



Crook County

AUG 18 2021

Community Development

Preliminary Environmental Assessment

Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Conditional Use Request
Record Number 217-21-000436-PLNG

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Concerns that I still need to research

- Impact of washing of aggregate on water use and environment
- Impact of surface ponds on water use and environment
- Impact of French Drain systems in mining
- Other mining operations in Oregon/Washington/Nevada/California
- Job Quality/Safety
- Impact of poor air quality on people/farms/animals

While my research is not complete, the following presentation will give you a general sense as to how devastating strip mining of farmland will be to the Crook County North Valley.

Environment – Dust and the Atmosphere

- Dust is a major pollutant to consider when dealing with the planning of local mining operations. Especially when considering multiple operations as each compounds the amount of dust present. We have many mining operations within Crook County, with 2 in sight of Grimes Road.
- Open pit mining operations create windblown dust in, around, and down roads the operation is run on⁷.
- Dust from open-pit mines can be taken up by local plants⁶. If there is anything in the mine there is a fair chance it's being taken up by local agricultural crops.
- Dust produced by open pit mines is hazardous to human health. Leading to respiratory, pulmonary, and other health impacts⁶.

Environment – Evaporation

- Running into the water table was unplanned and has resulted in its heavy recirculation. One commission member specifically asked if the same amount of water is going back into the ground that's coming out of the ground. The answer to that is no.
- Recirculating water is going to result in evaporation. As can be seen in the attached photo of a fertilizer bucket. You can see around an inch of evaporation in a day in this five-gallon bucket.
- Exposure to the wind, dry air, and high desert temperatures will result in evaporation and water loss.

Environment - Evaporation

- Environmental conditions in Prineville are perfect for evaporation.
- Total surface area for the water at the mine is far higher than a five-gallon bucket.



Economic - Conflicts in Prineville

- Tourism – Conflicts with mining. Not aesthetically appealing and its right on the way into town. Unsightly open-pit mines are not what people come here to see.
- Agriculture – Conflicts with mining. Substrate permanently changed. Dusts local crops. Damages the surrounding environment.

Economic - Limitations for Locals

- Locals cannot afford to leave. Selling at the moment is likely to result in getting less than what you have now. Forcing the majority to stay or be put out of business.
- As discussed last meeting the burden of proving damages and taking Knife River to court will be on the locals.
- Also discussed was the lack of ability that local farmers must pay for testing and particularly legal defense in the case something happens.
- Claims were made that if problems occurred impacted landowners could just fix them. However, geoen지니어ing is not often talked about academically for two major reasons. First, *when* we have a researched a solution it tends to be prohibitively expensive, which is why governments are mainly the ones that dabble in it. It costs that much to fix these things. Second, is the “*when*” as most solutions are in their infancy or don’t exist.
- If problems occur local residents will be forced to shoulder the cost of the solution or litigation *if* a solution exists. A cost they likely can’t afford.

Social – Counter to Culture

- Prineville is traditionally an agricultural town that was founded in 1877⁵. Farmers and ranchers have supported the population since. As an industry we have shown a great ability for adaptation and resilience over the years. We are a cornerstone of the community.
- We produce high quality grass, alfalfa, carrot seed, sheep, beef, dairy products, and various other agricultural goods.
- This is because the valley is a premium location for farming in the region as we have experience, water, and arable land that drains properly due to the natural structure of our soils. These are things that you can't get back after surface mining and pushing people out of the region.
- As a community we depend on our environment to be clean and not dusted by mines. It helped us build a railroad to the main line when the railroads bypassed us early in our history. It sustained our food source and created industry to sustain the early timber industry. We wouldn't be here today without agriculture and our environment that created and sustains it. Mining hinders both.

Social – Local Opposition

- Mining operations were opposed back in 2015². Opposition was large enough that the aggregate industries pundit news producer picked up on it to defend their position³.
- To date mining operations at this site are still opposed by locals.
 - See petition – ongoing gathering of signatures.
- Local opinions on the mining operation lay somewhere between resentment and hatred.

Recent Examples of Negligence and Non-Compliance by Knife River

- As discussed last meeting many already believe there to be and have reported violations at the local dig. Concerns have been raised over surface water, noise, dust, non-compliance, and what would happen once the site is recovered.
- Minnesota, 2021 - "Northstar Materials Inc. dab Knife River Materials - Bemidji - \$17,525 - Industrial wastewater — Discharged sediment-laden mine pit water to surface waters, causing nuisance conditions; failed to report the problem as required and recover the sediment that left the site."¹
- Wyoming, 2021 – Wrongful death of a motorist in 2017 due to poor traffic control. 60% of responsibility bore by Knife River leading to award of 2M in damages⁴.
- ETC...

Poor Community Partners

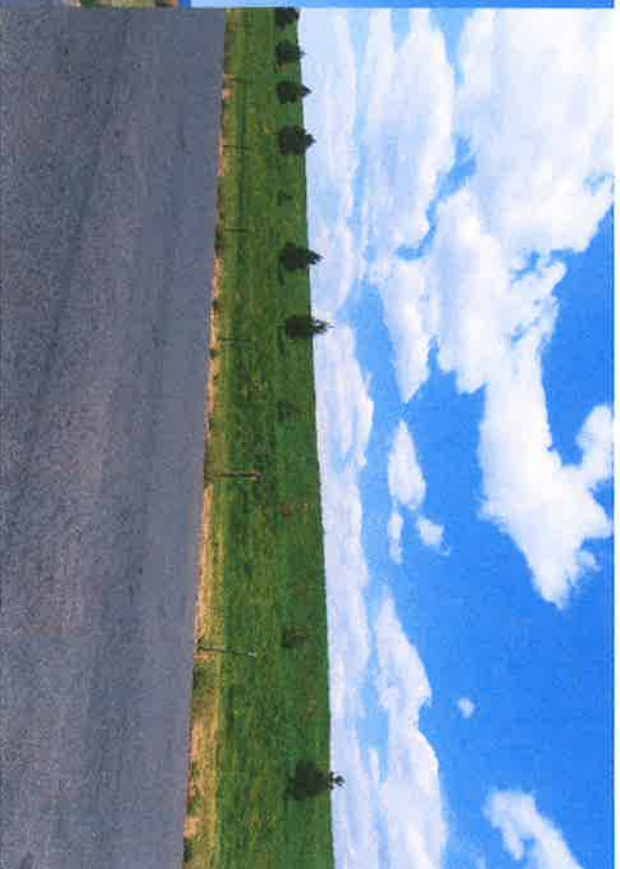
Response to previous mediation has been poor over the years.

- From the south the berm is unsightly. From the north all you see is a large industrial pit mine with large mounds of aggregate, which is worse.
- Area planted with non-native plants.
- Requires excessive watering for the equivalent of lawn grass.
- Grass left in disrepair until last meeting where now it is miraculously green – Next panel
- Mounds of sediment left dry allowing dust to regularly blow about. Prineville’s dominant weather is its wind. Yet people rarely see the mounds wetted down.
- Citizens are expected to keep a company that spans the western US accountable. This is untenable. Community members have better things to do than watchdog a company that doesn’t do anything it doesn’t have to do, and sometimes doesn’t do that. We do not have the time and cannot afford to keep them accountable. City representatives at the meeting also made it readily apparent the city too lacked the resources for this.

Grass Example



Before last meeting 7-17-21



After Last meeting, 8-18-21.

Poor Community Partners - Continued

- They plan to do bare minimum baseline tests at their facility.
- Only informed and negotiated with the bare minimum of people.
- Only presented evidence at the meeting that was favorable to them until pressed with questions.
- When asked more than one question in a row without a given chance to speak, they only answered the favorable question. It wasn't a choose your question written essay exam.
- Knife Rivers ability to present themselves and what they wanted to do showed they had no real long-term plan that benefits the community, and they cannot even stick to ones given to them in past mediations.
- The questions asked of the professionals at the previous meeting were basic things that should have been answered. They came uninformed or unable to answer questions they should have known were coming. This does not imbue me with confidence in their ability and revealed a pattern of deletion and distortion.

Conclusion

- There are real health concerns for those working in and living around the mine.
- There is no feasible plan here that we can trust will be implemented properly by Knife River.
- We are leaving it up to the honor system for Knife River to comply.
- When things go wrong local community members are on their own to seek coverage of damages that may or may not be fixable.
- Knife River is the only one that wins with this permit, and it is a permit. Permits can be denied.

References

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3. Aggregate Research. (2015). "Knife River Corp proposed gravel mine triggers opposition". <https://www.aggregateresearch.com/news/knife-river-corp-proposed-gravel-mine-triggers-opposition/>
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5. Leeds, W. H. (1899). "Special Laws". *The State of Oregon General and Special Laws and Joint Resolutions and Memorials Enacted and Adopted by the Twentieth Regular Session of the Legislative Assembly. Salem, Oregon: State Printer: 896.*
6. Arrandale et al. (2017). "Silica exposure in a mining exploration operation". <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29283843/>
7. Sairanen et al. (2016). "A review of dust emission dispersions in rock aggregate and natural stone quarries". <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17480930.2016.1271385>