

Neighborhood group opposes hydro project

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

The Rhododendron Neighborhood Association met with U.S. Forest Service officials on Dec. 29 to voice its opposition to the hydroelectric project proposed for Henry Creek.

Members of the RNA met with Chuck Smay, ranger for the Zigzag District, and Ron Marvin, who is in charge of special resources.

Smay and Marvin were told that the RNA opposes the project because

it would be constructed above the area's water system.

The project is being proposed by Douglas Pagar of Gladstone, who is considered one of the pioneers of micro hydroelectric generating in Oregon.

Pagar has three projects currently proposed for the Zigzag District. They are Henry Creek, Devil's Creek (just above Devil's Falls), and Wind Creek on Tom, Dick and Harry Mountain.

The RNA fears that the installation

of the proposed hydro would severely impact the quality of the domestic water system of the area. The water comes directly from Henry Creek and serves 325 persons.

The water company is a non-profit corporation that is operated by the Rhododendron Summer Home Association. Last year the company spent \$70,000 to construct a 100,000-gallon storage tank on the creek at the base of the East Zigzag Mountains.

Water board members said that they feel the construction and operation of a hydro would cause turbidity and erosion.

"There is no way to dam a creek and not cause turbidity," said Colonel Jack Baker.

"We know from past experience when someone disturbs the creek what it can do. In one instance up here it took a number of years for the stream banks to stabilize themselves."

Jerry Schmidt, and independent water consultant for the Alder Creek Water Users Association, agrees.

In an interview in November, Schmidt said that hydroelectric generating plants and domestic water supplies cannot co-exist.

"Turbidity is a good enough reason to shut down a water system," said Schmidt. "This was part of the problem here in the Alder Creek case."

Wendell Tobey, president of the RNA, told the Forest Service representatives that Pagar's hydro would be creating turbidity, which is the Environmental Protection Agency's reason for forcing the water

company to put in the new tank.

Tobey also said that if the turbidity gets too bad, we'll "be forced to go to wells like Lady Creek."

"This would affect not only us," Tobey said. "This would affect all the citizens on government lands (summer home sites leased by people from the Forest Service) who use this water also."

"How in the world can he do this thing," asked S. Lou Tipton of Rhododendron, a retired Clackamas County librarian whose family has owned property in the area for a number of years.

"That sounds stupid," she said. "Why would someone want to build above a water system? Is he (Pagar) of the right mind?"

Smay told her that Pagar has only filed an application to do a study on the site and that the Forest Service "could not deny him the right to look and do the study."

"I would just like to know if we, the people, the ones who drink this water, have a say in this study," asked Jane Tobey.

Smay told her that "the time to provide that input is when the environmental analysis is being done for that particular project."

But first, a study would have to take place. There would be no public hearing.

Edgil Panian, of the RNA, told Smay and Marvin that after she learned of the proposed hydroelectric project she was told by someone at the Zigzag Ranger Station that there would be a public meeting.

The Association's members said

that they are concerned about the extent of the study and possibly that Pagar would begin some of the initial phases of construction, such as the construction of roads.

This has happened in two other hydroelectric projects in the Sandy River drainage area. Permits were not secured, nor the proper legal channels followed, before construction occurred in the Sandy River Scenic Waterway, and on the Minikahda Creek project in the Lola Pass area near Zigzag.

Smay said that what Pagar could do in that study would "depend upon what's authorized in the study permit."

He said that he could start immediately on anything allowed by the permit, but that he doesn't envision any road construction taking place.

Dale Lamoreaux told Smay and Marvin that he wants the area's watershed protected.

"The water system wasn't a newborn babe," said Lamoreaux.

"It's been around since the turn of the century. We people live on the valley floor and want to protect that watershed."

Smay told the group that protecting the Rhododendron watershed was much different than protecting the Bull Run watershed. The Bull Run is closed to public entry and the East Zigzag Mountains are not.

"There is a significant difference between the watershed we're dealing with and the Bull Run," said Smay. "The dominant use in that area is water for Portland."

Lamoreaux raised concerns that

since the government is giving loans for mini-hydroelectric projects, and opening up federal lands for energy exploration, that he could see potential problems with letting them make the right decision for everyone involved.

"If the government is encouraging hydroelectric projects, then they will look the other way on requirements," said Lamoreaux.

Lamoreaux asked that since the RNA has voiced opposition to the project, "how hard of a stand will you take against it?"

Smay said that he couldn't answer that question at this time, but had to wait until the environmental analysis is done and the project's development proposal submitted.

"We have to take all the best input in the environmental analysis and make a decision," Smay said.

The Forest Service involvement in the project would be to determine the impact on the land, taking into consideration such things as environment, culture, history, hydrology and the other natural resources.

Smay told the group that they have the legal right to submit input, but added, "I warn you, not to mean it to be positive or negative, that it's not a voting process."

Smay told the group that if the Forest Service makes a decision that the group determines to be bad, then they could go through a "very formalized appeals process." But he added, when one goes through this process, one is faced with sorting out the differences of opinions from all the expert witnesses.

Hydro development called speculating

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

A lack of information, questions about energy speculating, and the selling of special use permits were topics that dominated a meeting about the Henry Creek micro-hydroelectric project.

At a special meeting held by the Rhododendron Neighborhood Association and Forest Service representatives, RNA members expressed concern about how little they could find out about the project.

Chuck Smay, Forest Service ranger in charge of the Zigzag District, said that the information is not secret, but that he could not give specifics because of the potential for other hydroelectric developers to come in and compete for the same site.

Smay said that there exists the possibility of many permits on the same site, if certain information is given out.

This happened last year on the Roaring River in the Clackamas Ranger District, where a local developer and a California developer were both studying the same location for a micro hydroelectric project.

"This particular field, like others, is speculative and competitive," said Smay.

Smay said that he "may just be hung-up on protecting the applicant," but that certain information, like financial data, cannot be released.

Also, the applicant's name and the specific location of the project has been guarded. Smay said that he even contacted the project's developer, Charles Pagar, before releasing his name to The Post last June.

"Do you protect those who come in to exploit," asked Edna Lamoreaux. "That's what it sounds like."

Smay said that he "was aware of some potential conflicts between domestic use and power production, but didn't know who to talk to."

Pagar told The Post last summer that he has been studying the site for two years, but has not indicated any move towards construction.

Dale Lamoreaux asked Smay that since Pagar "hasn't made a move in two years, wouldn't his application be null and void?"

Smay said that on a special permit issued by the Forest Service, that there is no set time limit.

He said that his application would remain active unless the developer made no effort to proceed any further on the project.

Some of the RNA members raised questions as to whether Pagar could be a speculator, since he has five or six other proposals on National Forest land.

Carolyn Smith said that Pagar could sell the special use permit to another developer, for a profit.

Smay said that this is true, but that he couldn't do it legally without permission from the Forest Service for the transaction to take place.

"Our permits are issued to a specific individual or corporation for a specific purpose," said Smay. "When that party no longer wants that permit, it goes back to us."

"Technically, this breaks the chain of ownership so it reverts back to the Forest Service."

The organization said that they fear that the developers are speculators, and do not show enough concern for such things as the creek's fisheries, scenic beauty, erosion, turbidity, wildlife needs, as well as maintaining the quality and quantity of the area's domestic water source.

They said the risk of having a hydroelectric project on Henry Creek is too great a risk to take.

Smay said that some of the developers are "legitimate" while others are just hoping to make a buck.

The economic incentives, either directly through the plant's operation, or through tax write-offs, has created a boom.

On the Clackamas River there are over fifty sites being looked at for possible hydroelectric plants.

In the Mt. Hood area there are eight, four on government land.

"This same thing happened with geothermal energy," said Smay.

"Everybody wanted to get in on it."

Couple discover that people do care

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

The holidays are over, but for some people, like Glenda Barbre of Rhododendron, the memory lingers.

Barbre said that she received the greatest gift of all this year, which is to know that others care.

She also said that she learned to receive as well as give.

Just a few days before Christmas it seemed to the Barbres that the holidays were off to a bad start.

Barbre's purse was stolen, and in it was her last paycheck. Her husband, Bob, is now unemployed. He was laid off his construction job on the new Hoodland Sewage Treatment Plant in Welches.

This was Dec. 21. There were bills to pay, food to buy for two kids, and Christmas presents. On top of all this, relatives were coming in from out of town to spend Christmas, unaware that the Barbres were officially broke.

Barbre and her family traced back their steps and remembered seeing the purse on a chair by the front door on Dec. 18. When she called the Clackamas County sheriff's office to report the possible theft, she was informed that six other houses had

been burglarized that week in the Rhododendron area alone.

The world was crashing down around her, Barbre thought. Not only in Rhododendron, but the world. Poland underwent the change to martial law, and peace between the U.S. and the Soviet Union seemed to be on shaky ground.

On top of all this, what she thought to be the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the purse began to eat away at her.

"The idea that someone would come into my house and take my purse really bothered me," said Barbre. "Why me at this particular time, I kept asking myself."

Word soon spread around the mountain about the Barbres' misfortune.

An emergency meeting was held amongst members of the Hoodland Women's Club board, with assistance to the family being discussed.

Neighbors and church members got together food baskets. Anonymous Christmas cards with money enclosed were mailed.

Hoodland Happenings

CPO organizational meeting set

Thursday, Jan. 7

A senior citizens lunch, sponsored by Loaves and Fishes, will be served at 11:30 a.m. at the Welches School library. Transportation and further information is available by calling 622-3331.

Monday, Jan. 11

A senior citizens lunch, sponsored by Loaves and Fishes, will be served at 11:30 a.m. at the Welches School library. Transportation and further information available by calling

622-3331.

The Hoodland Women's Club will hold its annual monthly meeting at the Alpine Hut restaurant in Rhododendron this morning at 11:30. The meeting will include lunch and a special presentation by the Forest Service. For reservations members should call Renee Knapp at 622-4671 or Pauline Beckoff at 622-3252.

Tuesday, Jan. 12

The senior citizens monthly

potluck luncheon will be held at the Hoodland Women's Club today beginning at noon. The luncheon will be served by Women's Club members. For more information, or transportation to the potluck, call Maxine Worley at 622-3331.

Beginning at 7:30 p.m. a special meeting will be held at Welches Grade School for residents of the mountain area. Participants will have an opportunity for prior clarification of the ECOS organizational bylaws before the county-sponsored meeting of Jan. 28 to elect officers for a local Community Planning Organization (CPO). Call Patty Cook at 622-3121 for additional information.

Wednesday, Jan. 13

Welches Community School Tiny-Tots group meets from 10 a.m. till noon. Call Louise Hoyt, 622-3752, for information and meeting location.

At 7:30 p.m. the Welches PTA will sponsor a special program on drug abuse. Niki Johnson, a counselor with CODA, Comprehensive Options for Drug Abusers, will be the guest speaker. Topics to be discussed include: "What is drug abuse?" "Drugs—What are the facts?" "My son is smoking pot—what should I do?" and "What help is available." A question and answer period will follow the program. This program will be open to the adult public, and will be held in the "old" school library. For more information call Dawn Morrison at 622-3538.

The Mountain Music Society has planned a Valentine's Day Concert for Monday, Feb. 15, at 7:30 p.m. in the Hoodland Women's Club. Linda Waterfall, a contemporary music vocalist and song writer, will be featured. For ticket information call Will Frank at 622-3130.

To place an event in Hoodland Happenings, contact Dawn Morrison at 622-3538.



At left: A city truck going down the hill by Meinig Park. Above: Butch Newell and son Shawn enjoy the outdoors on a Honda three-wheeler.

Photos by Scott Newton