

Mt. Hood Meadows avalanche 'media event'

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

The avalanche that swept through an isolated section of Mt. Hood Meadows Sunday was blown out of proportion by the news media, according to a spokesperson of the resort.

Michael Clark, director of marketing and sales for the resort, was reluctant to call a section of snow that moved 150 feet down a slope in Four Bowl an avalanche.

Four Bowl is a steep area used primarily by expert skiers just south of the Blue chairlift.

"We call what happened up here a 'sluff,'" said Clark, "a minor slide."

Clark said that at 3 a.m. that same morning, before the area was opened up for skiing, patrols were sent out to look for potential build-ups, or cornices. This is a routine procedure.

When potential hazards are identified they are knocked down by dynamite or by trained personnel on skis.

The area where the slide occurred, according to Clark, was dynamited early in the morning and slid down the hill.

However, 18 inches of new snow fell

by noon, forcing the snow to slide down through some trees.

The avalanche was discovered by a skier at 12:55.

"When we first learned about the avalanche, we augmented a search immediately," said Clark. "Our reaction time was faster than recommended. We had 30 people there within 20 minutes."

"If you can get people to an avalanche area in 30 minutes you are doing well."

Ski patrolers and ski instructors probed the area, 40 feet wide (? by what) and three to five foot deep, un-

til 3:30 p.m. looking for anyone who might have been trapped. Clark said they probed every inch of the area with 12-foot poles, and no victims were discovered.

"At no time were we alarmed at all," said Clark. "It was not a crisis situation, but it quickly became one to the media."

Someone monitoring the airwaves with a citizens band radio heard about the avalanche, and within five minutes a television crew was on the scene. Later the resort received calls from CBS News in Los Angeles, as well as from United Press Interna-

tional and the Associated Press in Chicago, wanting to find out about the incident.

Bruce Haynes, a U.S. Forest Service snow ranger with the Zigzag Ranger district, and Rick Ragen, a snow ranger with the Hood River Ranger district, both agree that the avalanche was a "media event" more than anything else. They said the incident was blown out of proportion.

A large avalanche at Multnomah-Ski Bowl the day before, however, went relatively unnoticed. An avalanche moved a timing shack on the resort's racing hill an estimated 30 feet down hill. A timer inside the shack was buried up to his waist.

At 3:30 p.m., high winds with gusts up to 50 miles per hour, forced the closure of the Mt. Hood Meadows for skiing. At the time of the closure, according to Clark, 3,000 people were skiing. He said, "they were refunded their money on a calibrated basis," according to how long they had been skiing that day.

"One of the big problems on a mountain like this, is when a storm comes in and there are 50 mile per hour winds," said Clark. "It's just too dangerous to risk operating the lifts."

Clark said that it was just a coincidence that there was an avalanche the same day as the high winds, and said that it had nothing to do with the early closure.

Ragen said that the avalanche may have been considered in the closure but it was primarily "due to the unsafe situation of the lifts during high winds."

Two out of five of the resort's ski lifts did not open that day due to weather conditions, according to Ragen.

The Texas lift, Meadow's highest, located about the timberline extending up between 6,000 and 7,000 feet, had high winds and no visibility.

The Hood River Meadows lift, which is located between the 4,500 and 5,900 foot level, was not opened, said Ragen, due to ice on the lift.



Workers put up a wall at the senior center apartment complex on McCormick Drive, adjacent to Meinig Park. The \$675,000 Cedar Park Gardens will

provide living quarters for 20 senior citizens by next summer.

Photo by Scott Newton

Approval sought for hydro study

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

The Clackamas County Planning Commission will decide upon a proposed amendment which would allow hydroelectric projects to be constructed on slopes greater than 35 percent.

On Monday, the commission will hear testimony on this amendment to the county's zoning and development ordinance, which would allow water impoundments and hydro facilities to be developed on slopes greater than 35 percent, which is now a violation under existing ordinances. If approved, the amendment will go before the Board of County Commissioners on Feb. 22.

The proposed zoning change originated after Paul Sanders of Zigzag, was denied a conditional use permit for a mini-hydro project on Minikahda Creek just off of Lolo Pass Road. The project was denied on Nov. 5 of last year by a hearings officer because it was to be constructed in an area with slopes that exceed 35 percent. Sanders argued that slope is necessary to create enough drop to produce energy.

At the project's appeal before the Clackamas County Commissioners on Jan. 6, Edward Sullivan, a Portland attorney representing the Mt. Hood Water Resources Coalition which is opposing the project, argued for a dismissal because the hydro was in violation of the ordinance.

The commissioners concurred but agreed to let Sanders refile another conditional use permit application, at no charge, if the zone amendment is approved.

Henry Markus, a land use specialist for the Oregon Department

of Energy, said that his office is assisting the county's planning staff from a legal standpoint because a similar problem could occur elsewhere in the state. He said that "the more small hydro projects that are proposed, the more the issue will keep coming up."

"We were aware of the problem with the zoning ordinance and the development of alternative and renewable resources like hydros," said Markus, "so we decided to get involved by drawing the county's attention to their policy problems."

"It was clear in the language of the existing development code," said Markus, "that it was not written with hydro in mind."

Markus said that most counties around the state are not aware of the siting problems for small hydros and with reasonable ordinances and planning, the conflicts can be resolved.

The proposed conflict between the zoning ordinance will be eliminated by the addition of a sentence which reads: "Facilities which satisfy this provision shall not be denied on the basis of slope-related development standards."

Carolyn Smith of the coalition said that her organization is currently speaking with other interested parties in opposing the ordinance change and said that it would have statewide ramifications, if approved.

Sullivan said in an interview Tuesday that he did not know if the coalition would be at the hearing to legally combat the amendment.

The proposed zone change will go before the planning commission at 7:30 p.m., Jan. 25, at the Department of Environmental Services, 902 Abernethy Road, in Oregon City.

State gets involved in county zoning proposal

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

The proposed Boulder Creek hydroelectric project near Brightwood has been recommended for approval by the State Water Resources department staff.

Steve Brutscher of the department, said that they will recommend Friday morning to the Water Policy Review Board, to accept the preliminary permit application for a hydroelectric project on Boulder Creek, a tributary to the Salmon River.

In a memorandum to the Board dated Dec. 18, 1981, Brutscher wrote that "the application and hearing record indicate that there are some issues of concern which could be appropriately addressed under a preliminary permit." By approving the permit "it is not apparent that the

project would impair or be detrimental to the public interest."

The mini-hydro is being proposed by Steven Sweitzer of Wemme, who underwent a series of hearings before the board last summer, seeking approval for the preliminary permit in order to study the stream further. Having met head-on with opposing factions, the project's fate was placed temporarily on hold, until further measurement of the stream's flow could be conducted.

The hydro application stated that the project would divert up to 60 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the creek and theoretically could generate up to 1,956 horsepower, producing an estimated 3,400,000 kilowatt (kw) hours of electricity annually. Portland General Electric has indicated a willingness to purchase the power.

The Mountain Area Corridor

Citizens division of the Environmental Committee on Suitability (ECOS), and the Columbia Group of the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club, questioned the generating capacity of the project, arguing that there were not historical flow records available on the stream. The hydrologic correlation for the project was based off of Fir Creek, which is located in the Bull Run area.

Dr. John Beschta, a hydrologist for the Oregon State University in Corvallis, testified that the flows available for power generation, may be 33 percent less than what Sweitzer has estimated. He said that such a reduction could make the project economically unfeasible.

Edward Sullivan, a Portland attorney representing the project's opponents, also challenged that the proposed three to five foot high diversion

structure to be located at the 1,420 foot elevation in the steep basin, would be detrimental to fish.

Francis N. Diack who owns a cabin in the scenic waterway area of the Sandy River, wrote the board in opposition to the hydro, raising the same concerns.

"Since the Sandy River, including its tributaries (and that means Boulder Creek) is the great spawning ground for 20 percent of all Columbia River steelhead taken on the Oregon side (fish ladders are not 100 percent safe for fish), why would you want to cut out this food resource from our increasing population?" wrote Ms. Diack. "I hate to think of the day when there are no cans of salmon on the grocery shelves, thanks to the Water Policy Review Board for allowing small dams on the many tributaries of Oregon's watersheds."

SUHS programs rated by public, assigned budget priority

by SCOTT NEWTON

The unedited comments may have been the most interesting thing about a recent Sandy Union High School survey.

"I personally know of a student who graduated from Sandy Union High School who can't either read or write. This type of schooling goes on all the time at Sandy," wrote one respondent.

Some respondents said that teachers are overpaid, while others feel they should receive better pay. A few said that the administration might be top-heavy.

One wrote, "It is generally considered that we have a discipline problem at Sandy H.S. This problem should be cured by removing those who are unwilling to learn and conform."

Many, when commenting about physical education and extracurricular activities, brought up sports. Although many supported athletic programs, others did not.

"I get angry when my students come home with new practice uniforms whenever they turn out for a sport," wrote one.

Another said that physical education classes "should be taught with health and fitness in mind. Not many people can participate in football through (-out) life. It should not be overly stressed."

One respondent wrote, "I get angry with the sex education that's taught."

One thought that was echoed often was the fact that these are tough times, and that the private sector

wants the job of education done with efficiency.

"I commend you for seeking input from patrons and wish you strength in meeting the challenge of maintaining good programs while battling the ever tightening financial restrictions," wrote one.

The survey was a random sample of 440 patrons from two groups, registered voters and parents of SUHS students.

About 40 questionnaires were undeliverable, through the mail, resulting in a sample of 400.

The school had 190 surveys returned, of which 187 could be tabulated. The overall response rate was 47 percent.

A post card, and then a first-class follow-up letter, with another survey enclosed, may have had something to do with the high response rate.

Although parents were only 40 percent of the sampling, 56 percent responded. Approximately 63 percent said they voted in the last school board election, while 73 percent said they voted in the last budget election.

If the data is accurate, it indicates that parents vote in budget elections at a higher rate than do non-parent registered voters.

"We did not have any program—and this is what we were pleased about primarily—that did not have a better than average patron support factor," said Dennis Crow, assistant principal.

Respondents rated programs in two contexts. There was the patron support factor, and the budget priority factor.

Therefore, it was possible for

respondents to approve of a program, while giving that program a low rating as a budget priority.

That was the situation in art education. On a scale of one to five, with five being the best a program could do, art was given a 3.676 approval rating. As a budget priority, however, again on a scale of one to five, art was given a 2.676.

Vocational education received the highest patron support rating. Also doing well was counseling and guidance, mathematics, science and homemaking.

As far as budget priorities, mathematics, language education, science and vocational education were at the top of the list.

"I think the public is telling us that math, language and science are very high priority factors, and they're high here. We're a basic skills institution. We'll continue to be quite accountable in those areas," Crow said.

"I am very pleased that we had the

response rate we did, and it has really helped up in our budget preparations."

Crow said that the results of this survey are similar to a survey published in 1976.

Forty-five percent of those responding to the survey said that the goal of the people at SUHS should be to provide students with a general education.

Vocational education was perceived as the most important goal of 39 percent of the respondents, while college preparatory work was perceived as the most important goal of 16 percent.

"The philosophy at Sandy High School is you develop a program to meet the needs of a specific individual." Crow said, explaining that counselors work with students, their parents and teachers, to make educational plans for freshmen. If students want college preparatory classes,

they will be guided in that direction. Or, a balance between vocational and general education can be planned.

A similar survey has also been sent

to patrons as a special section in The Sandy Post. The results of that survey are currently being tabulated.



Dennis Crow

Program	BPF	PSF	BPF-PSF
Mathematics	4.733	4.163	+0.570
Language education	4.327	3.762	+0.565
Science	4.209	4.107	+0.102
Vocational ed.	3.982	4.606	-0.624
Social science	3.808	3.710	+0.094
Counseling	3.602	4.254	-0.652
Health education	3.575	3.933	-0.358
Homemaking ed.	3.145	4.195	-1.05
Physical education	3.115	3.896	-0.781
Support services	2.939	3.640	-0.701
Student activities	2.832	3.767	-0.935
Special services	2.792	3.535	-0.743
Art education	2.676	3.676	-1.00