

Southern Oregon residents wary of an energy-storing lake

A project outside Klamath Falls

By JES BURNS
Oregon Public Broadcasting

When Leonard Jespersen thinks about the Swan Lake North pumped hydro storage project, he gets the feels — but not in a good way.

“I mean everything they’re doing burns ya,” he says, driving his big red pickup on his ranch and organic alfalfa farm outside Klamath Falls.

The energy storage project is comprised of two interconnected 60-acre reservoirs, a powerhouse and 32 miles of new high-voltage power lines that will connect it to the grid.

Jespersen’s frustration kicked into high gear when he saw a project map showing those high-voltage power lines running over about 7 miles of his land.

If an energy project with power lines is approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and a financial settlement between the project and affected landowner is not reached, then the company can force the landowner — with compensation — to allow the use of the necessary land through eminent domain.

Jespersen’s concerned about property values, his views and a financial hit

to his operation. His truck crunches over a snow-covered red cinder farm road past wheeled sprinkler structures, called pivots, that stand dormant in his snowy fields.

“They’re going to take (a) 300-foot swath out of 13 of our pivot fields. So our sprinkler systems won’t work anymore with the power lines. They’ll hit the poles,” he says.

Either Jespersen will have to reconfigure his sprinkler system or he’ll have to stop irrigating where the poles block the sprinkler heads. And without irrigation in this dry patch of Oregon, not much grows.

“That’s why we ... want them to bury the lines,” he said.

Pumped hydro storage

To understand pumped hydro storage, all you really need to understand is how rechargeable batteries work. Consumers charge cell-phones when they have access to an electrical power outlet, so the battery can power phones when consumers don’t.

Imagine if that battery was a huge reservoir of water, high on a hill. That’s the idea behind the Swan Lake North pumped hydro storage project.

Project backer Rye Development is awaiting final approval from federal



Jes Burns/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Rye Development plans to build a new pumped hydro energy storage facility at this site.

regulators to build power lines and two 60-acre reservoirs: one that’s high on a ridge and the other far below. When electricity is plentiful and cheap, the facility will pump water up to the higher reservoir — essentially charging the battery. Then when demand rises, the water will be released downhill over turbines to generate electricity that can be sold back to the grid. And because demand is high, so, too, is the price that electricity gets sold for.

The capacity of the project is 393 megawatts — enough to meet the instanta-

neous demand of 290,000 to 390,000 homes.

Federal energy regulators’ decision on the project is expected by the end of April.

Pumped hydro storage projects are reviving an older technology that’s been made new again by the renewable energy boom.

“We haven’t built a new one of these in the U.S. since the early 1980s,” said Rye Development’s Erik Steimle.

Most of the early pumped hydro projects were tied to nuclear power plants, which ideally generated electricity at sustained rates, even if there wasn’t immediate

demand for the power from consumers. When demand was low, the plants would use the excess power to charge the hydro battery.

With variable renewable energy, like solar and wind, the need for storage is similar. For those renewable goals to become reality, there’s going to need to be electricity storage on the grid that can bank power when it’s sunny or windy and then release it when it isn’t.

“A great example is there are large amounts of daily solar oversupply that cannot be utilized fully in California,” said Steimle. “And

we’re going to continue to see that increase as time goes on. So the trade-off is we can curtail that and not deliver it or we can store it.”

Adding energy storage to the grid is one of the only ways to meet the renewable energy goals set forth by Western states.

Oregon aims to get to 50 percent renewable electricity production by 2040. California’s goal is 100 percent by 2045. Washington’s target is 15 percent by next year, but its Legislature is currently considering increasing that to 100 percent renewables within 25 years.

“As we move towards a grid that’s 100 percent renewable energy, we need to invest in energy storage infrastructure to meet the region’s energy capacity needs,” Steimle said.

In addition, Oregon Department of Energy analyst Rebecca Smith said both Oregon and California have grid storage mandates that are helping drive investment in storage projects. The Oregon Legislature is also considering a new carbon regulation program called cap and trade.

“If Oregon were to pass cap and trade ... that would be yet another driver that would further incentivize storage solutions because it would allow us to use more of that renewable energy,” Smith said.

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TONIGHT	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
39	56 38	64 45	67 46	66 45
Mostly cloudy	Mostly cloudy	Partly sunny and mild	Mild with plenty of sun	Mostly sunny and mild

ALMANAC
Astoria through Thursday.
Temperatures
High/low 51°/35°
Normal high/low 54°/39°
Record high 80° in 1926
Record low 27° in 1969
Precipitation
Thursday 0.00"
Month to date 1.34"
Normal month to date 3.49"
Year to date 13.93"
Normal year to date 20.88"

SUN AND MOON
Sunset tonight 7:21 p.m.
Sunrise Saturday 7:27 a.m.
Moonrise today 1:02 p.m.
Moonset today 3:54 a.m.

UNDER THE SKY
Tonight’s Sky: Mercury at inferior solar conjunction.
Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

TOMORROW’S TIDES
Astoria / Port Docks
Time High Time Low
9:23 a.m. 8.4 ft. 3:31 a.m. 3.7 ft.
11:27 p.m. 7.1 ft. 4:54 p.m. 0.2 ft.

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Atlanta	64	40	t	59	40	s
Boston	59	45	sh	49	31	pc
Chicago	40	27	sn	40	28	pc
Denver	40	17	s	42	20	s
Des Moines	42	24	pc	47	29	pc
Detroit	44	30	sh	38	23	c
El Paso	55	38	pc	52	38	c
Fairbanks	39	26	pc	39	27	pc
Honolulu	84	64	s	83	67	s
Indianapolis	41	28	c	43	29	s
Kansas City	47	28	pc	55	30	s
Las Vegas	65	47	s	71	51	s
Los Angeles	75	53	s	79	55	s
Memphis	55	35	s	56	37	s
Miami	84	70	pc	84	69	pc
Nashville	55	33	pc	55	32	s
New Orleans	59	50	c	58	49	sh
New York	66	43	t	50	32	pc
Oklahoma City	52	30	s	59	35	s
Philadelphia	68	44	t	52	32	pc
St. Louis	48	31	pc	50	35	s
Salt Lake City	46	28	s	51	31	s
San Francisco	64	45	s	64	48	pc
Seattle	60	41	pc	60	44	c
Washington, DC	72	45	c	54	35	s

TOMORROW’S NATIONAL WEATHER
Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

Permanent daylight saving in Oregon? ‘Hell yes,’ says Brown

Associated Press

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown endorsed a growing movement to make daylight saving time permanent.

When asked if she was in favor of a proposal to abolish the yearly time shift, the Democrat told reporters on Thursday: “Hell yes!”

“I think everyone’s done with the time change,” she added.

Washington state and California are also considering shifting to a permanent daylight saving time. Florida became the first state to approve such a change.

Any state law extending

daylight saving time would have to be approved by Congress.

Brown noted that this was one of the few issues where she agrees with President Donald Trump. The president tweeted earlier this week that daylight saving time year-round would be “OK with me!”

State hits pause button on chronic pain proposal

Associated Press

BEND — Oregon health officials have delayed consideration of a controversial change under the Oregon Health Plan that could have forced many patients with chronic pain off opioids.

The Bulletin reported that while chronic-pain patients cheered the development as a sign the agency wanted to back off the proposal, early indications suggest the plan may still proceed.

The proposal was scheduled to be considered by the Health Evidence Review Commission on Thursday. But Oregon Health Authority director Patrick Allen asked for more time to allow the agency to review a potential conflict of interest that arose with a consultant who had worked on the proposal.

The proposal under consideration would establish new coverage under the Oregon Health Plan

for five chronic pain conditions that have not been covered in the past. That would allow patients with those conditions to receive opioid and nonopioid medications, as well as a range of nonpharmacological services.

But the proposed policy has been controversial because of initial language that would have forced patients with those conditions to be tapered off of opioids within a year.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY

Ecola Creek Watershed Council, 4:30 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St., Cannon Beach.
Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

LOTTERIES

OREGON

Thursday’s Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 7-5-7-6
4 p.m.: 0-9-3-9
7 p.m.: 2-6-7-0
10 p.m.: 2-2-9-3

Thursday’s Lucky Lines: 02-08-10-14-FREE-20-24-26-30
Estimated jackpot: \$22,000

WASHINGTON

Thursday’s Daily Game:

5-3-4
Thursday’s Keno: 04-06-09-10-12-16-18-19-28-30-33-44-45-46-48-51-56-60-75-77
Thursday’s Match 4: 01-04-07-22

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