
- The *barriers* to effective reform, especially the "black cloud" of the current economic reality.

Please RSVP to 482-4544 for lunch.
Everyone is Welcome!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The gods must have been shining down on us last weekend when we set up our tables in front of the Co-op and Shop'N'Kart to sell the state League's raffle tickets. Despite fierce winds, the rain never came and we sold over \$650.00 worth of tickets. Special thanks to Regina Ayars, Suzanne Marshall, Ellie Marzocco, Iris Milan, Susan Rust, Mary Anne Wallace and Carol Wilder, for making made the sales possible. On April 17 and 18, we'll set up shop once again in front of the two supermarkets, so don't be surprised if you get a call from me asking you to staff a table. If you won't be available to help out, but want to buy tickets, please let me know – jeg@mind.net or 488-3827 – and I'll make sure to get them to you. Tickets are \$10, and proceeds from this important fundraiser go to LWVOR's Development Fund. The winner of the raffle has the choice between a trip to Maui for two or a cash award of \$2,500. The maximum number of tickets sold will be 2,000, so you have an excellent chance to win.

Our consensus meeting in March to discuss the National Popular Vote Compact did not draw many members. My theory is that there is a certain amount of ambivalence about the issue: Does the goal of having the President elected by popular vote justify sidestepping the Constitution? The few people who were at the meeting apparently shared my own concerns because they reached consensus only on the last question: that like a Constitutional Amendment to abolish the Electoral College, the NPV Compact also will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional consideration and action by so many states. Also, with other issues taking priority – the economy, unemployment, health care, global warming, and wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to name a few – it's not surprising the National Popular Vote Compact is not uppermost in our minds. The Oregon House of Representatives just passed a bill adopting the NPV Compact, yet it produced virtually no discussion nor publicity other than a brief mention in the local newspaper.

On the other hand, I predict our meeting on April 14th to discuss the results of our water study will elicit more interest by our members. The excellent report produced by our water study committee should prompt a lively discussion.

At the end of the month, we'll be hearing from John Forsyth, M.D. a retired physician and President of the Jefferson Regional Health Alliance, who has been working to achieve health care reform. He will talk

about the likelihood of reform and the current state of proposed legislation both in the United States and in Oregon. Join us for lunch at the Elks Lodge on the 30th for a comprehensive discussion of this critical issue.

Our annual meeting will be especially important this year because it reflects the theme embraced by our Presidential election: change is in the air. Not only will we be electing officers and considering new policy statements, but we'll also be discussing a proposal to consider a merger with the League of Women Voters of Rogue Valley to form the League of Women Voters of Jackson County. Our members will get a chance to voice their opinions about this issue when we hold our annual meeting at the library on May 14th; the Rogue Valley League's membership will consider this proposal at a special meeting in the fall. In the next six weeks, think about the questions and concerns that need to be addressed when we discuss the possibility of uniting our two Leagues into one countywide organization.

Below you will find the Water Position Statement that we will be discussing at our meeting on April 15th.

I look forward to seeing you at upcoming meetings.

Judith



League of Women Voters of Ashland Position Update on Water: Quantity & Quality

LWVA believes that all water resources should be for the benefit of the public and are an integral part of the ecosystem in which they occur. Applying this principle, LWVA supports:

- Conservation as a major source of water.
- Coordination of land use planning and water resources planning.
- Comprehensive erosion, flood, and fire control measures in the Ashland city watershed.
- Development and implementation of a comprehensive stormwater management plan.
- Access by the city of Ashland to all available sources of water.
- Implementation of a meaningful Riparian Ordinance for Ashland.
- Ashland's operation of high quality, efficient water treatment systems.
- Community education regarding all aspects of Ashland's water resources.

WATER FOR ASHLAND: NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

By Valentine Jones

On March 19th, the Ashland Community Center was the scene of a lively discussion on Ashland's water resources, presented as a public forum by our League's Water Study Committee. President Judith Benjamin introduced the moderator, Susan Rust, who co-chairs the committee with Kate Culbertson. As part of a two-year study updating its 1995 position on water issues, the LWVA had presented two previous forums that focused on state compliance with water regulations.

Guest speakers for this meeting were Mike Faught, Public Works Director, City of Ashland, and Steve Mason, Coordinator, WISE Project (Water for Irrigation, Streams and Economy). In preparing for the meeting, the Committee had asked the speakers to address these questions:

- Does Ashland have enough water to meet current/future demands?
- How could climate change impact our water supplies?
- Is the quality of our drinking water being adequately protected?
- Is it appropriate to use potable water for landscapes?
- What are the objectives of the City's new water study?
- Is our stormwater management state of the art?
- How does the treated effluent from Ashland impact Bear Creek?

Faught began his talk by citing some statistics. He said that Reeder Reservoir holds about 277 million gallons. Ashland's average daily use in winter is 2 million gallons, with peak demand in summer rising to 7+ million gallons. Ashland has enough drinking water, if this water is not used for irrigation. Faught estimated a 1.4% population growth rate for the city, yet projected a 20% reduction in water needs by 2016 through conservation and use of a proposed new pipeline.

The city is engaged in a water study, which is being undertaken with grant funding and focusing on conservation, reuse and storage. The city is also getting federal stimulus money and is looking at all water resources, including effluent. The Public Works Department enlisted utilities managers to work on the conservation goal of the study and Faught mentioned city rebates for household appliances and an irrigation controller as examples of their activities.

Faught stated that the city water study did not include plans for either drought or other catastrophic events, or for population growth and climate change. He said that there is need for a redundant system -- another water supply source by 2016. There is adequate protection for water quality in

Ashland at this time, but our water plant is vulnerable to flooding and fire.

When asked whether the water study would benefit Ashland residents, he replied that the study isn't looking at a municipal increase in water for the city, but at the issue of right water, right use. Ashland's water needs can be met if TID is used for irrigation. TID water goes through town, and Faught stated that there are options to use the effluent (Class A water). Water quality is tested, and organic farming needs can be met with Class A water. An audience member who had questioned using this water to grow crops for human consumption suggested that the public be given data on water quality. Another asked about gray water for irrigation, while someone else questioned whether water rights and brown water would be included in the city's study. Faught indicated that these issues would be evaluated as well.

A number of questions were raised about conservation. A long-time resident stated that "real conservation" needs to be promoted that encourages the public to use less water, landscaping with xeriscaping, for example, instead of lawns. Others asked about systems that use stormwater and rainwater to supply people's needs, and Faught mentioned that the state has just come out with new regulations that should answer these questions.

Steve Mason, our other guest, stressed conservation. His organization, the WISE Project, is focusing on agriculture, a local industry worth millions of dollars. The WISE Project is interested in improving instream conditions for 1) fish and recreation, 2) water quality, 3) reliability and availability of water, and 4) increased efficiency in the use of water. WISE wants to increase summer flows in creeks and stabilize water temperatures. The Project's sources include Little Butte Creek, Bear Creek, Howard Prairie and Fish Lakes, Rogue River and all the reservoirs. WISE is working with five different watersheds along with 20 agencies, including environmental groups and irrigation districts.

Conservation is needed because the canals lose 20% of their water mainly from leakage. WISE is looking at Emigrant and Howard Prairie Lakes for water storage. WISE is studying three irrigation districts -- TID, Rogue, and MID -- and plans to set up one closed pipe system that would operate by gravity pressure instead of electricity. Mason commented that seven cities, not including Ashland, are already using Class A water for irrigation. With the new system, agriculture would get more and better water, and best of all, there would be no return flows to the creek. Pipes would cut down on the loss of water and the problems canals have with moss, algae and invasive species. However, stormwater management may become an issue, as well as the use of pipes on the riparian and shallow wells that benefit from canal runoff.

WISE is aware that this project is big and expensive, but as Mason said, "Our 100-year-old system needs to be changed." If funding is obtained, the staff could begin working on the 250 miles of main canals by 2011-2012. Currently our reservoirs can handle three years of drought; with pipes in place, 10-15 years of drought could be handled. One member of the

audience asked what Mason considered to be agriculture, the “real farms” that we had in the past or “hobby farms” that many newcomers have established. In answer, Mason noted that each of the three irrigation districts has thousands of customers. Some of their water use is metered, some is not. Their lot sizes are mostly less than 10 acres, and he anticipates that with the WISE project in place, sprawl would be reduced.

At the conclusion of the forum, one audience member commented that the city seems to be looking at four plans at the same time -- 1) wetlands and riparian areas, 2) stormwater management, 3) future conservation and 4) land-use planning. Faught responded that all of these issues would be brought together as Ashland moves forward with its Master Plan. He also said several times that he welcomes and encourages public input and comments as he and his staff work on the city’s water study.

OREGON'S WATER: ENOUGH TO GO AROUND?

**By Marnie Lonsdale,
LWVOR Water Study Co-Chair**

A visit to the National Weather Service climate data center shows Oregon’s precipitation is down significantly this year. For example as of February 22, 2009, in Eugene, the precipitation since October 1, 2008 has been 13.78 inches, down 19 inches from the normal value of 32.78 inches. If the low rainfall continues the prospect of drought looms. The state of California is already experiencing a drought that has significant effects on agriculture. According to an article in the February 20 *New York Times*, projections from federal authorities indicate that little or no water will be available from federal sources this year for agricultural use, with the Central Valley Project, the large irrigation system operated by the Bureau of Land Reclamation, only able to provide zero to 10 percent of its contracted deliveries.

Just as in California, almost all or perhaps all of the water rights in Oregon have been allocated, and in drought there may not be enough to go around. The Water Resources Department is responsible for tracking these water rights. A detailed system of regulations is in place to track and control the use of the water that, by law, belongs to the public. However, many rights having first priority were obtained years ago when the Oregon population was agrarian. The needs of increasingly urban populations and modern industries may be secondary to earlier rights.

These issues are further complicated by problems of pollution and the more recently introduced laws to maintain in-stream flow. Also, both the Federal Endangered Species Act and the Federal Clean Water Act may place additional limits on the water that can be removed from surface sources.

Governor Ted Kulongoski has initiated a strategy to address the complex water issues by creating Headwaters to Ocean (H2O). The strategy is intended “to achieve sustainable water supplies and quality to benefit Oregon's people, communities, environment and ecosystems, and fish and wildlife.” The governor convened an H2O Advisory Group, including representatives from key stakeholder groups and state agencies. To learn more about the group and related legislative action visit

<http://www.oregon.gov/Gov/GNRO/14jan09-h2o-strategy-home-page.shtml>.

As you read the study *Water in Oregon – not a Drop to Waste, Part I*- keep in mind the complexity of addressing modern and future water issues when rights were established many years ago. The economics and culture of our state have strong ties to the traditional rights that must be adjusted for future needs.

Go to lwwor.org for a PowerPoint presentation of Water in Oregon.

LWVOR ACTION ALERT:

Health Care and Climate at Risk -- Support the President's Budget

President Obama has proposed a 2010 federal budget that articulates America's most urgent priorities. The proposal contains essential funding for health care reform and for curbing global warming, while making other changes aimed at putting America on a path for economic recovery.

[Please take action now to urge your Senators and Representative to support the President's budget!](#)

The upcoming votes in the House and Senate will be the first real political tests for health care reform and curbs on global warming. Opponents of both these important initiatives are mobilizing to defeat the President's budget because they know that's the easiest way to sidetrack reform. We can't let them succeed!

[Tell your Senators and Representative that you support health care reform and cutting global warming. Ask them to vote for the President's budget.](#)

In today's economy, it is more important than ever to support a budget that includes solutions to America's toughest problems. The President's proposal includes \$630 billion over ten years for health care reform and \$646 billion over the same time period to reduce the greenhouse gases that are causing global warming.

TAKE ACTION:

1. Contact your Senators and Representatives, by phone or by email, and urge them to vote to support the President's budget. Tell them you support health care reform and curbs on global warming.
2. Send this alert to other concerned citizens - your grassroots network, your friends and coworkers. Encourage them to contact their Representative and Senators today!

Phone calls are helpful as well, and can be made through the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121.

Sign up to receive Action Alerts directly by e-mail. Don't miss an opportunity to take action! It's easy to sign up and the League will never share your email with others: <https://member.lwv.org/Subscribe.asp>.

Action Alert #111-6, House and Senate, GLC, 03/24/09

COME TO LUNCH OR DINNER AND HEAR THE CONVENTION SPEAKERS!

You don't have to be an official delegate or observer at the Oregon League Convention to be at the dinner on **Saturday evening, May 16th** at the Red Lion Hotel in Medford to hear **Roger Hamilton, from the University of Oregon's Climate Leadership Initiative**, speak about Water Resources and Climate Change in the Rogue and Willamette Valleys.

Just send your request by May 4th to LWVOR, 1330 12th St. S.E., Suite 200, Salem, OR 97302, indicating your meal preference and enclosing a check (\$31.00 for grilled salmon; \$27.00 for pork loin or roasted vegetables in a pastry puff).

You may also attend the **Saturday luncheon**, where **Lorraine Kerwood, founder of NextStep Recycling**, will speak about her experience starting a company that refurbishes computers and donates them to people who would not have access to them otherwise. Luncheon choices are either a Mediterranean chicken salad or a fresh fruit salad with goat cheese (\$20.00 each).

CALENDAR

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|------------------|---|
| April 15 | Members' Meeting: Water Study Concurrence, Ashland Library |
| April 30 | General Meeting: John Forsyth, M.D. Health Care Policy |
| May 14 | Annual Meeting, Ashland Library |
| May 15-17 | LWVOR Convention, Red Lion Inn, Medford |

Climate Change Fact Sheets Available from LWVUS

The LWVUS has recently added new fact sheets on cap and trade and greenhouse gas emissions to its web site at www.lwv.org. To see them, go to the Issue Priorities column on the left of the home page and click on Global Climate Change. In addition to the new fact sheets, the climate change resources include background papers, podcasts and video and LWV testimony. Meant to be shared, the information can be printed out or emailed. The Global Climate Change page does not require a password to access, since it is not part of the members-only portion of the web site.

SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF LWVA BOARD MEETING ON 3/13/09

Treasurer's Report: PMP (Per Member Payment) is being raised again. With reduced income, fundraising will be critical. Money from the grapefruit sale has not yet been received.

Membership: One new member. Dues are up to date and three members prepaid for next year. Dues year begins May 1st.

April Meetings: (1) April 15, Members' Water Study Consensus/Concurrence; (2) April 30, General Meeting, Health Care Policy, Dr. Forsyth.

Nominating Committee: A treasurer and secretary are needed for next year. Heatherington offered to continue as treasurer, until a replacement can be found. However, she would like someone to deposit checks and update the membership list. Perkins will be responsible for the membership list; board members will act as rotating secretaries until one is found.

Proposed Merger: Board decided that there are good reasons to consider a merger with LWVRV. A letter will be sent to their board, asking them to consider a merger. This topic will be on our annual meeting agenda.

LWVA Water Study: Committee's report will be ready by mid-March and mailed to members at the end of the month. Consensus/Concurrence meeting will be April 15th at the library.

May Meeting: Annual Meeting will be a membership business meeting on May 14th, with no guest speaker.

Convention Delegates and Observers: LWVOR Convention 2009 Delegates: Ayars, Benjamin, Perkins; Observer: Milan. Registration fees will be paid for all four; we will pay for Ayars' meals.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ASHLAND
P.O. BOX 1296
ASHLAND, OR 97520**

JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Annual Membership Dues: (Dues year is May 1st through April 30th)
Individual Membership: \$60 ___ Household Membership: \$90 ___
Student Membership: \$30

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

NEW MEMBER: _____ RENEWAL _____ ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION: _____

My Special Interest/s: _____

**Please make your check payable to League of Women Voters of Ashland (LWVA)
P.O. BOX 1296, Ashland, OR 97520**

Thank you for your support!