

The INDEPENDENT

Serving the Upper Nehalem River valley. Published monthly on the last Thursday of each month, by Public Opinion Laboratory Ltd., 1206 State Avenue, Vernonia, OR 97064, as a free newspaper. Editors and Publishers, Dirk and Noni Andersen, (503) 429-9410.

Opinion

Bacona, a substitute for Wildwood loss?

The Bacona Road site on Green Mountain has been chosen for use as a garbage dump for the Portland Metropolitan area. This is no surprise.

After years of effort and the expenditure of at least a million dollars, the Metropolitan Services District and the state Department of Environmental Quality couldn't accept the bitter defeat they suffered trying to put their dump at Wildwood, so they chose Bacona, the site most like Wildwood - a rural, forested watershed with clean water and air, and best of all, a small population with little political clout!

There are a couple of other similarities, too.

Bacona, like Wildwood, has landslides beneath the surface. An April report to CH2M Hill, DEQ's "technical experts," discusses extensive landslides in the site area, calls for more subsurface exploration and warns about slope movement. Don't worry; it took only five years to teach Metro/DEQ that the subsurface landslide at Wildwood meant the earth actually moves. In another five years they may master the equation: Landslides equal Earth Movement.

Bacona, like Wildwood, has few residents when compared to the Metro area. Few, yes, but adamant that their water will not be polluted, their property will not be destroyed, and their lifestyle will not disappear under a mountain of garbage.

There is another similarity. It takes a great deal of money to fight city hall or, in this case, to fight Metro and DEQ. Wildwood opponents spent approximately \$150,000. Bacona opponents need \$30,000 right now, and will need more during the battle to come.

In the words of Carole Winner, a Scappoose resident and Wildwood opponent, "Something is terribly wrong with the legislative and judicial processes in Oregon when community organizations and environmentalists, badly outmatched and outfunded, must do battle with taxpayer-funded agencies to prevent garbage and sewer sludge from seeping into their drinking water."

Something is terribly wrong, too, when the state agency charged with protecting our environment works so hard to pollute our watersheds because that's easier, politically, than insisting that Metro develop an intelligent system to dispose of its waste.

Now is the time to fight. If you think it's not your problem think again. Think about the beauty of this area, about the healthy livestock and crops, about the hunting and fishing. Think about your children and grandchildren. Then think about what water pollution will do to all of them.

We can't afford to lose our clean water and we can't afford to let the state shove Portland's garbage down our throats.



Between the Bookends

By Sandy Nimz

School's out, summer's here!! It's hard to believe, but true. The library is busier than ever. Our summer reading program is in full swing. Remember - students reading 10 books this summer will receive a very official certificate from Governor Neil Goldschmidt and Superintendent of Instruction Verne Duncan. So don't delay, start reading today!

Many new titles have been added this month. All you Stephen King fans will want

to sign up for his newest book "Misery." This is a bit different than his usual work, and it's a story that could really happen, right here in Vernonia. Sounds intriguing doesn't it?

Another new best-seller is Dean Koontz's "Watchers." This one, I'm told, is an excellent book, especially for animal lovers. Everyone who loves to read Danielle Steele will be happy to know that we have her latest, "Fine Things." I haven't had time to read this, but I was told, again, that it's a very good,

sad book. "Windmills of the Gods," Sidney Sheldon's newest book is also here. We have something for everyone!

The big, summer book sale is in full swing. Come in and take a look. The price is right and new titles are added every day. Anyone ages 10 to 100 who would like to volunteer in the library should come and see me. I can find many things for you to do.

Keep reading, and don't forget to stop and shop our book sale!!!

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

The state parks department is "beating a dead horse" by looking, again, at the development of the Banks-Vernonia Linear Park, and by considering the allocation of funds for another feasibility study.

The findings of such a study won't be much different than the findings of the study done in 1976. The study, as well as the idea of the park, will be met with HEAVY RESISTANCE from property owners along the route.

As two of those property owners, we are registering our opposition because of concern about property damage by those using the park; ie, vandalism and fire hazard from campfires and smokers.

Land bordering the park is primarily timber, and the potential fire hazard is a very important issue. If a fire caused by a park user spread to our property, would the state assume liability for the damage done?

In 1976 there were plans to fence and deck the railroad trestles for hikers and bikers, while providing ground level crossings for horses. This would mean horses crossing Highway 47 in at least 3 places, 2 of which are at corners with minimum visibility, which would create liability for the state and danger to motorists.

Also worth noting is that not all of the land is available for development. Some property owners have reacquired their land in court after the "scam of the century," when the railroad property was sold to the state SO FAST that private property owners were unaware of what was going on until it was too late to do anything about it - even when they were to have the first right-of-refusal to the land, or their deeds said the land would revert to them when the railroad was no longer in use.

The appropriation and the study are a waste, and will show much MORE resistance.

The state might want to prepare for another grassroots opposition movement from the citizens of Columbia and Washington counties.

Sincerely,
Patricia Cone Ray
Margaret E. Cone

To the Editor:

We no longer live in Vernonia (but still own our property) and are saddened to hear of the proposed dump at Bacona. Don't delay - join in the fight! Send donations to DDOVE, write letters, attend meetings. We are 125 miles away and want to help.

Don't come crying to anyone if your drinking water becomes tainted thanks to the flaky sounding "plastic liner." You'll probably be dead anyhow.

NOW is the time to act, before Vernonia becomes part of the armpit of Oregon.

Sincerely,
David & Dianne Cornog
Puyallup, Washington