



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of State Lands

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 100

Salem, OR 97301-1279

(503) 378-3805

FAX (503) 378-4844

www.oregonstatelands.us

State Land Board

September 21, 2007

Theodore R. Kulongoski

Governor

Mr. Michael Schneyder
County Assessor
Josephine County Assessor's Office
500 NW 6th Street
Grants Pass OR 97526

Bill Bradbury
Secretary of State

Randall Edwards
State Treasurer

Subject: Questions Concerning Assessment Of Rogue River Parcels

Dear Mr. Schneyder:

You may be aware that the State Land Board directed the Department of State Lands (Department) to undertake a navigability study of the Rogue River from River Mile 68.5 (at the confluence of Grave Creek) to River Mile 157.5 (at Lost Creek Dam). The purpose of this study is to determine if sufficient evidence of the historical use and condition of this 89-mile segment of the Rogue River exists to meet the requirements of the federal test for title navigability.

The Department has nearly completed a draft navigability study report and will hold a public hearing in Grants Pass on October 24, 2007, to obtain public comment on the validity of the evidence presented in the draft document. A second public meeting, which will include the members of the State Land Board, is scheduled for March 12, 2008, in Medford.

Based on our experience during the conduct of the navigability studies for the Sandy and John Day Rivers, we expect that a number of questions will be raised during the study process regarding the activities and policies of the Josephine County Assessor's Office relative to private property located along the Rogue River.

To provide accurate information to persons interested in the Rogue River navigability study, the Department would like to have your answers to the following four questions:

- (1) How does the Josephine County Assessor's Office determine the assessed value of a privately-owned tax lot located within the beds and banks of the Rogue River?**

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- (2) **Is a "special" land category assigned to land located within the beds and banks to assist in valuation? How does the Josephine County Assessor's Office determine the portion of a tax lot to include in the "special" category? For example, does the Josephine County Assessor's Office simply determine that amount of a parcel lying below a certain line of demarcation (for example, the mean or ordinary high water line), or classified as lowland?**
- (3) **If such a line of demarcation is used, how is it established and mapped?**
- (4) **Has the assessed value placed on the portion of privately-owned property within the beds and banks of the Rogue River been in effect for a number of years, or has it recently been changed?**

We would appreciate it very much if you would provide us with the answers to these questions. We want to ensure that any information we give to the public is accurate.

For your information, I have enclosed with this letter a copy of the Rogue River Draft Navigability Study Report. Please let me or Jeff Kroft, Senior Policy Specialist (503-986-5280), know if you have any questions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

C
Louise Solliday
Director

Enclosure

cc: Steve Purchase, Assistant Director – Land Management Division
Jeff Kroft, Senior Policy Specialist