

Coal company dumps Morrow Pacific Project

Port of Morrow will continue appeal for dock

By George Plaven
East Oregonian



E.J. Harris/East Oregonian

Lighthouse Resources has abandoned their efforts to build a coal terminal at this spot at the Port of Morrow in Boardman. The Port of Morrow however is pursuing their efforts to build an export terminal on this site.

the Morrow Pacific Project in 2011 as a way to reach Asian markets via the Pacific Northwest.

But in 2014, the Oregon Department of State Lands denied a remove-fill permit needed to build the Coyote Island Terminal at the Port of Morrow. According to the state's decision, the dock would have interfered

with usual and accustomed tribal fisheries.

Earlier this year, Lighthouse also gained full ownership of Millennium Bulk Terminals in Longview, Washington, which would ship roughly 48.5 million tons of coal. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement of the

project, which is expected to generate more than 2,000 direct and indirect jobs.

In addition, Lighthouse started sending coal to South Korea earlier this month through Westshore Terminals in Vancouver, British Columbia. As a result, Lighthouse CEO Everett King said the company has decided to move on from Morrow Pacific.

"Our ability to now ship to our customers in Asia allows us to achieve our short-term goals while we continue to focus on further long-term growth at Millennium," King said.

King said the decision made by the Department of State Lands was "unprecedented," and prevented Lighthouse from adding trade, jobs and economic development in Oregon.

"Though we are disappointed for our Morrow Pacific Project supporters, we are very excited to commence delivery of products to our customers," King said.

Though Lighthouse has stepped aside, the Port of Morrow will continue to fight to

build a new dock. Joe Taylor, president of the Port Commission, said they have already invested around \$50 million in rail infrastructure to serve the site.

"This new dock will allow us to ship commodities in the same manner as our existing facilities," Taylor said. "Without this dock, hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars are at stake for Morrow and Umatilla counties, and Oregon."

Gary Neal, the port's general manager, said he feels the state's decision to deny the dock permit was politically motivated. Coyote Island Terminal would be built along a stretch of river in the port's East Beach Industrial Park, between two existing terminals: one to ship grain, and another to ship biofuels.

Neal is not sure what commodities might be handled at the new dock, but unless they build now, he said companies will continue to take their business elsewhere.

"If you don't have something available, those opportu-

nities pass you by," Neal said. "It's unfortunate we lost Lighthouse for the jobs and capital investment. That commodity is moving. It's just moving through Canada now."

Chuck Sams, spokesman for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, said the tribes maintain their stance that the project would harm tribal fishing rights guaranteed by the Treaty of 1855.

"Again, we're not against economic development in any way, unless it interferes with or infringes on our treaty rights, which are guaranteed by both the treaty and the U.S. Constitution," Sams said.

The Coyote Island Terminal is just one of two remaining sites for major industrial development in the John Day Pool of the Columbia River, Neal said. The Department of State Lands found the proposal did not adequately consider alternatives that would have less impact on the river and tribal fisheries.

"We just need to convince the (state) they were incorrect," Neal said.

FRIENDS

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Half of the money from all the banquets in the state comes back to the Oregon Friends of NRA State Fund Committee from which grants and scholarships are funded.

Grants in Wallowa County have supported shooting sports and provided donations to Divide Camp (a hunting camp for disabled veterans) and Creating Memories, a hunting and fishing organization for disabled people.

They've also funded range improvements for Eagle Cap Shooters Association and the Wallowa Rod and Gun Club, scholarships for local high school seniors, youth awards for kids to visit the state capital (and maybe Washington, D.C.) and more.

According to organizer Ste-

phen Wolfe, Wallowa County has received more than \$200,000 in grants and scholarships over the years.

Saturday's attendees enjoyed live and silent auctions of gun-related prizes, special drawings, door prizes, a prime rib dinner and plenty of conversation with friends.

Scores of local businesses and individuals support the event through donations of goods and money. Name-brand manufacturers of firearms and hunting-related items, along with hunting guides from Africa and Alaska, donate prizes.

The makeup of the crowd might surprise some.

Auctioneer Luke Wanochil of Hayden Lake, Idaho, represents a segment of the crowd in that he is not currently an NRA member. He is, nevertheless, a supporter of the work of the NRA. "I love what it stands for — the Second Amend-

ment," he said.

Steve Rogers of Joseph, who happens to be the Wallowa County Sheriff in his professional life, attended the banquet and auction as a private citizen. He represents another segment of the crowd. He's not a member of the NRA. He is, however, an individual with a broad view of firearm ownership. He's got a professional understanding of the relationship between firearms and crime, is one of the founding members of the Eagle Cap Shooters Association so as to provide a safe training site for shooters, and he understands the rural relationship to firearms.

"When I look out at this crowd I see all my friends and the people I work for," he said. "What I see is 'normal.' These are just 100 percent, card carrying, blue-blood Americans."

The fact that many of his friends and neighbors have

gun safes full of multiple firearms does not alarm him in the slightest.

"Personally, I think the general populace should be able to own any gun they want," Rogers said. "What business is it of mine to mess with people who are lawfully carrying a gun? It's their Second Amendment right. Of course, I'm not in favor of mentally ill or criminals having guns."

Ken Hauxwell of Enterprise, a significant sponsor for the Wallowa County event, has been an NRA member off and on for nearly 40 years.

He recalled learning how to shoot with his grandfather, which lead to more memories of great hunting and fishing experiences. He gets to the Second Amendment after he's put gun ownership and his relationship with guns into that rural, familial and responsibility-related context.

"I think the most important thing to me is that the NRA stands for our Second Amendment rights," he said. "They are defending our rights to have freedoms and constitutional rights — and the right to have guns to protect my family. The first amendment gave us the right to have the religion of our choice and the second gave us the right to bear arms. These are our rights — the rights that this country was founded on. In the past the real threats to the country came from outside, but I think anymore (the right to bear arms) could be necessary for protection from threats on the inside."

The ability to grasp the nuances of gun ownership issues is not absent in the Wallowa County Friends of the NRA crowd. But the approach to any management of those nuances is predicated on protection of Second Amendment rights.

Wolfe knows the balance of individual viewpoints is what makes the Wallowa County event such a success. The Friends of NRA are the non-profit, non-partisan branch of the NRA, so it's no surprise that those family traditions of hunting and fishing often are mentioned first by attendees of the event. From an economical standpoint, hunting and fishing also count for a lot nationwide. Back in 2012, Wolfe said, he did a little research on the economic impact of hunting and fishing and found the sports accounted for \$38 billion in business.

"In the process of protecting our Second Amendment rights we all come together from every walk of life to enjoy the camaraderie of other gun owners," Wolfe said. "We have a lot of fun and we're very grateful for all the support we receive."

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