

Mo's Mess

By Mark Riskedahl

Last year, NEDC received a troubling phone call and e-mail from a small business owner in NE Portland. He expressed frustration about the significant pollution being caused by a junkyard next door to his business, and he sent along numerous photos detailing his concerns. He was also highly critical of local and state environmental agency staff who had not been able or willing to deal with the problem.



After conducting initial surveillance, and gathering evidence in the form of photos, video and water quality samples, NEDC launched a Clean Water Act enforcement action against Mo, the operator of the scrap yard. Although Mo tried just about every trick he could think of to avoid our surveillance (including dancing around in front of our video camera in an attempt to shield the visible sheen caused by heavily contaminated discharge flowing off his site), we were ultimately able to get him to agree in the form of a Consent Decree enforceable in federal court to either retain an experienced environmental engineer and install a comprehensive stormwater pollution control system prior to the onset of the next rainy season *or* shut down his unlawful operation. We'll keep you updated on his progress.