

Remember who benefits

Published: May 10, 2007 5:00AM PST

Not everyone likes the idea of transforming a large parcel on Bend's east side into a master-planned community with shops, offices, an elementary school and as many as 2,600 homes. Some like to hike on the property. Others worry about the traffic such a development will generate. On Tuesday night, a number of neighbors expressed these and other concerns during a meeting held by the Department of State Lands, which owns the land and the headaches it's sure to bring.

The development the state envisions could still be many years in the future. Most of the tract is zoned for exclusive farm use, and there's no guarantee that the property will be swallowed up by the impending expansion of Bend's urban growth boundary. Whenever groundbreaking does draw near, however, opponents inevitably will become much more insistent, realizing as they surely do that government entities are far more sensitive than private developers to public opposition.

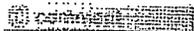
Remember what happened in 2004, when the county agreed to lease space at nearby Knott Landfill for a small tire pyrolysis machine? Neighbors were outraged, and the County Commission soon caved in. And that was over a benign device that would have occupied an 1,800-square-foot building. The state's plans cover 640 acres.

So, in anticipation of stiffer opposition, we urge the Department of State Lands to remain faithful to its mission. That mission is to manage lands like the Stevens Road parcel for the benefit of the Common School Fund, which earns money for Oregon's public schools. Developing the Stevens Road property as the state intends will earn lots and lots of money. And when the project is finished, it will merely

resemble development nearby - only nicer. The county dump sits directly to the south, and dense residential development encroaches from the west.

That isn't to say the state should slap together a mindless, unimaginative house farm. But that isn't what it has proposed. The master plan calls for an extensive trail network, a few neighborhood parks, an elementary school, and an enormous open area intended to buffer caves and protect the bats that call them home.

Even all of this won't be enough to satisfy some people, and they're free to oppose the development. But they're also free to raise the tens of millions of dollars the project will pour into Oregon's classrooms. When they've done that, we hope the Department of State Lands takes their check, says "thank you" and hands over the deed to the property.



[Terms of Use](#) • [Privacy Policy](#) • [Contact Us](#) • [Comments/Questions?](#)

Published daily in Bend, Oregon, by [Western Communications, Inc.](#) Copyright 2007.