

DOE: MRS Issue Not Dead, Despite Congress Action

By BEN ANDERSON
The Mountaineer

Funding for design work on a Monitored Retrievable Storage facility in east Tennessee isn't dead despite a committee vote in the U.S. House of Representatives last week denying such funds.

That according to Ginger King, a spokeswoman in the U.S. Department of Energy, which has proposed building an MRS on a site once proposed for the Clinch River Breeder Reactor.

Ms. King said that despite the House Appropriations Committee's denial of a \$58 million request on MRS design work, the DOE is still optimistic that the facility will be authorized and funded.

"We do have the MRS proposal before Congress," she said, "and we hope that, one, the MRS will be

authorized and, two, Congress will allow funding."

"There will not be a final appropriations bill until Oct. 1, and we're hopeful that what we've requested will be in it."

The appropriations committee did approve, however, a \$34 million request by the DOE for general research on a selection of a second waste repository. "We did not request any funds for site-specific work," Ms. King said.

Both funding requests will be acted on this week by the entire House, said Dennis Clark, a spokesman for Rep. James McClure Clarke, D-N.C.

"Something could come up before then, but we don't expect anybody will come in and try to restore funding (for the MRS), spokesman Clark said.

The MRS facility would process

and store spent fuel from nuclear reactors until the fuel could be transferred to a permanent burial site.

Many people, including Rep. Clarke, think construction of an MRS in Tennessee would make Western North Carolina a likely site for a nuclear waste repository because of its proximity. A 105-square mile site encompassing parts of Madison, Buncombe and Haywood counties was identified in early 1986 as one of 12 eastern sites under consideration for a second repository.

Opponents are also concerned that an MRS in eastern Tennessee would mean the shipments of radioactive waste through WNC - by way of Interstate 40 through Haywood County and by railroad through Madison County.

The search for a second dump was

suspended last May by Energy Secretary John Herrington, a move that many Democrats labeled both temporary and political. Clarke has introduced legislation calling for permanently ending the search for a second repository.

Ms. King said selection of a second waste dump would not be linked to the location of the MRS, however.

"No, it would not be at all likely that a nearby site would be chosen," she said. "It's the geology that counts for a repository."

"We look at geology, then environmental considerations, socioeconomic factors, transportation, and where the spent fuel is generated." But she said general location "is not a technical factor, and it just would not come into play."

Ms. King points to the consideration of three sites in the West - in

Texas, Utah and Washington state - as the site of the first repository as evidence that selection of the MRS

and second repository are not linked. The first repository is scheduled to open in 2003.

State Completes DSS Investigation

Flaherty, Anderson said. The Madison County Board of Social Services asked Flaherty last month to look into the way county DSS workers handled charges against Chandler.

That request came after friends, relatives and supporters of Chandler asked the board to re-investigate the sexual abuse case.

Chandler, 29, was convicted earlier this year on 12 child sexual abuse charges involving Madison County Day Care children, aged 2 to 5.

Chandler was arrested following an investigation by Social Services workers who had received complaints from several parents of those children.

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"They found nothing in the files to indicate anything was not done properly."

Several officials in the N.C. Department of Human Resources, when contacted Wednesday, would not confirm that finding.

Mary Lee Anderson, head of the Child Protective Services Division, said David Flaherty, secretary of human resources, is the only state official authorized to comment on the investigation.

State DSS investigators, who only completed the probe late Monday, have not yet filed a report on their findings with

Buncombe Residents Oppose Rock Quarry

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started pounding the pavement, obtaining signatures on petitions in opposition to the quarry and sending letters to state officials.

Among their major complaints is the threat the mine would pose to clean air and water in the adjacent community, said Gary Hensley, leader of the Flat Creek group.

"The mine could contaminate groundwater and surface water," said Hensley. "All of the people in this area are on wells or springs, and all of those water sources would be upset by a major operation of this kind."

Storm water runoff from the site would devastate drinking water supplies, he said.

The quarry site is located three-fourths of a mile from the new North Buncombe High School and three-fourths of a mile from the old high school, which will become the junior high school.

"All the school buses would be using the same access road alongside big dump trucks and other mining

equipment, and that's already a busy road," Hensley said.

More traffic on the road would mean more accidents, injuries and fatalities, he said.

Residents are also concerned that a mining operation nearby, with frequent blasting, will create noise and raise dust.

"It's totally residential and farmland out here," Hensley said. "Something like this can only decrease land values."

Hensley and other Flat Creek residents have discussed their concerns with Weaverville town officials, and have also talked to the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners and the Buncombe County Board of Education.

Charles Horne, Weaverville town manager, was scheduled to meet with a group of the residents Wednesday.

"We have talked with a couple of folks out there, and we have set up a meeting to see exactly what they have on their minds," Horne said Monday.

Weaverville officials are looking at

town zoning maps to determine if the Vulcan site is located in the town's one-mile extraterritorial area of control. If it is, the town may have some bearing on the location of the quarry, Horne said.

"If it's not good for the north end of the county, it's not good for Weaverville, either, and our initial reaction is that it's not good," said Mayor Reese Lasher.

"The type of economic growth we could like to see is not the kind that would impair property values, and with strip mining, we question whether that will help our people," Lasher said.

Lasher and Tom Sobel and Curtis Ratcliff of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners were scheduled to meet Wednesday with Vulcan officials to listen to the company's plans.

Hensley said he and others would be at the July 9 meeting of the Buncombe County Board of Education to talk about their concerns.

Hensley also said he has been in contact with Guy Mitchell of Winston

Salem, state vice president of Vulcan, who has said he would be willing to meet with community members to discuss the mining operation.

"My response to that was that it would have been better to do so before they sent out the letters and got everybody worried to death," Hensley said.

Despite several telephone calls to Vulcan's offices in Winston-Salem, Mitchell could not be reached for comment.

"Every secluded cove in Western North Carolina has granite in it. They should go somewhere else not so heavily populated," Hensley said.

"We are not opposed to Vulcan. We are not opposed to community growth. We are just standing up for the right kind of community growth," he said.

After a public hearing on the issue - if one is called - state officials will make a ruling within 10 days on Vulcan's application for a surface mining permit.

SBI Arrests Tax Collector On 4 Charges

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Commissioners," Rusher said Tuesday.

Commissioners asked Rusher in May 1986 to investigate Wallin, and Rusher passed the matter over to the SBI. During the SBI's investigation, Rusher also asked a Madison County grand jury to look into the delinquent taxes.

"This investigation began at the request of the Madison County Board of Commissioners. While the investigation ensued, some time ago the

Madison County grand jury requested we continue the investigation," Rusher said Tuesday. The file on Wallin has been kept open until this week's filing of charges by the SBI, he said.

The commissioners, in April 1986, asked Wallin about his failure to collect interest charges on a number of delinquent tax accounts.

Wallin told the commissioners that some of the uncollected penalties were the result of a mix-up in tax billings. He also offered to pay \$79.20 in lost interest out of his own pocket.

That came a month before the commissioners asked Rusher to conduct an investigation.

Wallin left the tax collectors office Tuesday following his release from custody.

He could not be reached at home for comment.

According to warrants charging Wallin with willfully failing to discharge his duties, he did "unlawfully and willfully omit, neglect and refuse to discharge the duties of his office, the office of tax collector for Madison County, N.C.

This offense occurred in that the said Harold Hubert Wallin is the duly elected and qualified tax collector for Madison County and he did corruptly omit, neglect and refuse to collect interest in the nature of penalty from taxpayers which he favored. . . .

Warrants also charge Wallin with specifically violating General Statute 105-373 (f) " . . . in that while serving as tax collector for Madison County, he did fail to perform his duty of collecting interest in the nature of penalties from taxpayers that he favored."

Peregrine Falcons To Be Released

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dinator of the peregrine recovery program in the Southern Appalachians. "They had nests all around these mountains, but from the 1940s to 1960s, pesticide use completely wiped them out."

For the past 10 years, state and federal wildlife officials - working with the Peregrine Fund, a private group that provides funding for the reintroduction of the species into the East - have been releasing young birds into the wild in the hopes that they will breed.

A total of 50 pairs of adult peregrine falcons now live and nest in the eastern United States - and one of those pairs is in the Southern Appalachian region, Henry said.

Efforts to return peregrines to the east first began in the northeast corner of the nation, but have now shifted to the Southern Appalachians, he said.

At each site where falcons are released into the wild, wildlife workers follow a general "hacking" procedure. (The term "hacking" means releasing birds without their parents):

"The birds, raised in captivity, are taken when about 30 days old in cages to the hacking site. "We take them out before they can fly and keep them in the hacking box so they can get used to the site," Henry said.

"After a week to 10 days, the front of the cage is removed by attendants. Food is left near the cage for the birds. They become used to feeding at that area, and when they're hungry, they come out," Yambert said.

"The whole thing is that when the birds return and breed at

the location where they learned to fly."

"Workers continue to leave food for the falcons, but do so in such a way that the birds cannot associate the food with humans, Henry said.

"Within six to eight weeks, the falcons should be able to catch their own prey. "When the birds disappear for two to three days, we assume they won't be coming back," Yambert said. "We also assume they can get their own food, or they would be coming back."

"When the falcons become sexually mature, they should return to the original hacking site to mate and nest, he said. New birds, born in the wild, should follow the same pattern as their parents, eventually restoring the species into the ecosystem, Henry said.

Although some area farmers and livestock producers have expressed concern that the falcons may try to feed on their chickens or other animals, wildlife officials say that's unlikely.

"We've tried to put out publicity to alleviate those fears," Henry said. "Although it's a bird of prey, it catches its prey in the air. It will not come into contact with domestic livestock, like chickens."

"Peregrine falcons are strictly a wild bird-eater," said Yambert. "It won't come into contact with the farmers at all. Very few farmers will ever see or hear one of them."

Henry called the peregrine the "jet fighter of the bird world." The falcons can reach speeds approaching 300 mph when diving for a "kill," he said.

Mars Hill OKs Budget

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sewer customers now than it did at this time last year, Boone said.

"We didn't really have anybody hooked up and paying a sewer fee last year," he said. "Very few customers were hooked up. That's the difference."

The general fund budget of \$399,150, used to finance the operation of the town, is \$30,500 lower than last year's \$429,500.

Boone said that the loss of federal revenue sharing funds has given the town less money to work with, forcing

officials to cut back in several budget areas.

"Some of this is due to the fact that revenue sharing has been cut out," he said. "Plus, we don't have the unexpended funds available this year that we've had in the past. We were forced to spend money last year than in the past, leaving us with less money left over at the end of the year."

The town had \$112,500 left over at the end of the 1985-86 budget to apply toward the 1986-87 fiscal year, Boone said. This year, the town has \$60,500 in unexpended funds.

Water Supply May Hurt Town

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Natural gas lines are already in place on the west side of U.S. 19-23, where many potential industrial sites are located.

The local labor force is "inexpensive and of high quality."

Asheville, "with its much-touted quality of life," is nearby.

A newly formed chamber of commerce should be of value to economic development efforts.

Glen's report also examines other ways to boost the Weaverville economy.

She suggests that Weaverville officials try to "capture" the money that is being spent elsewhere - that is, capture the money Weaverville residents are spending in Asheville,

capture money spent by Madison County residents, and capture money spent by Asheville residents or tourists.

The town should try to take advantage of goods and services available only in Weaverville, she said.

"Local officials should realize the reality that the variety of goods offered in a city as large as Asheville cannot be matched in Weaverville and will continue to draw shoppers from Weaverville," Glen said.

She suggested that the town try to attract and promote restaurants, lodging, entertainment, crafts and festivals.

Weaverville should capitalize on its "small-town" atmosphere, its "walkable downtown" and its scenic beauty, she said.

Weaverville Joins Plan

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The Asheville Chamber of Commerce will guarantee \$250,000 in private contributions.

Horne said that the summit set a common goal of the economic development of the entire county and set up a way for smaller communities to pool resources.

"What's good for ourselves is good for the entire county," Horne said. Weaverville Mayor Reese Lasher

called the partnership "an investment."

If the program results in new development in the Weaverville area, it will provide additional revenues to the town and an increase in property taxes, he said.

"The county and economic development area will give Weaverville the same opportunity to share in the growth," he said.



Ruth Gregory
... first citizen of the month

Ruth Gregory Is 'Citizen Of Month'

Ruth Gregory of Marshall has been selected as The News Record's first "Citizen of the Month."

Gregory is best known in the Marshall community - and across Madison County - for her efforts to help beautify the town and the county. She has spearheaded several cleanup campaigns throughout the years, and has also been active in area youth projects.

Here's what James "Pop" Story, who nominated Gregory for this award, had to say about her:

"I have known Ruth Gregory for more than 50 years. She is a born leader and dedicated to serve youths, to serve the environment, to serve her fellow human beings and to serve her friends and neighbors in making Madison County a better place in which to live.

"Her accomplishments are numerous and reach all ages. She has worked with the PTA, with the Land-of-Sky Regional Council, with the Western North Carolina Community Development

Association, with Pisgah Council of the Girl Scouts and many more organizations. She is an active member of the Marshall United Methodist Church and accepts leadership roles in all progressive projects involving Marshall and Madison County. She is a most deserving asset to this area."

Gregory was selected "Citizen of the Month" by a panel of judges from the Madison County Board of Realtors.

She will receive lunch for two at French Broad Deli, dinner for two at Mary's Restaurant, a floral arrangement from Shadyside Florist and a one-year subscription to The News Record.

Those who submit the winning nomination will receive a bouquet from Mars Hill Florist.

Nominations for the next "Citizen of the Month" are due at The News Record by Tuesday. Residents of Madison County and North Buncombe County (the Weaverville and Leicester areas) are eligible.

Myths Surround Crime Of Rape

By ANNE KITCHELL
Staff Writer

One of the most traumatizing and violent crimes committed daily is rape.

The shocking statistics reflect a society in need of education to dispel the myths surrounding the nature of rape, say experts.

That's one reason Gov. James G. Martin has proclaimed June as "Rape Prevention Month," stating that citizens of North Carolina have a right to live in a rape-free society.

According to Nancy Oglevie of the Madison County Rape Crisis Center, the incidence of rape may not be increasing, but the number of reported cases is.

"Prior to May of 1986, before the Rape Crisis Center opened there was one reported rape case in 10 years," Oglevie said. "From May 1986 to December, we have assisted 56 new victims and presented programs to over 2,000 participants."

Oglevie said that the focus of the center is on prevention.

"We need to look at offenders and their behavior to see how we can change that to prevent assaults from occurring," she said. "Society needs to acknowledge that a high percentage of offenders were victimized as children, and that behavior can become a vicious cycle when they become adults."

Another area of concern for the Rape Crisis Center is an increase in

the occurrence of date rape.

Date rape can be defined as anytime a person is forced to have sex and his or her protests are ignored. If forced intercourse occurs, it is considered rape, but other sexual acts against the will of the partner are considered sexual offenses.

"Date rape victims are very reluctant to report the rape, and sometimes are not even aware that a rape has occurred," Oglevie said. "The victim may blame herself because she may feel she must have somehow consented or not fought hard enough."

More often than not, victims of date rape know their assailant and have consented to go out with the person, she said. The victim will often feel that because she has agreed to go on the date, she is responsible for the assault.

Regardless of the circumstances surrounding the rape, the victim needs unconditional support, Oglevie said. The Rape Crisis Center of Madison County does not tell the victim what they should do, but rather acts as a support system to help the victim regain control in his or her life, she said.

Rape crisis counselors feel that the most effective way of reducing the incidence of rape is through education and a common-sense approach.

For more information contact the Rape Crisis Center at 848-3312.