

# Cow Creek Residents Resist Galesville Dam

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dam of 9,000 acres on Applegate Creek, "would be like putting a band-aid on major surgery."

The smaller dam had been proposed in conjunction with the much larger Days Creek Federal Dam project that has been halted due to the Carter Administration's moratorium on all federally funded dams.

The other alternative at Gold Mountain, according to Elst and other detractors, "is in an inaccessible spot; would cost a fortune; and Coos County won't do it."

The Gold Mountain site lies between Douglas and Coos Counties and is discouraged by Coos County commissioners.

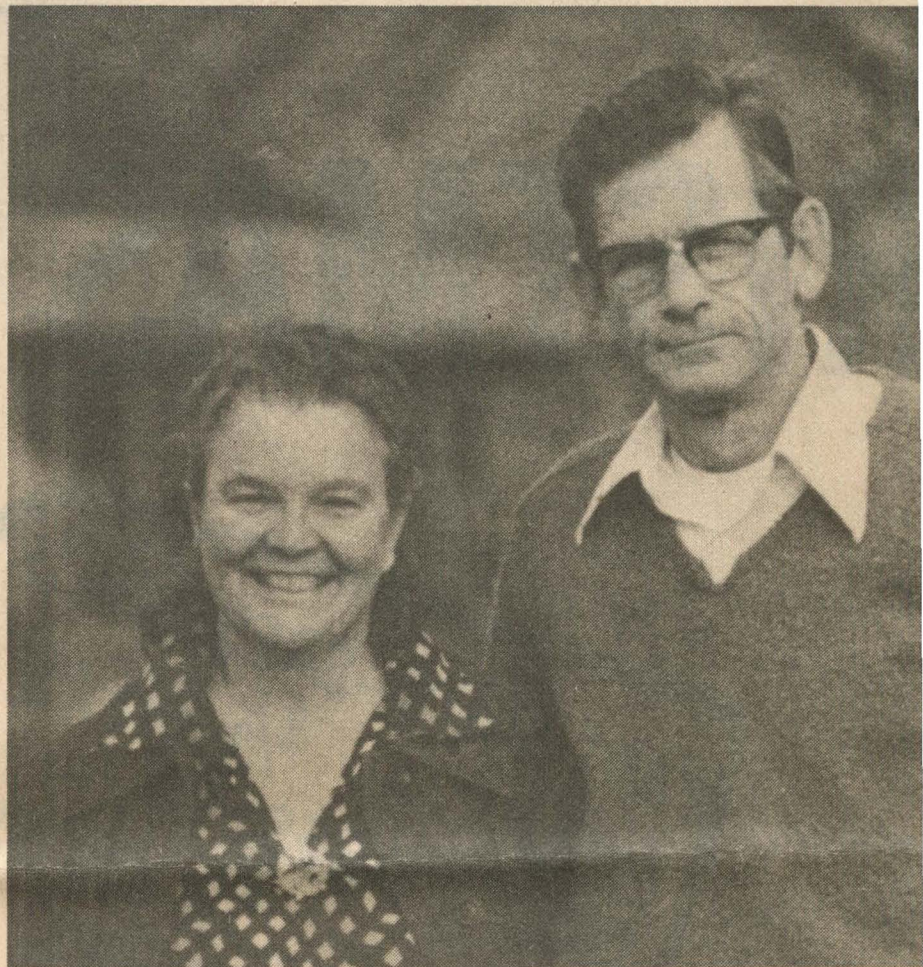
"The impoundment area created by this dam would flood valuable forest land, much of which is under private ownership, "the commissioners wrote in July. "We do not feel we can support this proposal unless the affected landowners also support it." Those owners include Robert Dollar, Superior Lumber, and Georgia-Pacific.

Owners of the 700 acres of farm land along Cow Creek persist in requesting "equal studies on Gold Mountain.. They have visited the alternative site and insist that it is "not remote".

Photos show that ordinary vehicles have arrived at the end of the road which some claim is only accessible by 4-wheel drive. Burl Oar, former water master, led a number of group tours to this point, five miles from a paved road.

Currently county charts show the estimated costs of the two possible 50,000-acre projects within one million dollars of each other, listing Galesville at \$17,757,500 and Gold Mt. at \$18,802,800. The Galesville site shows extra cost in Property acquisition, utility relocation, and road relocation. The Gold Mountain site is more costly only in actual construction allocations.

Seeking allies, Mrs. Cookman has made four trips to Salem with information supporting her group's cause. She spoke to the State Water Resource Board in October and to LCDC in early November. She plans to return whenever the subject appears on the LCDC agenda to alert



JIM AND MARY Cookman are living in the shadow of a \$17 million Douglas County

dam project and they'd like to find a place to back up water.

— Elaine Weiss

that "the dam and where to place it is essentially a political decision." The group is urged to participate in public hearings on a comprehensive plan, to consult an attorney prior to any county action "to adopt a special plan or exception", and to "find candidates sympathetic to your cause and support them."

Vian does anticipate including the dam in the comprehensive plan but does not look to state agencies for funding. He relies on O&C funds and support within the county. He observes that applicants for state assistance often bog down.

"Everytime you start to do something, somebody wants to protect a snail or a bird," he said. "If there's five people tht don't want something to happen, it's easy for them to stop the whole show."

Even those who want the

Galesville dam built readily see that the present controversy is "understandable."

Glendale Mayor Martin Brooks, who sees "water shortages all the way down the system" and has had to hold off subdivisions of 30 to 40 homes because "we can't guarantee them water."

"I feel very badly about certain people," he said. "I want them to be reimbursed fairly." Milton Herbert of Herbert Lumber Co. in Riddle states "I lean toward Galesville, but there's a definite problem of displacement of people." He stresses that "you don't put those people in a lesser living situation than they have now."

Jim Cookman is less optimistic about reimbursement. He claims that apprais-

ed cost has no relation to the value of an owner's personal labor. He sees no reason to be afraid to work on their own property.

For himself, he visualizes future ownership of the dam. These appeals do not frighten him. He is angry to have his property expectedly become enmeshed "in a game where the rules are changing faster than the umpire."

"You close every door to protect people and trees when you build a dam." Mary Cookman's home was never particularly active before:

"This is the first time in my life I took my apron off

Tests recently conducted by Douglas County at the proposed Galesville Dam site indicate the geology appears to be favorable according to Jim Gossen, Director of Public Works.

But area residents who fear a dramatic change of the valley and loss of their land maintain their opposition.

Mary Cookman says she hopes that her family and others along Cow Creek Road in Azalea will not "live in the shadow of the dam forever." She says that their effort is not just to stall construction. "I'd like to see it off the books."

The other landowners meeting — "whenever we have something to exchange" — at the home of Robert and Carol Sanders share this goal and commiserate with Jim Cookman's feeling that the project hurts people even in preliminary study phases.

"I'm being unjustly taxed for property that has no market value," he said. "Can't sell it. Can't improve it." There are 27 property owners who are directly affected, by the group's count, though not all of them live in the area.

The possibility of a dam about seven miles down Cow Creek Road has been one of several alternatives considered by the county for water resources development, according to Project Engineer Ken Shumway.

He acknowledges that it is, "the one we're conducting in depth studies on."

Geological investigations and soil samples were completed during November. Gossen says the suitability of the site is still being evaluated. He has been compiling cost estimates based on '78 prices from San Francisco International Engineering Company, and says that the figures listed now are "not very accurate" and the chart presented from his office is "in need of revising." He is not prepared to say if or when the dam will be built.

"The commissioners don't have a preference until they hear from us," he explained. "I'm not in a hurry to make recommendations."

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Douglas County Commissioner Bill Vian is less hesitant.

"My vote would go for the Galesville site tomorrow," he says. He expresses concern about county water needs, "now and in the future" and does not see any of the alternatives sites as adequate or feasible.

Vian refers to "information gathered by competent people who weigh costs and accessibility" and adds, "I'm not listening to emotional people."

He admits, in reply to a question from the Cookman's, "I'd be madder than hell if I lived there."

However his work with the highway department has given him experience. "I've seen many people displaced," Vian said. "This isn't anything new."

Still he adds, aware of one particular case, "I sympathize very much with the Bradys".

Mary Brady lives on a 100-year-old homestead that has been in her family since 1919. She has lived there all her life and is a teacher of Home Economics at Glendale High School.

One protest sign along Cow Creek Road reads, "Our Commissioner's Political Playground."

Vian responds: "I don't think it's political. I think it's a matter of need." He substantiates this with the evidence of a petition signed by 2,000 people throughout the southern part of the county supporting water resource development.

To Vian, this petition, which specifies no one site, means "an overwhelming majority must have some kind of faith in what we're doing."

Azalea Realtor Frank Elst was active in organizing the petition and is a "strong supporter" of the Galesville Dam. He says the idea has been around since Orlo Worley supported it in 1929.

he indicates that the alternative sites proposed are not feasible. One for a smaller

spoke to the State Water Resource Board in October and to LCDC in early November. She plans to return whenever the subject appears on the LCDC agenda to alert the commission to the quality farm land of the Cow Creek valley. LCDC Goal No. 3 mandates protection of lands of class I through IV soils.

Mrs. Cookman has also written to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Portland office to request an environmental impact statement on any permit required. Her file contains a 1971 study recommending that Galesville not be considered due to relatively poor water quality and high cost.

The Bradys have kept copies of a 1974 study by the engineering firm Cornell, Howland, Hayes, & Merryfield of Corvallis, advising against the site due to water quality and cost. The water of the Gold Mountain is preferred because steeper land causes more rapid flow.

Advice to Mrs. Cookman from a Eugene law firm states

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