

OUTDOORS

Land swap paves way for Hult Pond campground

By **MIKE STAHLBERG**

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Four years after the concept was first approved, the Bureau of Land Management has acquired title to Hult Pond, a popular fishing and swimming spot in the Coast Range north of Blachly.

The land swap opens the door for the eventual construction of a small-scale campground at the site, according to Wayne Elliott, BLM Coast Range Area Manager.

Hult Pond — a man-made 60-acre reservoir on Lake Creek that originally served as a log storage pond for a long-gone sawmill — appeared doomed several years ago. Bohemia Inc., which

owned the dam and most of the land under the reservoir, announced it planned to permanently drain the pond.

The company said it did not want to be liable for the continued safety of the earthen dam the created the pond.

The concept of a land swap involving the pond was approved in concept back in 1990. Shortly thereafter, however, Bohemia drained the pond to repair a faulty headgate, a move that resulted in a major fish kill. The pond has since been re-filled and restocked.

In the interim, Bohemia's holdings were purchased by Willamette Industries, which continued negotiations with the BLM.

The land swap consummated with the filing of

deeds last month involves 2,760 acres of BLM land traded for 2,850 acres of Willamette Industries land in four sections around the reservoir, according to Elliott.

"Very similar timber types were involved so it was basically an acre-for-acre exchange, although the government did pick up an extra 100 acres or so," he said.

The next step will be to prepare a formal recreation management plan.

"Our general idea is for a small developed recreation site — nothing fancy, but well maintained and well kept up," Elliott said. He envisions a fee campground with about a dozen campsites, flush toilets, running water and a handicapped access fishing platform.