

## Diana's story

*Note. This is the text of a speech given by Diana Lynn Purdy at the Environmental Law Conference held in March 2000 at the University of Oregon.*

I'm Diana Lynn Purdy. I live in the community of Crow, 12 miles west of Eugene. My husband and I have lived in the area all our lives. We have lived in our home for 30 years.

Twenty years ago our neighbors planted four acres of grapes. The last row of grapes is 20 feet from our house. Our house sits below the vineyard. In 1997 Vicki and Allen Eckerdt, our neighbors and owners of Shalvachris Vineyard, contracted with Gary Carpenter, LaVelle Vineyard, to manage their four acres of grapes. LaVelle Vineyard brought in a blast sprayer to apply pesticides. With the use of the blast sprayer, mist was visibly seen drifting over our property. I told the Eckerdts that when it rained we could see the spray in our rain barrel, that our dogs were being sprayed, and that the spray was affecting my health. I got a letter from my doctor requesting that they notify me prior to any spraying. LaVelle Vineyard never did.

On June 11, 1999, I was drifted upon again. The spray entered my house, covered my dogs, and I had severe reactions from the chemicals. This began my horrible and overwhelming nightmare. That day, I called that Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (NCAP). They told me to call the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Pesticide Division, and place a Chemical Trespass Complaint. This was on a Friday. ODA said they couldn't come until Monday. They never came. I called and they told me they didn't have anyone to send. I insisted someone come. Finally, five days later, on June 16, ODA came and found the chemical drift.

I called NCAP again and told them how the spray was in my house and how bad I felt. They told me to phone the State Health Department. I did and they said "You've been poisoned. You'll have to move." I told them I owned my place and have lived here 30 years. They advised me to go on vacation to the coast...

I slowly found out there would be no help for me from ODA, which could only make suggestions to the Eckerdts and LaVelle Vineyard on going back to the old way of spraying, putting in a buffer zone, and notifying prior to spraying. ODA wouldn't even come back when I called and made another Chemical Trespass Complaint. We were told they only do one a year. The State Health Department wouldn't help us with our house. They said they could only document.

I would eventually go through over 40 organizations and people and phone them numerous times asking for help – senators, county commissioners, EPA Region 10, DEQ, Congressman Peter DeFazio's office, the Governor's hotline, and doctors. I would be told there are no laws to help me, or be referred back to Agriculture, or told to move.

In the meantime we were being sprayed every three weeks and my health and way of life were suffering. On December 14, 1999, we became "homeless" homeowners. We lived with our daughter or in a motel for several weeks until our equity loan went through and then we purchased a fifth-wheeler. We are living in it while getting our home ready to sell.

My family and I have suffered the very long and painful death of our home. I have also suffered so very terribly with my health. I have been chemically sensitized where I know I won't be able to live in my home. And I still keep trying to keep them from spraying.