a View of the Summit

from the CRAG

Environmental Justice

line art by Anna Stonestrom

Woman and Baby

Crag Law Center
Fall 2008

A View of the Summit
Environmental Justice

by Chris Winter, Staff Attorney

Last May I had the privilege of experiencing an important part of the traditions of the Inupiat Eskimo when I visited Barrow, Alaska. I joined a family in hauling a 30 foot bowhead whale onto the pack ice by hand. For two hours, we all grabbed the line in a tug-of-war ritual that dates back two thousand years. Once the whale was out of the icy Beaufort Sea, the family seamlessly fell into their traditional roles as they processed it. Men used traditional tools to butcher the blubber. Women cut up the meat with ulu knives and boiled maktak for the crew. Kids played on the ice and chipped in with the work. The family worked together for many hours as the arctic sun dipped slowly towards the horizon in one of the final sunsets of the year.

A month later, I drove home from Brigham City, Utah following my Grandmother's wake. My Grandmother was born in 1913 to a family of Japanese immigrant farmers. In 1945, she and

photo by Chris Winter

The community celebrates after a successful whale hunt.

my Grandfather moved their children to Utah to avoid the indignity of the internment camps. For the next sixty years, she worked the land and provided for her family, allowing her children to obtain an education and integrate into American culture. During my time in Utah, I mourned with my immediate and extended family. We celebrated my Grandmother's generosity and her life-long commitment to her children and grandchildren.

As I drove, I reflected on these two experiences. My time with the Inupiat people helped to crystallize the importance of the Environmental Justice movement. Royal Dutch Shell is currently working hand-in-hand with the Bush Administration to open the Beaufort Sea to offshore oil exploration. Last year, Shell proposed to place two large drill ships in the middle of the Inupiat's subsistence hunting grounds, knowing full well that underwater noise associated with drilling and icebreaking has previously interfered with the subsistence hunt.

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Crag has been working with the North Slope Borough, the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission and the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope in an effort to protect the Inupiats traditional way of life from the impacts of industrial resource extraction. The Inupiats want nothing less than everyone else in the United States – an opportunity to provide for their families and live their lives in happiness. In the harsh conditions of the Arctic, their version of the American dream relies entirely upon subsistence activities to hold together their families and carry on the traditions of their ancestors.

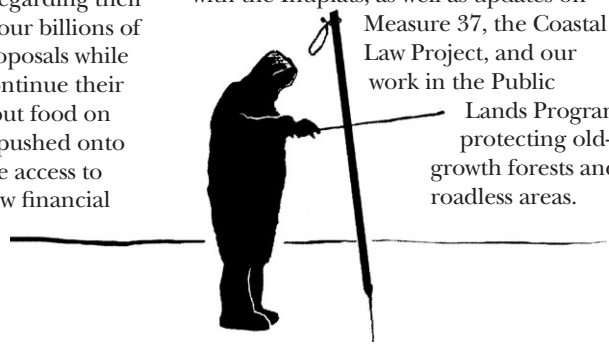
Environmental justice blurs the distinctions that are often made between social justice and environmental concerns. The rush to tap the petroleum reserves of the Arctic presents one of the most tangible examples of EJ today. Exploration activities threaten to interfere with the fundamental human rights of the Inupiats – their food source, their cultural traditions, and their freedom. The harm caused by resource extraction leads to social problems. At its core, the issue is about one group of people in Northern Alaska being forced to bear the full brunt of our nation's addiction to oil. Here, it is clear that social justice and environmental preservation are one in the same.

Crag's Environmental Justice Project provides legal support in these types of cases. Our government and media often stifle the voices of the actual people that have the most at stake, disregarding their concerns. Oil companies pour billions of dollars into exploration proposals while local families struggle to continue their traditional way of life and put food on the table. The impacts are pushed onto communities that have little access to our political process and few financial resources. What can the environmental movement accomplish if it fails to offer help to those most affected by oil exploration and energy development? We can't fundamentally change our system without empowering those that are most affected.

As I drove back from Utah and reflected on my grandmother's life, I saw how this struggle has woven its way through my own family. Forced from their home in Los Angeles, my Grandparents moved to Utah and relied entirely on the land to provide for their family. Through hard work and dedication, they achieved the American dream for their children and grandchildren. But if they had stood in the way of an oil company, who knows what would have happened to my mother, my aunts and uncles, or even me and my sister.

I believe that everyone can relate to the challenges faced by the Inupiat. At some point, everyone's family or ancestors have struggled, worked the land, and lived close to the edge. In the future, any of us could be in that place again, either by choice or by circumstance. Forcing a group of people to bear the brunt of our dependence on fossil fuels is wrong. If we let it happen now, it could happen to any of us or our children or grandchildren in the future. We are all interconnected, and right now our addiction to oil threatens the livelihoods of real people right here in this country.

Thank you for your interest in Crag's work. Inside this issue of the Summit you will find more information on our work with the Inupiats, as well as updates on Measure 37, the Coastal Law Project, and our work in the Public Lands Program protecting old-growth forests and roadless areas.



FROM THE SUMMIT

Seismic Surveying: Another Concern for Arctic Waters

by Maureen McGee, Summer Associate

As oil and gas exploration and operations persist in the Arctic, Crag continues to help the Inupiat people maintain an active voice in the development processes for offshore drilling. This summer, the Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope (ICAS) approached Crag to draft public comments to address concerns with a permit application for ConocoPhillips Alaska Inc. The company seeks to conduct site clearance and shallow hazard surveying, which are the next steps in establishing operations in the Chukchi Sea.

Surveying happens after companies have leased potential offshore drilling sites from the Federal Government. It involves mapping the ocean floor to determine the best places to drill exploratory and production wells. Specifically, "site clearance and shallow hazard" surveys locate surface features that provide evidence of oil or gas deposits and detect obstructions that could cause problems during drilling.

To conduct these surveys, companies use an array of seismic and sonar equipment mounted on a ship. Each piece of equipment shoots concentrated pulses of sound (sonar) or energy (seismic) into the water toward the topography. As pulses hit the ocean floor and reflect back toward the surface, specialized computers on the ship detect and calculate the wave energy retained in the pulses. This information is then used to estimate the depth and characteristics of the ocean floor.

The pulses are incredibly loud and may seriously harm marine mammals protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Seismic airguns emit pulses at levels ranging from 120 decibels (dB) to 190 dB –or from about the sound of a jet engine (120 dB) to a little louder than a shotgun (180 dB). The effects on marine mammals include changes in feeding behavior, deflection from migration routes, separation of young from their mothers, and permanent hearing loss. Fatal whale strandings, like that of over forty melon-headed whales early this June in Madagascar, also may be linked to seismic surveying.

Because these effects constitute "takings" under the MMPA and the ESA, oil companies must apply for an Incidental Harassment Authorization (IHA) from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) before they begin. An IHA application must specify all possible effects of an activity on marine mammals and include plans to mitigate those effects so only small numbers of animals will be "harassed." If any animals could be seriously injured or killed, an IHA cannot be issued. The company also must show that activities will not substantially interfere with native subsistence hunting. Once approved, the application creates the basis for an IHA and controls how a company must proceed to avoid harming the protected marine mammals or the subsistence hunt.

photo from Shell's October 2007 IHA application.

Shell's Seismic Vessel, the M-V Gilvar, was used for seismic surveys during the 2006 exploration season and is proposed for use in 2008-2009.

The IHA application should be used as an opportunity for a straightforward discourse about potential harms and proper mitigation. This usually is not the case. Recent IHA applications for seismic activity in the Arctic have failed to recognize the potential for surveys to seriously injure or kill mammals, have relied on data that is either outdated or inadequate, and have focused on using Marine Mammal Observers (MMOs) for mitigation. Using MMOs has widely been proven unsuccessful. They stand on the deck of a ship and watch (through binoculars or with the naked eye) to see if a marine mammal gets close enough to be harmed by the loud seismic pulses. If an animal is observed within this "safety zone," operations are shut down. Sometimes the safety zone extends as far as two miles from the ship, meaning if a MMO cannot see that far, they will not see whether animals are being harmed. MMOs also have difficulty seeing in inclement weather (common in the Arctic), and are ineffective at night. Surprisingly, this mitigation approach is widely cited as the sole approach for protecting marine mammals during seismic surveys.

Because IHA applications rarely examine the full extent of the possible harm to marine mammals, they fail to fully examine possible effects on subsistence hunting. Since Inupiat Eskimos living along the coast rely on traditional hunting practices of marine mammals for nearly 80% of their diet, any detrimental effects on the stock or location of marine mammals also has a serious effect on the Inupiat.

In May of this year, the NMFS issued a public notice and request for comments on the proposed authorization of an IHA application by ConocoPhillips' for seismic activity in the Chukchi Sea. Concerned that this application carried similar flaws as past IHAs, the ICAS enlisted Crag to help draft comments urging denial of the application.

Together, ICAS and Crag identified many of the same failures exhibited by previous IHA applications, and many important legal arguments weighing strongly against approval of the ConocoPhillips' IHA. At a minimum, the NMFS must take concerns of possible violations of the MMPA, ESA, and the National Environmental Protection Act seriously when developing an IHA plan for ConocoPhillips. Crag will continue to keep a close eye on ConocoPhillips' development plans and work to ensure that if seismic surveying proceeds in the Chukchi Sea, it will be conducted in a way that has the least possible impact on marine mammal populations and the Inupiat's subsistence livelihood. ●

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917 SW Oak St, Suite 417
Portland, Oregon 97205
503-525-2724 • 503-296-5454 (fax)
www.crag.org

Neighbors Successfully Oppose Pete's Mountain Housing Development

by Nicole Rentz, Summer Associate and Ralph Bloemers, Staff Attorney

While Measure 49 (M49) significantly curbed the effects of Measure 37 (M37), the new law is not a cure-all. Almost a year later, questions remain regarding how to handle many M37 claims.

Under M37, the state approved waivers to land use laws, granting claimants a specific use of their property that otherwise would not be allowed under current land use laws. M49 invalidated M37 waivers, but allowed claimants to convert their claims into one of three options. Two of these options allow claimants to build a limited number of homes. The third allows claimants to retain their rights to build under M37 if they have a common law "vested right."

Courts consider several factors when trying to determine whether a property owner is vested. How much money was spent on the development relative to the total project cost? Did the owner have knowledge of a change in the law before beginning improvements? Could the improvements be used for the other two uses allowed under M49?

Crag represents neighbors and land use advocacy groups throughout the state in numerous vesting determinations, including neighbors near a proposed 41-home subdivision on Pete's Mountain in Clackamas County. Our clients had worked for months to express concerns about impacts to their wells and water supplies, increased traffic, destruction of the area's rural character and degradation of their quality of life.

The landowners sued the State and County for a determination of a vested right to continue their development, and Crag attorney Ralph Bloemers filed intervention papers for a group of eight neighbors and the Friends of Clackamas County.

The landowner engaged a developer who spent about $1.5 million on various efforts to alter the land, build roads, lay gravel and prepare the lots for development. Most of these expenditures were incurred in the days leading up to the election, showing that the owners "rushed to vest" their M37 claim.

The owners claimed they had spent a substantial amount in relation to the total project cost of building a subdivision, not actually constructing houses. The owners tried to maximize the amount spent and minimize the total project cost by changing the use they had originally sought from the State in their M37 waiver. They wanted to sell lots to third parties, which was not allowed under M37.

After three days of trial, plaintiffs rested their case. The Judge granted a joint motion from the State and the neighbors for involuntary dismissal. The judge agreed that the total project cost included building the homes. The plaintiffs threatened appeal and offered to put an expert on the stand to testify that the lots would sell for only $150,000 apiece (a price low enough for small houses with relatively small construction costs). This piqued the Judge's curiosity. Raising his eyebrows, he leaned forward and said he was interested to see whether someone would swear under oath to what was an extremely low price for lots in this unique rural setting.

photo by Fritz Von Tagen

Development on the Tumwater subdivision on Pete's Mountain was stopped by neighbor opposition and the passage of Measure 49.

The next day the developer and his experts argued that, despite statements at neighborhood meetings about multi-million dollar homes and a 4,300 sq. ft. minimum in the proposed subdivision code, they intended to sell the 1-2 acre lots for only $150,000 apiece due to housing market changes. This information was shown to be of limited utility and the State's experts and individual neighbors laid out a strong case for the actual verifiable value of the total project cost.

Our clients' property interests were threatened by the development – and those are precisely the property interests that M49 was intended to protect. In the end, the Judge ruled against the owners. The Court held that the claim was not vested because a third-party developer had incurred the expenditures and found that the total project cost was the cost of completing the entire subdivision, including constructing homes, wells, driveways, and landscaping. Finally, the Court found that the expenditures and on-the-ground improvements could be adapted to uses allowed by Measure 49's "express route."

The M37/M49 saga continues. Crag continues to offer its services to local land use advocacy organizations and local neighbors working with these difficult issues. Crag and its clients hope to ensure a quick and smooth transition from M37 to M49. There are many important lessons to be learned from this costly experiment and we hope to move on to a fruitful discussion in light of M37.

Editor's Note: Nicole Rentz, the author, represented dozens of neighbors in this case and in a number of others that Crag is handling in its Livable Communities Project. She got to experience Oregon's land use system first hand and argue her first motions in court. ●

Removing the Thorn from Nature's Side

Aldrich Roadless area in the Malheur National Forest.
Photo taken by Asante Riverwind during a Light Hawk flight.

Landmark Agreement Reached In Eastern Oregon

Vast Roadless Wildlands and Old Growth Protected

by Ralph Bloemers, Staff Attorney

After many long months of negotiation between conservation groups, officials with the Malheur National Forest, Grant and Harney County logging interests and community leaders, our clients reached an agreement to protect tens of thousands of acres of native forestlands that are recovering from two large fires. The settlement agreement reigns in proposals for the Thorn and Egley postfire timber sales and keeps bulldozers and chainsaws out of large wilderness-quality roadless areas that stretch over 30,000 acres. The agreement allows limited roadside logging for hazard trees in less ecologically sensitive areas.

The negotiations successfully resolved three appeals of the Thorn timber sale in an effort by our clients the Sierra Club, Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project, Cascadia Wildlands Project, and Oregon Wild. Governor Kulongoski and Senator Wyden voiced their support for the settlement.

This unique agreement grew out of collaborative discussions between parties that have been adversaries for decades. The parties were able to move beyond the past and reach common ground that benefits both conservation goals and local economics. A limited amount of logging in already roaded and logged

areas will move forward while old growth forests and roadless areas will be protected for fish, wildlife and recreation. This landmark settlement sends a clear signal to industry – agree to protect old growth and stay out of roadless areas and you are less likely to have a fight on your hands. This agreement may mark a shift to a more ecologically sound future for the Pacific Northwest's forested wildlands.

Over the last decade, public perceptions and values of forests have changed dramatically. The public wants to see old growth and roadless areas protected while also encouraging scientifically responsible restoration and management.

Increasingly, scientists are finding that the practice of post-fire "salvage" logging delays forest recovery and makes forests more prone to fire in the future. Scientific research recommends post-fire landscapes be allowed to naturally recover and strongly discourages logging in sensitive burned forests. Initially, Forest Service plans for the Thorn and Egley timber sales included massive amounts of logging in roadless areas and wilderness quality lands spreading across the combined 155,000-acres affected by the fires. Instead, the Forest Service has agreed to drop thousands of acres of roadless wildlands, old-growth forest, a research natural area, and additional interior forest habitat from logging. Much of these areas are in a fragile state as they recover from fires that have occurred in the past two years.

Hopefully, this settlement heralds the end of an era when massive timber sales were considered a sensible or acceptable response to wildfires. Fires have always burned in the region's dry forests, rotating cyclically over time across the landscape. Eventually a policy of logging burned areas would leave no area unlogged or ecologically intact. As fires may increase in frequency and severity due to growing climate change, how we as a society manage post-fire landscapes will play an increasingly pivotal role in shaping the future of our public lands and waters.

This agreement is one of those rare times when people with very different opinions and backgrounds came together and found common ground. It also shows the path forward for our Congressional delegation – if Congress requires the Forest Service and the BLM to abide by the scientific recommendations against logging in roadless backcountry areas, mature and old growth forests and naturally recovering burned forests – then there will be less conflict and litigation over our forests.

Ultimately, this agreement represents another essential step towards bringing our society into balance with our remaining natural ecosystems. Together, we need to cooperatively address how to responsibly live within Earth's natural balance, and provide for the ecological heritage of the generations yet to come. Over the past two years our clients have hiked, surveyed and photographed these forests. Through their efforts, and our legal expertise, we managed to successfully protect this irreplaceable area from imminent harm. Now, the stage is set for a proposal to protect this area as Wilderness. ●

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OUR MISSION

Crag is a client-focused law center that supports community efforts to protect and sustain the Pacific Northwest's natural legacy.

Planning for the Future
The Chetco and Rogue Rivers

by James D. Brown, Staff Attorney

The Chetco River is in high demand. The river nourishes the communities along its banks as a source of drinking water and jobs. Fishing guides run the river with tourists from Oregon and beyond who come to experience the river's rich fish diversity and southern Oregon's climate. The river is also the growing focus of proposals for expanded in-stream mining operations, which creates a potentially conflicting source of economic return from the river.

The Wild and Scenic Chetco

In 1988, a 44.5 mile portion of the Chetco River that runs from its headwaters in the Kalmiopsis Wilderness to the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest boundary was designated for protection under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The river has high water quality and is valued as an anadromous fishery and for recreational opportunities such as angling.

Upper sections of the Chetco are narrow with large boulders and fast running rapids. As the gradient decreases, the river becomes broad with sand and gravel bars and raised river terraces. The river empties south of the City of Brookings, five miles north of the California border and contributes to the scenic beauty of an area that was once slated for inclusion in the National Park System.

The Chetco River is home to threatened populations of coho salmon listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. The entire length of the river is additionally designated as Essential Fish Habitat ("EFH") because it provides important habitat for other federally managed commercial fish species. The Oregon Endangered Species Act also lists a number of fish species found in the Chetco, including sea-run cutthroat trout, winter steelhead, and fall Chinook salmon.

Existing Demands on the Chetco

Against the backdrop of its essential role as a critical ecosystem for a variety of fish and wildlife species, a healthy Chetco River serves as a source of drinking water and a critical underpinning of the area's local economy.

The high water quality has led to the Chetco's use as a source of domestic water supply for the City of Brookings and the community of Harbor. Other withdrawals along the Chetco provide water for resource activities, including timber and grazing.

The principal use of the Chetco is for recreation. Winter offers white-water kayaking on the upper reaches of the river and salmon and steelhead fishing on the lower reaches. The river enjoys heavy use in the summer for a wide variety of recreational uses including fishing, swimming, boating, and camping. This heavy recreational use trickles down to form a cornerstone of the local economy.

Instream Mining Proposals

The beds of the Chetco are known to contain valuable minerals, including placer gold deposits in the upper reaches of the river and utility minerals like sand and gravel in the lower reaches. There

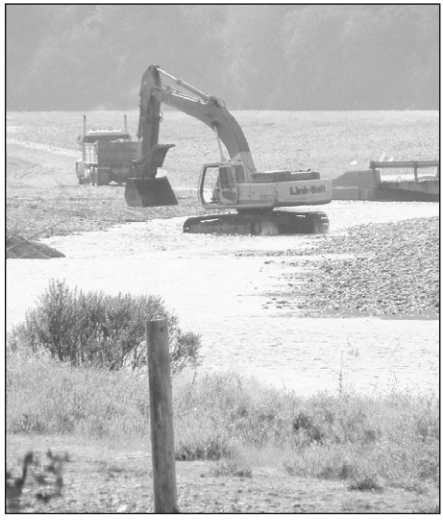
are several placer mining claims along the river that have been largely inactive. A handful of sand and gravel operations have operated at low levels.

Despite the relatively low level of mining that has historically occurred along the river, there has been a recent surge of new proposals for new or expanded in-stream mining operations along the river.

Principally, the Army Corps of Engineers is proposing a regional general permit that would streamline authorization for gravel mining projects along the length of the Chetco. If approved, the Army Corps would permit gravel mining without individual environmental review so long as the operations fit within the scope of the general permit. The proposed general permit could become a model for streamlined approval for in-stream gravel mining on rivers throughout Oregon.

Further, a gold mining corporation has petitioned to operate an 8-inch suction-dredge for 10 years at nine different locations within the boundaries of the Wild and Scenic portion of the Chetco.

photo by an anonymous friend of the Chetco River.



Gravel mining on the Chetco.

The total proposed operations would cover 1,000 acres. The remote nature of several of the claims would require access by helicopter.

According to a published scientific review of several studies which examine suction dredging, the impacts can be significant if operations coincide with incubation of fish embryos in sand/gravel or precede spawning runs.

The Balancing Act

Crag recently presented at a conference which focused on instream mining proposals on the Cheto and Rogue Rivers. The conference was sponsored jointly by the Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition and the Oregon League of Women Voters of Curry County. Crag provided an overview of the overlapping state and federal laws that govern approval of new mining operations.[1] Harvey Young, a Chetco River guide, spoke to the economic returns that the river tourism industry provides for the area. Frank Burris and Guillermo Giannico from Oregon State University presented on the lifecycle of Chetco fish and spoke of the opportunity to work with instream mining operators to develop an understanding of the environmental impacts.

The take-home message from the conference was that a basic scientific consensus could help guide the decision making process regarding potential sustainable ecological and economic uses of the river. Despite the large demands placed on the Chetco, stakeholders can work to agree on a vision for a sustainable balance of uses of the Chetco. Ideally, the agreed vision will be underscored by a realistic, science-based forecast for how the Chetco can meet the various ecological and economic demands for its use for the long term. ●

Footnotes

[1] *View the presentation online at www.crag.org/coastal/.*

CRAG Supports Local Communities in Preserving Oregon's Valued Landscapes

by Charlie Ringo, Board Member

It's hard to forget the face of Measure 37: that pugnacious Dorothy English, ninety years old and still battling for private property rights. If Multnomah County wanted her seven acres designated as forestland, she claimed, the County should pay for the land's diminished value.

This plea won 60% of Oregonians' votes in the 2004 election. But initiatives don't pass without serious funding. Oregon's timber industry put up the cash to fend off environmental regulations that might diminish the value of their timber holdings.

M37 was fraught with unintended and unmentioned consequences. M37 claims were filed to allow for landfills, geothermal power plants, and gravel mines. Claimants proposed huge residential developments in prime farmland. Dorothy English never talked about this!

M37 was deceptively simple. It stated that if the government imposed a new regulation that diminished a property's value, the government must pay the owner for the amount of the diminished value or waive the regulation. Since no government has extra funds sitting around, the practical effect would be widespread waivers.

To the "true believers," private property should be free from government regulation. This philosophy may have once held sway, but we now live in a complex and compact society where it's not that simple.

Forty years ago, Oregon's leaders recognized that unrestrained and ill-planned development would smother our state. This led to our renowned land use system that sought to simultaneously foster livable communities, preserve rich farm and forest land, and encourage economic development. This has been a precarious balance, but its success has helped make Oregon one of the best places to live.

Yet at times, the defenders of our land use system were too inflexible, fueling discontent that gave rise to M37 (and its precursor, Measure 7, which passed in 2000).

As with many value-laden disputes, the battle over land use is often waged by offering extreme cases; at one end of the spectrum, some M37 claimants were grandchildren of farmers who acquired land in the Willamette Valley or the Hood River Valley more than 90 years ago. These claimants inherited rich agricultural land, but the world has grown up since their grandparents' time. Some of these properties are close to growing cities and could easily become subdivisions packed with houses. The claimants requested as much as $50 million from the government. It little mattered to them that it meant permanently destroying some of the best farmland in the world. Why engage in the hard work of farming when this kind of money is at hand?

On the other end of the spectrum, some M37 claimants purchased property with a specific purpose in mind, only to see a new government regulation thwart that goal. One young couple in East Multnomah County purchased 11 acres of forestland for the purpose of building one house for their family to live in.

However, a year later, a new land use rule prevented the construction of any dwelling. This couple suddenly lost almost the entire value of their investment. This was a gross injustice, and these rare examples gave potent ammunition to property-rights ideologues.

Regardless of the equities at hand, all Measure 37 claims were clouded by a host of uncertainties as to how the law should be interpreted. For example, the initiative's language gave no guidance on how to determine the value of a claim.

Additionally, misconceptions and intentional overreaching pervaded Measure 37 claims. Some claimants argued that the government was required to waive *all* land use regulations, not just those that reduced the value.

Hundreds of thousands of acres hung in the balance and the reign of M37 was a time of great confusion and danger for our precious land use system.

Fortunately, Crag attorney Ralph Bloemers was one of the key players working to ensure the fair implementation of M37. He coordinated efforts and strategy with local and state-wide organizations, challenging the practices of certain counties in illegally approving Measure 37 claims.

On behalf of local citizens and groups, Crag filed 19 lawsuits challenging over 200 of the largest M37 claims around the state, stopping or curtailing many M37 claims slated for development on land set aside for farming.

Fortunately, the 2007 legislature crafted a compromise plan, and Measure 49 was approved last fall by the voters. It dramatically reduced the amount of development that would have occurred under Measure 37, allowing claimants to build a few homes.

Pear farms such as this one near Mount Hood were threatened by Measure 37.

M49, however, gave rise to new legal uncertainties. A crucial question was whether certain M37 claims were voided by Measure 49, or whether the claim had become "vested."

Once again, Crag is responding to the challenge by providing leadership to local citizens and groups around the state. Crag continues to work with clients on community education, policy development, campaign strategies and media relations in responding to Measure 37/49 vesting issues.

Oregon's land use battles will undoubtedly continue, and Crag will keep fighting for people and communities that value Oregon. Together, we will continue to work to keep it a wonderful place to live. ●

BOARD HIGHLIGHT

Charlie Ringo

by Alexandra Saavedra, Summer Communications Intern

A true-to-heart fifth-generation Oregonian, Charlie Ringo is Crag's newest Board member. As a lawyer, Charlie has a close understanding of the role of litigation in achieving desired results and truly believes it can make a difference. He has a deep understanding of and fully supports Crag's legal strategy in accomplishing our mission. Since joining the Board in 2007, Charlie has developed hopes of seeing Crag flourish in the coming years by expanding its capacity through resource growth.

Charlie Ringo

Charlie brings an array of professional experiences and legal expertise to Crag. Charlie graduated from the US Air Force Academy in 1980, and went on to earn an MBA from Boston University in 1985 and a JD from Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark in 1989. He's had a successful law practice doing general litigation in Oregon for 19 years. Charlie also served as an Oregon State Senator for six years. Since leaving his post in 2007, he enjoys spending time with his wife and two sons, teaching them to fish and exploring all of the wonderful places Oregon has to offer.

Apart from his public and professional careers, Charlie's passion for giving back to the community has been a constant in his life, from working with the Oregon Literacy program teaching adults to read and volunteering at legal clinics for low-income clients, to becoming the Chapter Chair of the Sierra Club in 1998. It was through the Sierra Club that Charlie met his co-board member at Crag, Sadhana Shenoy; and it was she who led Charlie to Crag.

When asked what it was that sparked Charlie's interest in Crag, he replied that he was amazed at "how much they accomplish with such limited resources." Curious as to what Charlie fought for when in the Senate, I asked him what he was most proud of during his time in office. He explained to me that he had worked to push a bill through the Senate to make legislation be more non-partisan. While the bill didn't pass, he was happy that it had riled up attention and discussion. It focused on how damaging partisan legislation can be.

My last question for Charlie was where his favorite spot is in Oregon, as he loves to ski, hike, fish, and explore the greater outdoors. Hesitant to reveal his 'spot' to me for fear that readers of this article would flock to it, he broke down and described in detail what it was like to sit on top of Smith Rock, which is located roughly 20 minutes outside of Bend. He explained that the view is a mixture of pristine farmlands and mountains.

Charlie has a great deal of respect and enthusiasm for Crag's work on Measure 37, evidenced by his article on page 12. Crag is incredibly lucky to have Charlie on its Board of Directors. His familiarity with Oregon politics, policies, and laws make him a strong contributor to Crag's vision and mission. ●

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Crag is truly blessed with great volunteers and supporters. So many people have helped keep us going! We would like to specifically thank:

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Alberto Rey – Cover Desigh, T-shirt Design
Paula Reynolds – Crag Law Center Logo
Diane O'Leary – T-shirt Design
Shannon Wheeler – T-shirt Design
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We also would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our special events, including Wildshots 2007 and Filbert 2008. Thank you so much for keeping us going strong!

Photo taken at Crag's Filbert Farm Benefit Party by Duco Bloemers.

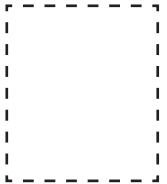
Staff Attorney JD Brown expresses his amazement at all of the hard work of summer associates Nicole Rentz and Maureen McGee, and summer intern Alexandra Saavedra.

photo by Chris Winter

Charlie's favorite place, Smith Rock.

Crag Law Center
917 SW Oak, Suite 417
Portland, Oregon 97205

www.crag.org
503.525.2724
503.296.5454 fax



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