

Oregon Conquers Stream Pollution

By WILLIAM L. FINLEY

A wonderful victory for clean streams in Oregon was won on July 21 when eight cities voted for sewage treatment plants. This is being followed up by a comprehensive program for cleaning Oregon streams

THE fight for clean rivers in Oregon was started over twenty years ago. One of the first important steps was the Deschutes River law in 1911 forbidding the pollution of this river in eastern Oregon. This was when the towns along its course were small, and they immediately established systems of sewage disposal which have kept the stream free from filth.

The State Board of Health has actively assisted in the campaign for clean streams. Before the Deschutes River law was passed, the Board filed a complaint against the town of Silverton for discharging sewage into public waters, but the court decision was won by Silverton. At that time, public opinion did not back the health authorities. Even though it was contrary to state law to dump sewage into public waters, it had been done by the larger municipalities, and the smaller towns one after another kept discharging new sewers into the streams on the plea that the larger cities were doing it. It was important that Portland take the lead in this campaign because, being the metropolis, she was the biggest violator in polluting the Willamette River.

The most valuable run of salmon on the Pacific Coast is the Spring Chinooks that enter the Columbia River to spawn in the upper tributaries. They are the largest in size, sometimes over eighty pounds in weight, and the richest in food value. The first of this early run to come in from the ocean pass by many tributary waters to head up the Willamette River to the ancestral spawning beds.

Formerly the Fall Chinooks and a run of Silverside salmon spawned in the Willamette, but these have disappeared largely because the Willamette has been poisoned by the sewage of cities and the waste of mills and factories. The filth that is a menace to fish life is a danger to public health and destroys the recreational value of public waters.

It was a fortunate turn of circumstances recently that brought the campaign for clean rivers in Oregon to a climax. The need to relieve unemployment, the awakening of opinion to preserve public health, the gradual extermination of salmon and other fish and the offer of government loans on a self-liquidating basis were all important factors in the campaign.

The various chapters of the Izaak Walton League in Oregon have been actively campaigning for clean rivers for many years. The Portland chapter jumped at the opportunity last winter, and Mr. W. T. Lambert was appointed to handle the campaign. Other sportsmen

and city organizations gave valuable aid, and a general committee of citizens called the "Portland Anti-Pollution Council" was organized with Mr. Lambert as Chairman. The State Game Commission, the State Fish Commission, the State Board of Health, and all the leading civic organizations were active in the movement that brought success.

This campaign was carried to other parts of the State; in addition to Portland, Salem and Silverton in the Willamette basin voted for sewage disposal plants.



SMOOTH STRETCH ALONG THE WILLAMETTE AT SUNSET
Sewage treatment plants are proposed for 38 communities along this river

Also Medford and Grants Pass in the Rogue River Valley, Roseburg in the Umpqua Valley, Baker and Burns in Eastern Oregon: all have had elections and voted favorably. This, however, is only a good start toward a campaign to get some sixty other communities in the Willamette basin and many other towns in the State, as well as many industries, to stop discharging filth into the streams. At a recent meeting of the pulp and paper mills, these industries took steps that will end the discharge of chemicals and other wastes into public waters.

Through the federal public works administration, the unusual opportunity is presented cities and towns to build sewage disposal plants (Continued on page 14)

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(Continued on page 15)
by this Field and financed
ly publication sponsored
portunity. A little month-
ship therein at every op-
and encourages member-
way fosters the League
ment in every possible
this year. The manage-
hundred thousand targets
throw more than one
Sundays, expects to
and operating only on
though privately owned
Field at Los Angeles, al-

Waltonian Skeet Team, Los Angeles, won second place in National Telegraphic Team Championship in 1932. Left to right, Jim Frew, Bob Wilfong, Al Lucas*, Mel Morgan and Fred Carr. *Member 1932 All American Skeet Team



ship demanded on the
quired from constant
handling of a gun, would
have contributed a potent
influence in cementing
good will and under-
standing between the far-
mer or rancher and the
sportsman.
The "No Hunting"
signs seen everywhere are
partially due to untrained
would-be sportsmen, who,
in their disgust, often

OREGON CONQUERS POLLUTION

(Continued from page 7)

without expense to the general taxpayers but with loans from the federal government, thirty per cent of which will be an outright gift and the remainder to be retired, not by taxes, but from nominal service charges. Such an opportunity to end stream pollution may never come again. The Oregon chapters of the Izaak Walton League hope to herald Oregon as the first State in the Union to free all its streams from pollution and develop its outdoor resources for the benefit of all the people.