

A social impact study

How will Willow Creek Dam affect Heppner?

What changes in the social structure of a small community can be expected when that village is faced with its largest single alteration since 1903?

Specifically, what will be Heppner's internal reactions to the Willow Creek Dam and lake being proposed by the Army Corp of Engineers?

Funded by the Corps, Robert W. Gardner, sociologist for Walla Walla College, visited Heppner during April and May with his social research methods class composed of upper division sociology students. His objective: give the Corps a thorough social impact assessment and an idea of the changes which may take place as a result of the proposed flood control project.

Keyed to a keen state of awareness, the study team entered Heppner for two days and one night and returned with information in the form of interviews, questionnaires, observations and documents.

Using these four methods, students investigated the social structure of Heppner in relation to economics, politics, education, recreation, religion, health, communications and local associations.

"Theoretically," says Gardner, "a major change such as the construction of Willow Creek Dam will bring about secondary changes throughout the community, affecting everyone even if it is in a small way."

Heppner is a small town of about 1,429 people. It is a town that began as a service center for stockmen raising horses,

cattle and sheep and then transformed to a center for agriculture, an activity that is its economic mainstay to this day.

Originally settled by a people that could endure tough conditions, Heppner's residents still display an individuality that encompasses the strength and friendliness associated with an independent way of life.

"In every case but one, the residents were willing to give their time and information when asked to answer the 99 items on the questionnaire," said Gardner. "And, no one refused to sit for an interview."

Communities like Heppner are less adaptable to change than most. Variations occur rarely and normally only in

small increments. The question of whether or not to build the dam is the biggest political issue in town, according to the findings. The dam is commonly discussed in local gathering spots, especially when the subject is spurred by the presence in town of a Corps or college study team.

Although Heppner has been flooded nine times during the last 30 years, the most destructive flood occurred in 1903 when a "leaping, foaming wall of water, 40 feet in height" roared through the small town tearing buildings from their foundations, and carrying trees, people and buildings along with it. That flood killed 247 people.

The destructiveness of floods has its bright side in terms of community spirit.

Gardner discovered that the act of rebuilding and reestablishing their way of life after each of the floods has bound the already close-knit community into a working team. As one long time resident put it, "You really haven't become a citizen of Heppner until you have gone through a flood."

In the economic sense, the main short term effect of the Willow Creek Dam will be the influx of 150 to 200 workers that will be required for construction. Their purchasing power will cause a quick rise in the local economy. However, when construction is completed, the workers will depart and the economic boost will go with them. The search for housing by these workers may cause a problem in this

small community where dwellings are in short supply.

The issue of flood control has been used as a "political football." The subject has been used during recent elections and most city leaders have played an active role in pushing for a solution. These individuals have gone to the State Capitol in Salem, the Corps of Engineers in Walla Walla and their congressional delegation in Washington, D.C., to speak in favor of the project.

Gardner found that in speaking to the townspeople, a decidedly different purpose comes through. Few people talk about the importance of flood control. Most of them speak in terms of recreation that they they hope will be

associated with the reservoir to be formed behind the dam.

The local educational system will feel the influence of the project when the children of construction workers move to Heppner and attend classes. The added number of students will increase the ratio of pupils to each teacher although the schools in Heppner are not considered overcrowded by comparative standards. Some teachers also felt that the reservoir and its surroundings would be utilized heavily for school social outings and field trips. This consideration of recreation continued to surface throughout many personal contacts made during the study.

Some of the early Heppner settlers were very religious while others were more interested in drinking and

gambling. The flood of 1903 changed what was a wild, boisterous, western town into a community of more serious-minded people. Religion took on a new meaning as a result of the disaster.

Some clergymen look on the new dam as a recreation site that will lure their congregation away from services on Sunday morning. The findings indicate that the possibility for racial discrimination exists in the churches, schools and the community as a whole since some of the construction workers may be of minority groups and Heppner is a nearly totally white community.

The added population during construction will also put an increased load on local health services and private

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Dam project clears another hurdle

Funds to begin the construction phase of Willow Creek Dam project has been approved by a Senate-House conference on the Public Works Appropriations Bill, Sen. Mark Hatfield told the Gazette-Times Monday.

Hatfield and Cong. Al Ullman called inclusion of the funds "a signal victory for the people of Oregon."

Hatfield and Ullman said the \$450,000 to provide funds for land acquisition and road relocation is "a critical step toward construction of this project. Inclusion of the funds finally gets this project over the hump and into the construction phase," they said in a joint statement.

Hatfield, who led the Republican Senate conferees, said he hammered away at the conferees with examples of property damage and human suffering caused by Willow Creek flooding.

House members have a reputation for hanging tough against such Senate budget additions, the senator said, "but Al (Ullman) had done a good job making the House conferees aware of the importance of this project to our state."

"I am pleased at the cooperation between us," Ullman said, "that allowed this key project to continue."

Oregon related items in the Public Works Appropriations Bill fared extremely well in the conference, the senator stated. Of the \$11.5 million in Senate budget additions, \$11 million remained in the final conference version of the bill.

Chances of the president impounding Willow Creek funds are slight, Hatfield believes, because the final budget recommendation is \$8 million less than the president's own budget recommendation for public works.

Stiff sentences for doe killers

Two men were fined \$305 each in Justice Court Thursday for illegal possession of a doe.

Harvey Edward Modrall, 813 W. Birch St., Walla Walla, and Wayne Elwin Cross, Heppner, received the fines from Justice of the Peace Charles O'Connor. They were given the choice of paying the fine or serving 60 days in the county jail.

The two were arrested July 25 by State Police Officer Victor L. Groshens, who stopped Modrall for a traffic violation and found deer entrails and other waste from a butchered deer in the man's car.

Modrall admitted he and Cross had shot the deer in the Opal Butte area south of Heppner, and that the venison could be found at the Cross residence. At that residence, Groshens found 100 pounds of fresh venison in the bathtub.

Modrall was fined \$17 for the traffic violation that led to the discovery of the butchered doe.

Both pled guilty to the illegal possession charge, but Cross protested that "We killed it for the meat, and didn't spoil any of it."

"But you did open the season a little early," Judge O'Connor replied as he set the fines.

Cross asked if he could pay the court \$50 a month on the fine, an offer the court declined. Judge O'Connor then ordered Officer Groshens to book both men into county jail at Pendleton to start serving their sentences unless they raised the money immediately.

Both began attempting to raise the fine money. Officer Groshens said the meat was "well butchered," and had it stored in a locker in Heppner until the trial, after which it was turned over to the authorities for distribution to welfare recipients.

The rifle used in killing the doe was confiscated.

\$10,000 worth of hay lost in fire

Last Wednesday afternoon a fire of unknown origin started at the Walter Wright Ranch, Heppner, and burned an estimated 250-300 tons of hay valued at \$10,000.

"Although some of the hay was from last year, with the present shortage of hay, this would have seen us through

the winter," Don Anderson said.

Some of this year's crop of hay lying in the field was destroyed, but most of the bales remained untouched.

A truck parked near the haystack, also completely destroyed, was blamed by some as the cause of the fire. The

truck had a short in the engine, and a spark could have ignited the hay, some speculated.

The fire burned an estimated 25-30 acres and came within 10 feet of burning a tractor, baler and a tank of diesel fuel.

According to Wright, it was an unusual fire. Although it

reduced the hay to a pile of ashes, there was hardly any smoke from the blaze. In fact, some of the friends and neighbors who helped fight the fire didn't know the location of the fire, because they couldn't see any smoke.

The fire was completely controlled early Friday.

Timber lost by fire

A "man caused" fire broke out last Thursday and burned three acres of heavy timber in the southwest part of the Heppner area, also called the John Day area.

The fire, which began between 5 and 6 p.m., was slowed by the work of 175 firefighters, 13 pieces of equipment and 8,000 gallons of fire retardant.

The area is heavily timbered, and the U.S. Department of Forestry considers itself fortunate the fire was controlled before it had time to spread.

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WILLIAM A WOLFF IN ROTC TRAINING

Cadet William A. Wolff, 21, son of Dr. and Mrs. Wallace H. Wolff, Heppner, is receiving practical work in military leadership at the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps advanced summer camp at Ft. Lewis, Wash., June 8 - July 19.

Wheat harvest yields half of last year's

Morrow County is facing a near disaster as far as wheat production is concerned, according to Harold Kerr, county extension agent.

He estimates that wheat and barley production in this area is 50 per cent under last year's yield. With the wheat harvest about 75 percent complete in Morrow County, the average crop is running about 14 or 15 bushels to the acre. Last year's average was 25 bushels per acre.

There are about 153,000 acres of wheat to harvest this year and 24,000 acres of barley. Wheat acreage is up 10,000 acres over last year; barley is about the same. Barley yields are about 1,000 pounds to the acre.

Lowest wheat harvest yield

reported in the county is 1 1/2 bushels per acre. Orville Cutsforth Jr., is reported to have one of the highest yields per acre. On 60 acres, heavily irrigated and fertilized, he is harvesting about 110 bushels per acre. Other ranchers report yields of 10-20 bushels per acre.

Bill Rietman apparently opened the harvest season on July 2. Most harvesting began in the period of July 9-16, should be completed by the end of the week.

This is the second year of drought for Morrow County, and unless there is rain soon, and plenty of it, next year's crops are expected to be poor.

Kerr said the improved price of wheat this year will help offset the reduced yields.

Farmers were selling wheat in Pendleton this week for as much as \$3.61 a bushel, the highest price in history. What with heavy exports already authorized to Taiwan, China and Russia, forecasters see \$4 a bushel a possibility. Farmers are being advised in some of their farm journals to sell only what poor grade of wheat is necessary to meet current expenses, and hold the best for higher prices.

Barley was bringing from \$105 to \$109 a ton this week.

Kerr attributed some of the blame for short yields to the April frost that hit crops at heading time.

In Portland last week, both South Korea and Taiwan bought wheat at \$3.35 per bushel.

Liquor, speed brings \$610 fine for youth

Donald Wayne Papineau, 19, Lexington, was fined a total of \$610 Tuesday by Justice of the Peace Charles O'Connor on charges of driving while under the influence of liquor and trying to elude police officers.

Papineau also had his driver's license revoked for 90 days and received 30 days in the county jail, later suspended with the stipulation that if Papineau appears in court on any charge of being under the influence of liquor, he must begin serving his 30-day sentence immediately.

Judge O'Connor was lenient to the extent that he permitted Papineau to drive a vehicle to and from work on a temporary permit so that Papineau can pay the fine.

The youth was arrested early Monday morning, July 30, after Papineau refused to stop his vehicle when ordered by police to do so. After a wild chase that covered 15 miles, Papineau was apprehended by Heppner Police after he drove his car into a dead-end street.

He was then placed in Morrow County Jail and later released pending his trial Tuesday.

Also arrested for speeding on July 27 was Joseph F. Mitcham, 22, of Beaverton. Mitcham was arrested by Heppner Police for speeding on South Court Street, and cited to appear in Justice Court on Aug. 2.

Court fine 'inflated' too!

Roger Lee Poullus, 19, Heppner, had just heard a man fined \$17 for failure to stop at a traffic sign.

So he was taken aback Thursday when Justice of the Peace Charles O'Connor assessed him \$32 for a similar traffic violation.

"The fine for running a stop sign is going up," the judge said by way of explanation.

Poullus was charged with failing to bring his logging truck to a stop at the intersection of Highways 206 and 207, near Ruggs.

Farmer free to produce

Farmers may grow all the wheat and grain they want in 1974.

The Secretary of Agriculture has announced features of the 1974 farm program as it affects feed grains, wheat and cotton, according to David McLeod, ASCS executive director.

In order to assure adequate supplies for domestic and export markets, the secretary said there will be no govern-

ment setaside of land for 1974. The decision announced at this time should permit farmers to plan their 1974 acreages of these crops.

Maintenance of an established conserving base will not be required as a condition of eligibility to receive price support or program payments. "This will permit farmers to produce all the wheat and feed grains they wish," said McLeod.



The ashes to the right of the truck are all that remains of more than 250 tons of hay after it was destroyed by fire on the Walter Wright Ranch. The truck, also destroyed, is blamed for starting the blaze last week. Upper right portion of the photo shows the path of the fire. The white area was untouched by the blaze.



SUMIKO ONOSATO

Tutor and chaperone for Japanese students visiting in Morrow County, Sumiko Onosato of Ykohana, Japan, will speak at the Chamber of Commerce meeting Monday, Aug. 6.