

Family says 'we're not selling'

Woman's farm condemned by county for landfill

By DENNIS PFAFF
Of the Emerald

The scenario conjured up by the current controversy over Lane County's selection of a new sanitary landfill site is a romantic one. The principal actors include an 87-year-old woman who has lived on the same Lane County farm all her life and members of the Lane County government who want to turn her land into a garbage dump.

Naomi Ayres is the woman who currently owns the land near the Willamette River which Lane

County Commissioner Nancy Hayward terms, "an almost ideal place for a sanitary landfill." Hayward says that a two-year study was "methodically carried out" covering at least 25 possible sites to replace the county's rapidly-filling Day Island Landfill. The criteria used in the study were: the site should be at least 100 acres in size, it should be easily accessible to population centers, it should be surrounded by light industry, it should have adequate soil to prevent leaching of pollutants, it should not pose a danger to domestic water supplies (such as wells) and it should have at least 10 feet of soil cover above the water table. Hayward's remark about the Ayres property being "almost ideal" stems from the fact that it successfully fills each of the criteria.

Hayward also said, "The land is not being used, apparently because it is not economically feasible to do so."

AYRES HERSELF IS very deaf, and so was not available for comment. However, her granddaughter, Mrs. Clarence Gerhke, said, "The land is being used. There are the remains of a walnut orchard, fifteen acres of filbert trees, a small cherry orchard, 20-25 acres of alfalfa, about 25 acres of row crops and the rest is being used to graze about 40 head of cattle and horses." She said that many of the trees were damaged in the freezing weather a year ago, but, "the land itself is still very fertile and productive, and it's one of the most beautiful pieces of property you'll ever see."

The three county commissioners, Hayward, Ken Omlid and Frank Elliott, voted 2-1 recently to proceed with condemnation of the property after Ayres refused to voluntarily sell. Elliott explains his lone dissenting



Photo by Monica Haag

Ayres' farm with crops, orchards of walnut, cherry and filbert trees and stock is the proposed site for Lane County's next landfill. In a two-one vote

county commissioners decided to condemn what Naomi Ayres' granddaughter calls "one of the most beautiful pieces of property you'll ever see."

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vote this way, "I think it's wrong to go out and condemn a piece of property in this amount. The technology we have today shows us how to stop the practice of burying garbage. The heat value in it is too great to lose in this way."

All of the commissioners agree that incineration of Lane County's solid waste for the generation of power would be the best method of disposing of it. However, Omlid and Hayward contend that a sanitary landfill would still be needed to dispose of the ash from such an incineration plant and to get rid of unsalvageable waste such as concrete and bricks. Omlid says, "Thirty to forty per cent of the garbage we now bury would still have to be buried."

ELLIOTT AGREES yet says that an alternative site, known as the Golden Gardens gravel pit, could be used for this purpose. Omlid calls Elliott's proposal "ridiculous." He says, "Much of

the water for the entire Eugene area drains right through the Golden Gardens site," adding "we don't know yet if the ash from an incineration plant would pose a danger to the water supply or not."

The Ayres site lies adjacent to the Willamette river. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has urged communities to locate sanitary landfills close to running water, so that any possible leachate could be diluted before it reached the domestic water supply.

As an alternative to the Ayres property, the commissioners are trying to get a site known as Mt. Pisgah. However, that site was purchased by the Federal Bureau of Recreation and is now being leased to Lane County for future development as a park. Federal regulations stipulate that no land purchased with federal money may be used as a landfill. The county is attempting to procure a

variance on this regulation, however Hayward speculates that the necessary procedures might take a year to complete. Yet a new site is needed by June of this year.

IF THE AYRES SITE is condemned and turned into a sanitary landfill, the county would pay Ayres for the land. No figure has been officially mentioned, but Gerhke says, "It would probably be around \$250,000. However, we haven't negotiated on the price and at this point, we're not selling."

OSPIRG may become involved in the controversy soon. No official word has been received on what the OSPIRG proposal would be, however.

The Ayres property is zoned for agricultural use only. Thus, the next step to be taken is that of obtaining a conditional use permit from the Lane County Planning Commission to use the land as a garbage dump.

Will the University try recycling?

A committee established under the direction of President Robert Clark met Friday at Johnson Hall to discuss the possibilities of converting the University's solid waste disposal program to a recycling system. Under the present system the University is the single largest contributor of solid waste in Lane county.

The committee also looked into the problems of transportation, storage, financing and current recycling operations.

The Resource Recovery program, under the direction of Jeff Detlefsen, was set up last spring to find an alternate system of solid waste disposal through recycling. Since then the program has expanded from the Hamilton dorm complex to cover the Carson Hall cafeteria and the EMU. Since the start of this operation, 70 per cent less solid waste has been taken to the dump. This is done by simple sorting of cardboard, bottles, tin cans, and plastics.

Project Intercept is another campus operation that has proven the feasibility of recycling. There are 110 Intercept barrels placed throughout the

campus for recyclable paper. Although currently funded by the University, Intercept is well on the way to becoming self-sufficient Terry Esvelt of the Survival Center reported.

A recent survey conducted by Detlefsen's search class on recycling revealed a substantial interest in recycling. From a cross sampling of the campus and Eugene community, Detlefsen's students revealed that 98 per cent felt there is a need for a community wide recycling system and 84 per cent felt there was too little emphasis placed on recycling. When asked if they would be willing to finance a recycling program by paying two to four dollars more in taxes or school fees, 65 per cent agreed they would.

Speaking at the Friday meeting, Detlefsen stated that the University has a responsibility to lead the way by recycling its solid waste. By setting up a successful waste disposal system based on recycling, Detlefsen pointed out, the University could serve as a rational model for future system.

Those interested in recycling may contact Jeff Detlefsen of the Environmental Studies Center, room 111 of the EMU, in the mezzanine.