

Fight over plan to bottle water in Cascade Locks is on ballot

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press



AP Photo/Don Ryan

In this May 5 photo, Oxbow fish hatchery manager Erin AnDyke looks out over crystal clear spring water from Little Herman Creek, which feeds the hatchery facility in Cascade Locks. A proposal for Nestle to build a water bottling plant in Cascade Locks is set to be one of the most heated battles in the state's May 17 primary. Town leaders and some residents want it, but others are fiercely opposed.

CASCADE LOCKS — This little town, set below steep, forested mountainsides at the bottom of the Columbia River Gorge, stubbornly persists, eight decades after a dam was built downstream, drowning the navigational locks that gave the place its name and main income.

Today, unemployment in Cascade Locks is 19 percent, four times the rate of the rest of Oregon. Many businesses have gone the way of the Scenic Winds Motel, whose cabins are crumbling, the roofs greening with moss, a no trespassing sign posted underneath towering firs.

So when Nestle, the Swiss transnational company, approached with a plan to build a water bottling plant from a local spring — plus a promise of 50 jobs and annual revenues of hundreds of thousands of dollars — town leaders jumped at it. So did many of the 1,200 residents.

But the opposition — including residents, Native American tribes and orchard owners — has grown so fierce that the project landed on Oregon's May 17 primary ballot. It's now one of the primary's most heated battles.

Measure 14-55 asks the voters of surrounding Hood River County to ban the commercial production and transport of bottled water.

The campaign has pitted neighbor against neighbor and demonstrates Cascade Locks' bigger dilemma of

generating income without spoiling the jaw-dropping scenery that makes the place special.

Blue signs opposing the project and red ones in favor are staked in lawns and affixed to fences all over town.

"Right now, we have two groups of people fighting tooth and nail over it. I've lost friends over it, just because I put up a sign saying no to the measure," said Heather Greene, a bronze sculptor whose large-than-life statue of Sacagawea adorns a city park. She wants Nestle there.

Farm and orchard owners have noted Hood River County experienced drought in 2015. Water bottlers would compete with their orchards and farms for the growing population of the town of Hood River and its shrinking water supply, they said.

But rainfall isn't consistent across the county.

Cascade Locks has water to spare, said city manager Gordon Zimmerman. The town gets an average of 77 inches of rain a year. That's about 2.5 times more than Hood River, the county seat, located about 20 miles east on Interstate 84.

Nestle's plan to use 118 million gallons of water per year — which probably wouldn't happen before 2020 if its allowed — would require some juggling.

The company would pay Cascade Locks an undetermined amount for the water. But the town must first swap well water for spring water with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The state, which uses the spring-fed Little Herman Creek for its Oxbow Hatchery, has

already agreed to trade.

Hatchery manager Erin AnDyke noted that the crystal-clear spring water is pathogen free and is gravity-fed into the hatchery, while the city water will be from a well and must be pumped uphill. Pumps can break down, he noted.

"We're dealing with a live product down there," AnDyke said. "You go to bed thinking, 'Are they going to be all right?'"

The city would then sell its new share of spring water to Nestle for its Arrowhead bottled water, branded as sourced from mountain springs.

In drought conditions, Nestle, which would be entitled to 0.5 cubic feet per second of spring water, could be using half of the flow, though it could be only one-tenth after wetter months, AnDyke said.

Studies by the fish and wildlife department and one commissioned by Nestle say the hatchery won't be adversely affected, and that conditions will be virtually unchanged for wild salmon swimming in the Columbia that use Herman Creek Cove to cool off during hot weather.

Many folks aren't buying it.

They also object to trucks making 200 trips a day to and from the plant, which would be in a business park and not next to the springs. Oregon was the first state to enact a bottle bill, in 1971, to encourage recycling. Many here reject contributing to plastic waste.

In April, Orvie Danzuka, a leader of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, appeared before the Cascade Locks City Council and cited global warming, salmon die-offs and water conservation as reasons to reject the bottling plant.

"I was told by my elders that if you start selling your resources, then they'll go away," he said amid the pounding of drums and chants and ululations from tribal members.

Nestle — also facing a battle in drought-hit southern California over its long-standing use of spring water in San Bernardino National Forest — says it's being unfairly singled out by Measure 14-55. The proposal would "limit our ability to pursue good jobs in a clean industry for Cascade Locks," the company says.

Dave Palais of Nestle pointed out only 1.38 gallons of water are required to produce one gallon of Nestle bottled water, compared to an average of five gallons of water for one gallon of beer.

Thunder Island Brewery sits right along the Columbia, near where the Bridge of the Gods — part of the Pacific Crest Trail — links Oregon to Washington. Head brewer Brian Perkey said the brewery uses municipal water and pays for it.

But for Perkey, the main issue is not water.

"I see no place on this green earth for water in a plastic bottle," he said. "Why would I want to support people putting water into a plastic bottle for profit?"

Standoff defendant pleads guilty to stealing cameras

PORTLAND (AP) — A man who joined the security team during the takeover of a national wildlife refuge in Oregon has pleaded guilty to stealing government property.

Scott Willingham was with occupation spokesman Robert "LaVoy" Finicum on Jan. 15 when Finicum took down surveillance cameras at a substation near Burns.

Willingham is the first refuge defendant to enter a guilty plea, but he's not one of the 26 people scheduled to go to trial later this year in the larger conspiracy case stemming from the 41-day takeover.

Under a plea agreement, Willingham is expected to face six months in prison. He's agreed to undergo a mental health evaluation and spend up to several months at a residential re-entry program.

The Oregonian reports that Willingham said "absolutely, without question" when a federal judge asked Thursday if entering the guilty plea was the right decision.

Corrections

Jacob Arnold will remain the head coach of the Hermiston High School varsity lacrosse team and Krystofer Lopez will coach the junior varsity team. Incorrect information appeared on Page 3A and 1B of the May 11 edition of the East Oregonian. The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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AccuWeather.com Forecast

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly sunny and very warm	Not as warm	Mostly cloudy, a shower; cooler	Partly sunny and warmer	Sunny to partly cloudy

PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

82° 50° 71° 52° 63° 51° 72° 49° 72° 49°

HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST

85° 54° 77° 55° 68° 53° 76° 52° 76° 52°

ALMANAC

PENDLETON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	83°	55°
Normals	79°	46°
Records	102° (1931)	29° (1916)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.17"
Normal month to date 0.45"
Year to date 4.57"
Last year to date 3.61"
Normal year to date 5.60"

HERMISTON
through 3 p.m. yesterday

TEMPERATURE	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	86°	44°
Normals	72°	46°
Records	99° (1993)	31° (2012)

PRECIPITATION
24 hours ending 3 p.m. 0.00"
Month to date 0.59"
Normal month to date 0.46"
Year to date 3.57"
Last year to date 2.16"
Normal year to date 4.48"

SUN AND MOON

	First	Full	Last	New
	May 13	May 21	May 29	June 4

REGIONAL FORECAST

Coastal Oregon: Partly sunny today; however, more clouds in the south; pleasant across the north.

Eastern and Central Oregon: Partly sunny and very warm today. Partly cloudy tonight.

Eastern Washington: Mostly sunny today. Partly cloudy tonight.

Cascades: Partly sunny and warmer today.

Western Washington: Partly sunny today.

Northern California: Partly sunny today. A passing shower at the coast tonight.

REGIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Astoria	67	50	pc	60	49	sh
Baker City	82	45	pc	72	43	pc
Bend	80	49	pc	62	41	t
Brookings	60	49	c	57	49	sh
Burns	81	46	pc	70	40	pc
Enterprise	78	49	pc	70	45	pc
Eugene	79	52	pc	61	50	sh
Heppner	80	51	s	69	48	pc
Hermiston	85	54	s	77	55	pc
John Day	86	55	pc	70	45	pc
Klamath Falls	80	45	pc	61	40	t
La Grande	81	49	pc	71	48	pc
Meacham	79	48	pc	69	46	pc
Medford	88	57	pc	67	51	c
Newport	57	49	pc	56	48	sh
North Bend	60	53	pc	59	52	sh
Ontario	80	53	s	81	51	pc
Pasco	85	55	s	77	53	pc
Pendleton	82	50	s	71	52	pc
Portland	87	56	pc	66	54	sh
Redmond	82	46	pc	66	42	c
Salem	84	52	pc	62	51	sh
Spokane	73	49	s	72	51	pc
Ukiah	78	48	pc	66	46	pc
Vancouver	85	55	pc	65	53	sh
Walla Walla	81	56	s	70	53	pc
Yakima	85	57	s	80	56	c

WORLD CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Beijing	76	51	pc	57	52	sh
Hong Kong	87	78	pc	87	80	c
Jerusalem	82	69	c	92	73	s
London	67	44	pc	56	41	pc
Mexico City	79	51	pc	78	53	t
Moscow	60	40	s	63	44	s
Paris	71	45	t	56	39	pc
Rome	68	58	s	66	56	t
Seoul	77	55	pc	77	57	pc
Sydney	76	55	pc	77	56	s
Tokyo	75	62	s	73	58	pc

WINDS

(in mph)	Today	Saturday
Boardman	NNE 6-12	N 7-14
Pendleton	N 6-12	NW 6-12

UV INDEX TODAY

1 4 7 7 4 1

8 a.m. 10 a.m. Noon 2 p.m. 4 p.m. 6 p.m.
0-2, Low 3-5, Moderate 6-7, High; 8-10, Very High; 11+, Extreme

The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

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NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

National Summary: Rain will soak New England, while showers and locally gusty storms extend from the mid-Atlantic to the Gulf Coast and Southwest states today. Severe storms will erupt over the central Plains.

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 103° in Thermal, Calif. **Low 18°** in Angel Fire, N.M.

NATIONAL CITIES

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	85	58	s	82	57	pc
Atlanta	81	56	s	82	53	s
Atlanta City	65	54	r	67	48	t
Baltimore	73	52	t	74	46	t
Billing	50	34	pc	56	40	c
Birmingham	79	54	pc	79	52	s
Boise	87	56	r	83	52	pc
Boston	65	56	r	72	50	pc
Charleston, SC	89	63	t	88	61	t
Charleston, WV	73	52	pc	63	41	t
Chicago	66	41	r	52	36	pc
Cleveland	67	51	pc	56	39	sh
Dallas	84	66	s	76	58	pc
Denver	72	44	s	65	43	pc
Detroit	68	47	pc	56	36	sh
El Paso	91	65	s	90	65	pc
Fairbanks	78	56	pc	79	55	s
Fargo	48	29	c	52	36	pc
Honolulu	83	72	c	84	73	pc
Houston	86	67	t	87	66	t
Indianapolis	68	45	s	54	38	c
Jacksonville	90	62	t	88	59	s
Kansas City	74	43	t	57	41	s
Las Vegas	97	72	s	96	68	pc
Little Rock	82	59	s	73	52	pc
Los Angeles	75	59	pc	72	59	pc

	Today			Sat.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Louisville	73	55	s	60	44	c
Memphis	79	58	s	70	51	s
Miami	87	73	s	89	73	t
Millwaukee	63	40	sh	51	36	c
Minneapolis	50	34	sh	52	35	s
Nashville	76	55	s	68	43	s
New Orleans	86	67	pc	87	68	s
New York City	66	57	r	73	48	t
Oklahoma City	81	52	r	62	46	sh
Omaha	71	38	t	60	37	s
Philadelphia	73	56	r	75	47	pc
Phoenix	103	77	s	100	74	s
Portland, ME	64	49	r	70	47	pc
Providence	67	54	r	72	48	t
Raleigh	79	55	t	81	49	s
Rapid City	54	29	pc	56	32	c
reno	85	56	pc	74	45	pc
Sacramento	79	52	pc	77	53	pc
St. Louis	77	47	s	61	43	s
Salt Lake City	84	59	s	84	60	pc
San Diego	72	62	pc	70	62	pc
San Francisco	65	53	pc	67	54	c
Seattle	82	56	pc	73	53	c
Tucson	99	69	s	95	67	t
Washington, DC	76	57	t	75	49	t
Wichita	82	47	t	61	46	c

Weather (W): s-sunny