FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 29, 2025

OR Department of State Lands Threatening to Forcibly Remove Established Houseless Encampment from 1000 Acres/Sandy River Delta Starting June 2, Devastating Community

Contrary to the DSL's own claims, their team is failing to provide adequate housing and resources to the 1000 Acres houseless community that they are threatening to sweep on short notice, and most have nowhere to go.

TROUTDALE, OR — The Sandy River Delta (a natural area at the confluence of the Sandy and Columbia rivers also known as "1000 Acres") has long been home to people who lack access to housing. **Over 30 people currently live at the park, with some having lived there for over 20 years, and many describe their community as an enduring "family"** where people support each other. Now, the Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) is threatening to conduct a sweep and forcibly evict 1000 Acres residents from their homes, beginning on June 2, 2025.

DSL has contracted a private security company to conduct the sweep in partnership with the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO). To conduct the sweep, DSL has closed 50 acres within the area, and is planning to reopen the site on October 1, 2025. The contracted private security company will then monitor the area for an additional year. **It is ironic that the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) is playing a role in conducting this sweep, as MCSO is responsible for several 1000 Acres residents ending up there in the first place.** For years, MCSO has been dropping off houseless people at 1000 Acres after their release from Multnomah County jail. Now, with little notice, these individuals are being forced to move again, at risk of arrest.

While DSL leaders have claimed that 1000 Acres residents were "served notices in early 2024" to leave the area, members of the community did not receive these notices, and it was not until March 24 when DSL began posting signage indicating their June 2 deadline for residents to leave the park or be forcibly removed (in a document called "Proposed Sandy River Delta Cleanup Timeline"). DSL then began posting signs to notify the public of a May 12-Oct 1 closure of the section of the park where they plan to conduct the sweep, but the signs lacked context and only indicated the area was being "closed for ecological restoration."

"The other notices in the past were signed by a judge as a court order, and they would give us 30 days, but we would be able to come back and have a place to go," said Grizzly, a 1000 Acres resident who has lived there for over 20 years. "This is our family. The same people have been here for years, and it's not fair for us to have no time to pack up and leave. Not having time to prepare for it, that's one of the biggest deals for me, especially because of my medical problems."

Contrary to DSL's claims, they failed to post notices at individual residents' homes until May 27, less than a week before the June 2 deadline for residents to vacate or face forcible removal.

DSL's team also claims they have been working with the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office HOPE Team, Metro, the Salvation Army, and others to "connect people living at the site with housing and support services." In actuality, 1000 Acres residents have only been offered support filling out the Joint Office of Homeless Services' (JOHS) Multnomah Services and Screening Tool (MSST) assessment. The MSST determines if someone meets the criteria for being prioritized for support then waitlists those individuals for housing placement. The whole process can take years, and is far from a guarantee. With homelessness on the rise in Multnomah County and a persistent lack of beds in shelters, many residents have nowhere to go, and **DSL has failed to meet its own claim that it would connect residents to housing and resources.**

"I'm on a 6-month waiting list for housing, and I don't know what I'm going to do," said Grizzly. "There's gotta be some kind of a solution that's not forcing us out and putting us in jail, that would help nothing. Helping you up is worth a whole lot more than kicking you down."

DSL argues that removing 1000 Acres residents from their homes is "part of a long-term effort to restore the natural area, improve public safety, and protect the environment." This dog-whistle argument is tied to harmful myths about houseless communities being centers of violent crime, where in reality houseless people are overwhelmingly more likely to be victims of violent crime than perpetrators of it.

DSL's argument also obscures the reality that 1000 Acres residents have long played a positive role in the larger community of people who utilize and enjoy the park. **Residents have also put together a proposal to enter into a cooperative stewardship agreement with agencies that manage 1000 Acres**, which would formalize the work they have long been doing to care for the ecological health of the area, such as removing invasive plants like himalayan blackberries and cleaning up trash that washes up on the banks of the Sandy River.

An outreach worker, who preferred to remain anonymous, has been working with residents at 1000 Acres was dismayed to learn that DSL would be forcing them to leave. "This is a supportive, interconnected, intergenerational community of people who have lived here together for years. I cannot overstate how devastating it would be to this community to displace them from 1000 Acres. This place is a home to them, and many have nowhere else to go. The DSL claims that we [outreach workers] have offered plenty of alternatives to 1000 acres residents, when in reality the shelters are overcrowded and the waitlists for housing are years long."

"This is a violation of our human rights," said Jerri, a resident at 1000 Acres, in reference to the sweep. "We need to have a place to live, and there is nothing available."

Full text from signage that DSL posted on March 24, 2025 in 1000 Acres, which indicates the June 2 deadline for residents to leave the park but is not an official notice, and is only a "proposed" timeline:

Proposed Sandy River Delta Cleanup Timeline

Developed by DSL Staff on 2/18/20258

January-April	Establish plan with Sheriff's Office and JOHS to offer resources and beds to all persons now living in Sandy River Delta
March 24	Post signage stating area will be closed by order of the DSL Director starting May 1st
May 27	Final posting with one week until area closure to prepare for cleanup
June 2	Deadline for every camper to be out of Sandy River Delta to prepare for clean up (DSL would want Sheriff's Office support for this day to help remove persons unwilling to leave) (DSL would want JOHS resources available with resources and beds)
June 9	Crews come in to start clean up (HOPE Team check area to sure it is safe for work to begin along with private security company)
June '25 - June '26	DSL will enter a contract with a private security company to provide routine patrols of the area for a year after the cleanup. After that year, DSL will reassess the needs for private security. DSL is willing to negotiate an IGA to pay for extra patrol of DSL Lands in Sandy River Delta by Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. DSL will make weekly visits to Sandy River Delta to look for new illegal camps and post those camps for removal prior to them establishing themselves in the area.