

Sand and gravel operation threatens herons

Eugene company seeks permits; sees excavation a public service

By E.G. WHITE-SWIFT
Of the Emerald

A proposed sand and gravel operation just north of Eugene may threaten the Willamette Valley's largest great blue heron nesting colony.

Wildlife experts and local ornithologists are concerned that the noise and human disturbance from the gravel excavation could force the herons to abandon their historical nesting site on McKenzie Island at the confluence of the Willamette and McKenzie Rivers.

The Eugene Sand and Gravel company, which has applied for permits to undertake the excavation, believes it would be serving the public interest by removing the gravel.

"The primary purpose of the excavation is to remove a gravel bar in the east side of the Willamette Channel that flows around the east side of the island," says James Kovack, production manager for Eugene Sand and Gravel.

"This gravel or point bar has been causing erosion on the west bank of the channel by forcing the water toward the island. The erosion is moving toward the great blue heron's nesting site," Kovack adds.

By removing the gravel bar during low water this summer or in 1978, Kovack believes the erosion will be halted. The gravel removed from the point bar would be used to dike off a McKenzie River backwater several hundred yards from the excavation site or to fill on an offsite property.

"The excavation is more of a benefit to the public than it is to Eugene Sand and Gravel," Kovack says. "We try to perform a public service and we are slowed by filing for permits and attending public hearings. As long as a private company is spending its money, nobody comes forward to lend support for the project to save the herons."

In fact, opposition to the excavation of the point bar in the Willamette and diking of the McKenzie River backwater has begun to grow. The Southern Willamette Ornithological Club, a Eugene-based bird research group, has requested that the Army Corps of Engineers hold a public hearing on the proposed operations.

The Army Corps of Engineers is one of several public agencies involved in sand and gravel permits. In addition, the Oregon state lands division must approve the operations and Lane County must issue a Willamette Greenway conditional use permit.

The Corps is responsible for issuing permits for work or excavations in the nation's navigable waters, which includes the navigable Willamette River. As of late Friday, the Corps had not reached a decision on holding a public hearing or issuing the permit.

"We are concerned that noise, vibration or just large-scale human activity in the area will have a detrimental impact on the breeding activity of the herons," says SWOC member Mark Eggar. "We are also concerned that the work in the area will disrupt feeding areas for the herons."

Great blue herons, long-legged wading birds, can be observed along the rivers and marshes in the Eugene area fishing for small fish and crustaceans with their dagger-like bills.

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Photo by Doug Lamb

The Eugene Sand and Gravel company's plans to excavate gravel from the confluence of the Willamette and McKenzie Rivers may disrupt the habits

of the valley's largest great blue heron colony as they are forced to abandon their historical nesting site.

Southern African demonstrators demand administrators' answer

By HEATHER McCLENAGHAN
Of the Emerald

The State Board of Higher Education acknowledges that investment in corporations with holdings in southern Africa is an issue that won't go away.

The results of May's student referendum were reported to the board at their Klamath Falls meeting two weeks ago. Board secretary Don Larson told members of the Southern Africa Support Committee Friday afternoon.

The students' meeting with Larson followed a march to Johnson

Hall. The demonstration was called to demand an answer from University administrators about implementation of the referendum's results.

The students were met by a locked door when they arrived at University Pres. William Boyd's office. Boyd had left campus prior to the students' visit.

The students were greeted with a more polite reception at the offices of the State System of Higher Education.

There, Larson told the students Vice-Chancellor Freeman Holmer had informed the State Board of the referendum and had suggested a few options the board could exercise in dealing with the student vote.

Larson read a transcript of the last board meeting to the students:

"A substantial majority of students voted in favor of the referendum," Holmer said, noting that there is "a general push around the country" on the apartheid-investment question.

"This is an issue that won't go away," Holmer said.

The vice-chancellor will present specific recommendations on the referendum to the board at their meeting in Ashland later this month.

Larson said members of the

Southern Africa Support Committee are more than welcome to make a presentation at the meeting.

Boyd sent a memorandum to the Southern Africa Support Committee Friday answering the four demands presented to him Thursday by ASUO Pres. Gary Feldman.

Boyd said the administration does not intend to comply with the referendum's request that the University stop providing facilities for recruiters from multi-national corporations with subsidiaries in southern Africa.

"An open campus is fundamental to the Oregon tradition," Boyd's reply stated. "No change is contemplated."

Boyd told the Support Committee to draw up a program and a budget for a symposium to be funded by the University on the situation in southern Africa fall term.

A list of publications from liberation movements in southern Africa should be submitted to the University librarian for consideration, Boyd added.

Support Committee members said they will continue their activities through the summer. For more information contact the committee at P.O. Box 3723, Eugene, Ore. 97403.

Mother-son combination doubles graduation thrill

When Mike Boehnke receives his bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University at spring commencement exercises this Sunday, his mother will be watching.

And when Chari Boehnke receives her master's degree in public affairs, her son will be watching.

Sunday is a big day all around for the Boehnke family as Mike, 21, and his mother Chari, 45, both graduate from the University. But it's not the first time two Boehnkens have been awarded degrees together. When Chari received her first degree, a bachelor's in business in 1956, her mother Marcella Shorack received her bachelor's degree in education from the University.

And the coincidences don't stop there. Both Chari and Mike sport fine academic records. Chari won membership to Phi Beta Kappa, the liberal arts honorary, in 1956, although she missed her initiation in order to go to the hospital and give birth to Mike. Mike has done well; he was initiated into Phi Beta Kappa last year, recently won the De Cou Award for math and will spend next year in Germany on a Fulbright fellowship.

So, for the Boehnkens — and some 2,200 other degree candidates and their families — Sunday will be the day. Commencement exercises are scheduled to begin at 2:30 p.m. in Hayward Field or Mac Court, depending on the weather.

Tomorrow: What's it all mean?

Years of college and you can't decide what it all means? Oppressed by systems beyond your control? Looking for the meaning of it all? Watch the Emerald stands tomorrow for an incisive, hard-hitting discussion of the reality only a student could know. It's the story they've never dared tell before.