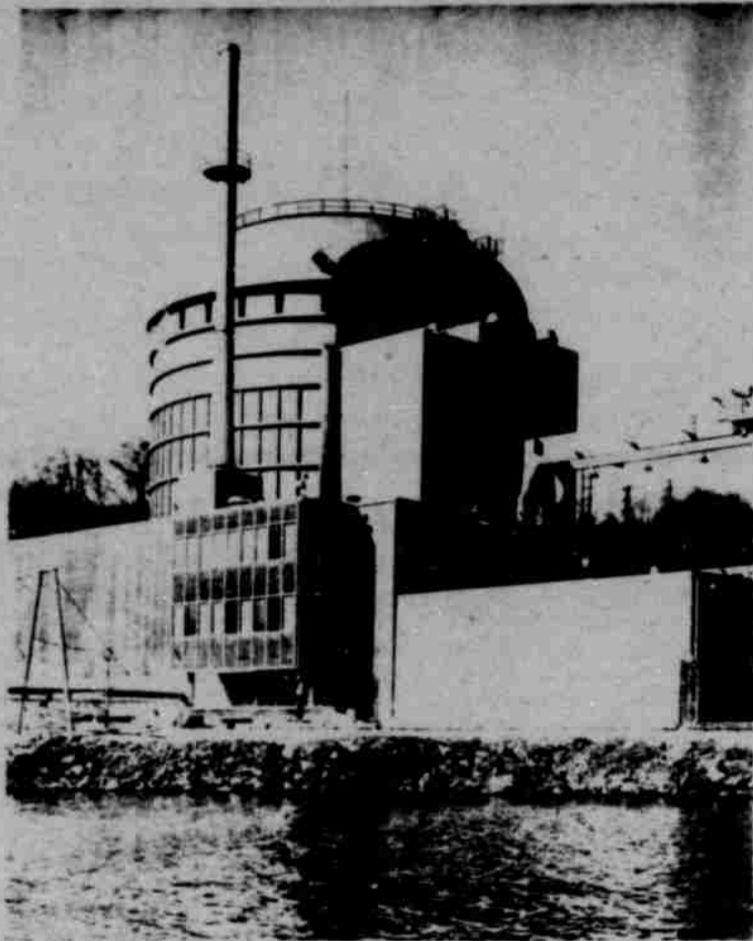


Soil & Water Conservation District

Annual Report

*Good Land Use
and
Resource
Opportunities*



Nuclear Siting & Navy Bombing Range

By HENRY GANTENBEIN
Farmers are the "lifeline" of our country. They have a basic philosophy born of living and working with nature. They have taken a lead in the nation's progress from the very beginning. It is this progress in which we are now involved.

The time is right for new ideas, new approaches and new methods to be put to work. This is why we are anxious for this bold plan, multiple use of coolant water from nuclear power generating plants, to become a reality as soon as possible.

Morrow County and Western Umatilla County have 70 percent of Oregon's irrigable land with available water below elevation 1000 MSL. This land will produce early crops and a variety of crops. These lands have been proven; 6,800 acres intensively irrigated land in Morrow County produced \$6,180,000 of the finest potatoes in 1972.

We would be extremely pleased to have Portland General Electric Company to come to Morrow County and help our district to irrigate the dry land.

Relocation of the Navy to another suitable site is essential. The bombing range block contains some of the best soils in the heart of an irrigation development. The increased value of the bombing range as irrigated cropland indicates the best use of the resource.

District Consolidation

By DICK McELLAGOTT
1972 was the year of the merger for the Heppner and Boardman Soil and Water Conservation Districts. A joint meeting of the two boards was held in Boardman for the districts to legally merge. This meeting was conducted by Chuck Liles of the State Commission staff.

This meeting was held December 5 in Boardman and was the culmination of a years exploratory talks, public hearings, joint meetings, and finally, approval by each board. At the December meeting the following supervisors were elected for the new Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District: Ken Turner, chairman; Henry Gantenbein, vice-chairman; Arnold Hoffman, treasurer; Dick McElligott, secretary. Other supervisors elected were Gary Grieb, Fred Frederickson, and Rudy Bergstrom.

At the present time we are working to consolidate the finances of the two districts, dispose of some of the equipment and clear up outstanding debts. When this is squared away we feel that we can develop a budget and have a district that functions as well as previously but with greater economy. We know that we will save money where we had duplication in dues to our state and national organizations, and that our reports and publications will no longer be duplicated.

We feel that the greatest advantage of the consolidation will be that we now have a district whose boundaries are the same as the county boundaries and for this reason we should be able to maintain a closer working relation with the County Court and the County ASCS Committee.

As Leverett Richards of The Oregonian put it recently, the Boardman area Friday welcomed with open arms Portland General Electric's proposed nuclear power plant on the Boardman industrial area.

About 100 residents of Morrow, Gilliam and Umatilla counties turned out for a public hearing held by the Oregon Nuclear Thermal Energy Council. Of the 25 public witnesses, not one was against PGE's proposed nuclear reactor.

No one expressed any concern about radiation or other hazards.

"We're not concerned about hazards. We are interested in taxes," said Dorris Graves of Hardman.

"We're in more danger on the freeway than we are living next door to a nuclear reactor," said Mrs. Joe Bartlett of Boardman. "We know. We lived next door to the Hanford Works for years."

The hearing was called

Our first thoughts of consolidation came from joint meetings held during the past four years in which we discussed problems with new land development and attempted to organize a wind erosion control district. We met with no success in organizing a blow control district, not for lack of need, but because there were so few people living within the proposed district and the election laws under those circumstances made it unfeasible. We now feel that we can best meet this problem by promoting the wind erosion control recommendation published under the leadership of the Columbia Blue Mountain RC&D.

specifically to determine "the desirability and feasibility" of locating PGE's plant 7.7 miles from the target on the Navy's practice bombing range.

John Grund, PGE nuclear safety engineer, submitted a detailed analysis of the chances of a bomber hitting the nuclear plant, which showed the chances were less than one in 100 million if the Navy would change its present approach patterns, as Rear Adm. John Tierney, Navy commander, promised to do.

"The probability of an individual getting killed by lightning is 10 times higher than the probability of an aircraft hitting the PGE nuclear site," Grund concluded. "For all practical purposes, the chances of an accident are zero," he told the council.

Richard McElligott, president of the Morrow County Wheat Growers Association, called PGE's proposed safety measures "needless overkill."

He said that as a former military pilot, he was not concerned about the danger of a Navy bomber hitting a nuclear plant. "In fact, construction of the nuclear plant will serve as a checkpoint and help the pilot hit the target," he said.

H.H. Phillips, PGE's vice president and general manager, testified that the probability of an airplane crash was so insignificant as to require no additional hardening of the plant. But he added, "The company is willing to further harden the plant at a cost of \$8 million to \$20 million if required."

Dean Smith of The Oregon Journal reported: "YOU CAN'T ask for any-

thing more from the Navy," said Rupert W. Kennedy, coordinator of the Port of Morrow. They've offered to move, but if they can't they've offered to co-exist."

PGE officials reiterated testimony presented Monday at a Portland hearing, suggesting they could "live with" the dummy bombing range and would "harden" their plant to protect against a plane crash.

When PGE filed its notice of intention to build the plant, last February, it was assumed that the Navy range would be vacated by 1980 when the plant is to become operational. However, Adm. John Tierney, commander of the Navy's A6 jet squadrons, said a new site has not been located for the range.

HE SAID the Navy could not leave the Boardman site until early 1978 -- assuming Congress appropriates about \$10 million for relocation. He indicated that the appropriation is not likely in the near future.

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Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District SUPERVISORS

Ken Turner, Chairman
Henry Gantenbein, Vice Chairman
Dick McElligott, Secretary
Arnold Hoffman, Treasurer
Rudy Bergstrom
Gary Grieb
Fred Frederickson