

5018 Environmental group critical of aggregate mine proposal

By Mark Carlson
of the Spotlight staff

A Portland environmental group has blasted a mining firm's bid to establish an aggregate-extraction facility northwest of Scappoose.

Northwest Environmental Defense Center contends that a proposed surface mining designation for a 700-acre tract eyed by Western-Pacific Construction Materials Co. violates three state land use planning goals.

The proposed aggregate mine has long been opposed by people who live near the site.

NEDC's criticisms of the zoning designation coincided with the Columbia County Planning Commission's first meeting on proposed changes in the county's comprehensive land-use plan Monday.

The plan, which faces a deadline for acceptance by the Oregon Land Development and Conservation Commission, has been amended by county planners in an attempt at complying with state requirements.

The ammended plan keeps minimum lot sizes of 19 and 39 acres for dividing property in forest lands, but adds several conditions. The lot sizes have been a sticking point in the county's struggle to gain LCDC approval of the plan.

Officials also have made numerous smaller changes in the document.

The aggregate-mining issue promises to generate much debate during the latest round of public hearings on the comprehensive plan.

According to NEDC, the 700-acre site cannot be made to comply with LCDC requirements, and therefore should remain an agricultural zone.

Western-Pacific wants an exception to the agricultural zone requirements.

The group also contends that the Western-Pacific request runs afoul of a land-use goal related to archaeological resources. NEDC claims that at least part of the site "is an archaeological area of

established scientific importance."

The organization called on the county to conduct an analysis of potential economic, social, environmental and energy-related consequences of the proposed mine, which would become one of several gravel-extraction facilities in the area north of Scappoose.

"Surface mining designation for Western-Pacific's proposed gravel site promises no benefit

for the community, and considerable harm to irreplaceable cultural resources."

NEDC claims that no economic justification exists for the mine, saying state Department of Geology and Mineral Industries officials have reported that enough gravel exists locally to serve the area's needs until early in the 20th century.

The next Planning Commission hearing on the comp plan is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Feb. 14.

Aggregate mine exemption 5018 one topic of meeting series

By Mark Carlson
of the Spotlight staff

Western Pacific Construction Materials Inc. has re-surfaced on the public scene locally with a request to establish an aggregate mining operation northeast of Scappoose.

The firm wants an exemption to state land-use regulations to allow the installation of an aggregate mine on about 700 acres of land near Multnomah Channel. To do so, Western Pacific needs an exception to the Willamette Greenway rule, which limits industrial growth along the Willamette River and Multnomah Channel.

Western Pacific's facility would extract and process gravel, along with related activities.

The county Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission will take testimony on Western Pacific's request at a series of public hearings between Jan. 28 and Feb. 15, as the county attempts to revise its comprehensive plan and re-submit it to state authorities before a March 7 deadline.

The hearings, at which citizens may offer testimony on Western Pacific's request or on any of the other proposed comprehensive

plan changes, are scheduled for 10 a.m. Jan. 28, Jan. 29 and Feb. 11, and at 2 p.m. Feb. 15. Expecting a flood of citizens wishing to express their views on the plan, commissioners emphasize that time limits will be placed on testimony to give all a chance to speak.

Written testimony also will be accepted. It must be submitted in advance of the hearings.

In early 1983, the county board issued a conditional use permit to Western Pacific allowing establishment of the mine. The action triggered howls of outrage from the site's neighbors, who launched a campaign to reverse the commissioner's decision.

In March of that year, Scappoose Sand & Gravel and a neighbor of the Western Pacific site, Elaine Gunderson, appealed the permit and took the issue to the state Land Use Board of Appeals, which remanded the matter back to the county.

The appeal contended that the commissioners' action violated some 11 statewide land-use goals and failed to justify the exception to the Greenway rule, which is designed to protect wetlands and wildlife. In addition, LUBA ruled that the county did not take into account the area's historical

significance. In September 1984, archaeologists unearthed Native American artifacts from an Army Corps of Engineers bank-improvement project near the Western Pacific site.

After the LUBA remand, commissioners voted to delay action on the Western Pacific request until both sides submitted new findings based on records accumulated during the original permit-application process and on LUBA's ruling.

Subsequently, the matter faded from the public view.

Also likely to generate heated debate at the hearings is a provision of the county plan that would increase the minimum size a lot in forest lands must be before it can be divided.

Currently, the plan lists a minimum lot size of 39 acres, but the Land Conservation and Development Commission is "adamantly" opposed to such a provision, said Bob King, chairman of the county Board of Commissioners.

Last year, the county came up with a plan that identified a minimum lot size of 80 acres, but revised it to 39 after rural county residents jammed public hearings to denounce the provision.

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considerable thought to the following:

No money is coming to the county from this conditional use permit. After the aggregate is removed, [we'll be left with] 700 acres of nothing. A hole in the ground is all Columbia County will have to show for this venture.

Has their company posted a performance bond assuring the ground will be returned to a usable and taxable condition within a reasonable length of time? Does this bond include compensation to families within the area for loss of drinking water? If, in fact, they dig below the water line and water is lost, will they pay for the drilling of a new well?

Will trucks use Columbia County roads, or City of Scappoose roads? Will this company pay their fair share of upkeep and repair of these roads, or will the county and city residents pay these additional costs?

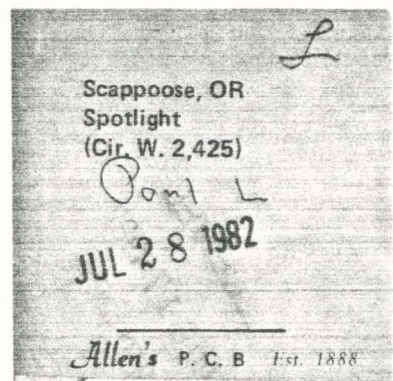
Will the company hire Columbia County unemployed? Or will all employees be hired out of a union hall in Portland?

In what way will Columbia County benefit from this business? Or will it be a costly venture for the local taxpayers?

Isn't this a question of mineral rights? If not, couldn't it be? Gas is a natural resource. Oil is a natural resource. Gravel is a natural resource. Royalties should be paid to the county when any of these are removed from the ground.

The county should deny the permit or pass an ordinance or resolution assessing a fee per cubic yard of gravel removed from the ground. This fee could be used in place of the performance bond and will assure the residents of Columbia County that they will not be charged for any additional damage caused by this proposed business.

Bonnie Kelley
Scappoose



They should deny permit

To the editor: 5018

The following is a copy of a letter mailed to the Columbia County Planning Commission requesting they deny a conditional use permit to Western Pacific Construction Materials Company to remove aggregate from 700 acres of land near the city of Scappoose.

"I respectfully request the conditional use permit be denied to Western Pacific Construction Materials Company until such time as the needs of the residents of Columbia County have been more closely considered and performance bonds are posted with the county, assuring there will be no water loss to those around the site, and if there is, it will be the responsibility of the company to secure adequate water for each family who has lost their well due to the company digging below the water level; that the company will be responsible for their share of upkeep and repair on the roads used by the gravel trucks so that the taxpayers will not be saddled with the added cost; and further, that the land will be returned to a usable condition within a reasonable time set by the Commission."

I urge every resident of Columbia County to write to the Columbia County Planning Commission stating their views, after giving

Viewpoint / An editorial opinion

What do we gain?

"Become the pits!" is the motto of those opposing the Western Pacific company proposed 700-acre aggregate mine in the dikelands area. If the people, the People Involved To Letting the support they'd like, it is an issue cloaked by a philosophy

opposed against Metro's proposed mine of longer duration, the Western Association has received more support, after all, nothing socially significant. The issue is clear cut: the aggregate mine at Wildwood, and the aggregate-mining period. The aggregate-mining is nearly as inflammatory. No one wants to mine the aggregate. Other aggregate-mining operations of the South Columbia dikelands are aggregate mine and chalk the operation up to the way for Western Pacific's mine. One important question that we, the residents of the area and the new aggregate

There is nothing in the world wrong with 'looking out for number one,' and several of the parties involved in the aggregate mine proposal are doing just that. Western Pacific will get the much sought after aggregate, and the revenues from selling it. Their employees at the company's plants in Portland and Vancouver, and Longview, Wash., who will get the payrolls created by the new aggregate source. And the Portland metropolitan area will get the aggregate.

What does that leave for the residents of the area and the county? We'll have the mining operation, along with the dust, noise and scarring of the land. We'll have increased barge traffic on our local waterways, increased traffic from the proposed 82 vehicle trips per day on our roads, and possibly, on Highway 30.

If you subscribe to the philosophy that you have to take the good with the bad with progress, and you're waiting for a roundup of the good, forget it. There isn't any. Aside from land taxes and a once-a-year \$25 permit fee, the county stands to gain not one penny from the wealth of aggregate that will be removed from this area under Western Pacific's proposal. This, in an industry-poor, economically hard-hit area, where any new industry should be welcomed to help offset our property taxes, to support county services and school districts.

We aren't opposed to progress, and we don't advocate a "closed community." We are realists, and we know that, to survive in the '80s, this area will need to attract industry. We are enthusiastic about growth--planned growth--and we welcome industry to the area, but feel that any new industry

should be adding to--and not detracting from--the quality of life here.

Neither are we "anti-Portland." Peaceful coexistence with our neighbor to the south is our aim. Many of us work in Portland. We are enthusiastic fans of the Blazers. We attend the Rose Festival. We acknowledge our proximity to Portland, and brag about the easiest commute in the area. But there is a fine line between coexistence and being swallowed up, and, through the years, Scappoose has remained a surprisingly independent community, near, but not an extension of, Portland. And we certainly have no wish to modify our area to meet the needs of the metropolitan area.

Having survived all these years near the metropolitan area and retained a separate identity, we'd hate to see South Columbia County become the drone of Portland, a place near which to dump their garbage, and the place to get their sand and gravel. Looking out for our own interests is the larger issue here, and one that we urge area residents, and the Columbia County Planning Commission, to keep in mind when weighing the merits of Western Pacific's proposal at the meeting on August 2.

If mining of the aggregate-rich dikelands is inevitable, then, at the very least, we should profit from it. It is inconceivable that we should send this rich natural resource out of the county and gain nothing but "the pits," and, perhaps in 50 years, another lake. As one local sage put it, "All those pits out there are proposed lakes or even a link with the Channel to the Columbia, but the first luxury liner has yet to dock in Scappoose."

Pension fund buys Scherzer-Moore warehouse

Scherzer-Moore Partners has sold part of an east Portland industrial park to a consortium of union pension funds.

Operating as Quest Group Trust I and II, the construction trade unions' pension funds paid \$3.7 million for the 8-acre parcel, which includes two warehouses Scherzer-Moore will develop for the venture.

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

Steve Mayes

One of the conditions of sale is that union labor be used to build the warehouses. Construction should begin this week.

The 88,000-square-foot and 52,000-square-foot buildings are expected to be completed by August, said Greg Specht, Scherzer-Moore vice president for acquisition and development. No tenants have pre-leased space in the buildings.

Scherzer-Moore will manage the completed project.

The Quest parcel is part of 28 acres Scherzer-Moore purchased from Transco Properties for \$2.4 million in February. Until now, the development firm has not announced specific plans for the site, which is south of Northeast Airport Way between Northeast 122nd and 138th avenues. Specht would not comment on the company's plans for the remaining 20 acres.

Quest Investment Management Inc., a Portland pension fund advisor, arranged the purchase for the Quest Group trusts. This is the second Scherzer-Moore acquisition put together for the union pension funds by Quest Investment.

Last summer Quest Group Trust I purchased Parkway Plaza II, a 50,000-square-foot office building in Vancouver, for \$4.3 million.

In March, Scherzer-Moore bought 4.6 acres next to the Vancouver property where the company intends to build two more 50,000-square-foot office buildings.

Scherzer-Moore, one of Portland's most active commercial real estate developers, recently relocated to the Skidmore Fountain building, 28 S.W. First Ave. The building is owned by a Scherzer-Moore limited partnership.

Previously, the company had been housed in the New Market Theater building, 50 S.W. Second Ave.

"We've grown so fast we needed more space," Specht said.

Some retail space in the 45,000-square-foot building was converted to office use, he said. The company occupies around 12,500 square feet.

Scherzer-Moore completed renovation of the former Packer-Scott Building in 1986 and renamed it the Skidmore Fountain Building. The \$3 million project was financed with City of Portland economic revenue bonds issued through the Portland Development Commission. The commission recently approved Scherzer-Moore's request to refinance the \$2.92 million balance of the bond issue so the developer could take advantage of lower interest rates.

In addition to the Airport Way and Vancouver projects, Scherzer-Moore currently is developing a Wilsonville industrial park and a string of West Coast auto malls. The company also owns several renovated office buildings in downtown Portland.

Reclamation project slated

Canby Sand & Gravel Co. will seek Clackamas County approval next week to remove 2.5 million cubic yards of aggregate from a site next to the Molalla River and reclaim the property for commercial

use. The company, a subsidiary of Oregon City-based Parker-Northwest Paving Co., is proposing a reclamation project consisting of three ponds, said Gary Naylor, Clackamas County senior planner.

A large pond would be used for a commercial aquaculture venture and two smaller ponds would be used for a commercial recreational area featuring fishing, boating, and picnicking, Naylor said. The county planning department has not made a recommendation on the proposal.

The 105-acre site is just southeast of the Canby city limits and is owned by Parker-Northwest.

Briefly noted

The Koll Co. has broken ground on a 55,000-square-foot mini-storage ware-

house on Northwest Nimbus Drive. Construction of the \$2.5 million project in the Koll Business Center-Beaverton is expected in September. . . . National Sanitary Supply Co. of Los Angeles has announced plans to acquire Portland-based Packer-Scott Co., a janitorial supply distributor. Packer-Scott is headquartered at 425 N.E. Ninth Ave. and has offices in five other Oregon cities and annual sales in excess of \$7 million. The deal should be completed in May. . . . Clackamas Promenade, a 420,000-square-foot shopping mall under construction on Southeast Sunnyside Road, has signed Nordstrom's Rack as an anchor tenant. The store will relocate from Clackamas Town Center, which is next door to the new mall. Nordstrom joins Lamonts, Target, and Mervyn's as anchors in the Schurgin Development Corp. project. . . . The Portland Development

Commission is looking for a restaurant operator to lease the new restaurant at the Center Building in Waterfront Park. . . . Clark County attorney, 21,500-square-foot office building on Highway 99 in Hazel Dell will occupy half the building. . . . Oregon Economic Development Commission has made \$1 million available to the City of Beaverton for structure improvement in downtown redevelopment. . . . State funds would be used to develop a 200-room hotel and a system of parking along the river. The availability of a firm financing from a private developer

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