



League of United Latin American Citizens

Dave Rodriquez, California State Deputy Director

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Over 80 years of advocacy on behalf of the Latino community

Sunday, May 24, 2009

Re: City of Oxnard, 2030 Plan - Modification Request

- Ormond Beach

CITY OF OXNARD

MR. CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMSON

e-mail: CHRIS.WILLIAMSON@CI.OXNARD.CA.US

SENIOR PLANNER

214 SOUTH "C" STREET OXNARD, CA 93030

DEAR MR WILLIAMSON;

LULAC MISSION STATEMENT: The Mission of the League of United Latin American Citizens is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political influence, housing, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States.

Based on our Mission Statement and responsibilities, we respectfully request the City of Oxnard's 2030 Plan be modified to treat the area as a historic treasure. Our research shows a Chumash Indian Village thrived on Ormond Beach and is thought to have existed for more than a thousand years. This historic issue is another reason the Ormond Beach Wetlands should be restored and protected as a state or national preserve/park land.

Allowing any further building on the coastal side of Hueneme Road in the Ormond Beach area would be a travesty to our citizens. The only possible construction that should be permitted after the clean up and restoration, would be for a visitor's center with a museum expressing the history and explain the habitat of Ormond Beach Wetlands and possibly a nature board walk so visitors can view sensitive areas without leaving a footprint.

This area represents an important period in our history and it must be preserved for the use and benefit of our citizens. If properly developed; Ormond Beach will become nationally known wetlands that could be an important destination when visitors come to Southern California.

- Oxnard enjoys a 60 – 70% + ratio of Hispanics, many of which are in the lower income levels. It has been stated that; *"California has the highest concentration of minorities living near hazardous waste facilities in the U.S".*
- The Oxnard area has a very high ratio of Latinos and the most hazardous waste sites per-capita. In addition LULAC believes that this is an issue of environmental justice.
- The Ormond Beach Wetlands area is an essential element in protecting our legacy and future. LULAC has joined a coalition of likeminded environmental and social justice organizations and our coalition has drafted the below "HALACO/Ormond Beach Wetlands Wish List:

Environmental Coalition HALACO/Ormond Beach Wetlands Wish List:

1. All of the current wetlands property changed from private to public ownership, by eminent domain if necessary
2. Revision of Oxnard 2030 Plan Zoning from industrial to resource protection/ESHA. "*Environmental Sensitive Habitat Areas*."
3. Expedite demolition of Halaco plant.
4. Expedite removal of slag heap and waste settlement ponds.
5. Removal of non-native species.
6. Restoration to natural state.
 - Convert Ormond Beach Wetlands area into a Protected Habitat State or National Park
7. Ownership or management by a conservancy.
8. Protection of habitat and wildlife.
9. Remove one block of Perkins road and parking lot so riparian up land can be continued from Hueneme Road through the Halaco site.
10. US EPA Region 9 place into action the 1994 Executive Order 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations."
<http://www.epa.gov/oswer/ej/html-doc/execordr.htm>
11. Establish a: "Jean Harris - Cynthia Leake - Roma Armbrust Memorial Ormond Wetlands Visitors Center"

LULAC and other organizations are currently pursuing plans to expedite "quick start" the EPA Super Fund Cleanup of the Halaco Smelter, slag pile and old waste ponds. It would be a sad tragedy to have the area restored only to have commercial buildings constructed on this valuable public resource.

Please take our issues into account and modify the Oxnard City 2030 Plan. Anything we can do to assistance you, do not hesitate to call us.

Cordially,

Jim Hensley
LULAC Deputy Director District #17

cc:
LULAC State Director - Argentina Davila-Luevano
Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Diane Feinstein
Congresswoman Lois Capps
California Lt. Governor John Garamendi
California Attorney General Jerry Brown
State Lands Commissioner John Chiang
State Senator Fran Pavley
California Speaker of the House Karin Bass
Assemblywoman Julia Brownley 41st AD
Assemblyman Pedro Nava

Mexican American Bar Association "MABA"
Coastal Conservancy –
Environmental Defense Center
Sierra Club
Coastal Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy
"CAUSE"
Coastal Advocates – Susan Jordan
Pacific Environment – Rory Cox
Beacon Foundation – Jean Rountree
Saviers Road Design Team – Larry & Shirley Godwin
Earth Alert – Janet Bridgers
Oxnard College Marine Center – Dee Anderson
Rebecca Carlson - Marine Biology teacher-
Saint Bonaventure High School
CINMS - Channel Islands National Park & Channel
Islands National Marine Sanctuary - Chris Mobley -
Superintendent



STAR West County

www.VenturaCountyStar.com

Friday, May 29, 2009

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COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS WANT HALACO PLANT CLEANED UP



Photos by Rob Varela / Star staff

"People are stalling, and they stalled so long in shutting it down," said Jim Hensley, deputy director of the League of United Latin American Citizens in Oxnard. "We want it cleaned up."

Superfund site lacks plan, funds



Stimulus funds for cleanup unlikely

Oxnard officials say structures attract trespassers, graffiti

By Scott Hadly
shadly@VenturaCountyStar.com

Near the hollowed-out, rusted, graffiti-covered buildings of the shuttered Halaco metal-recycling plant, a group of community activists gathered Thursday at a dead end near an Oxnard beach, hoping to light a fire under local and federal officials to clean up the contaminated site.

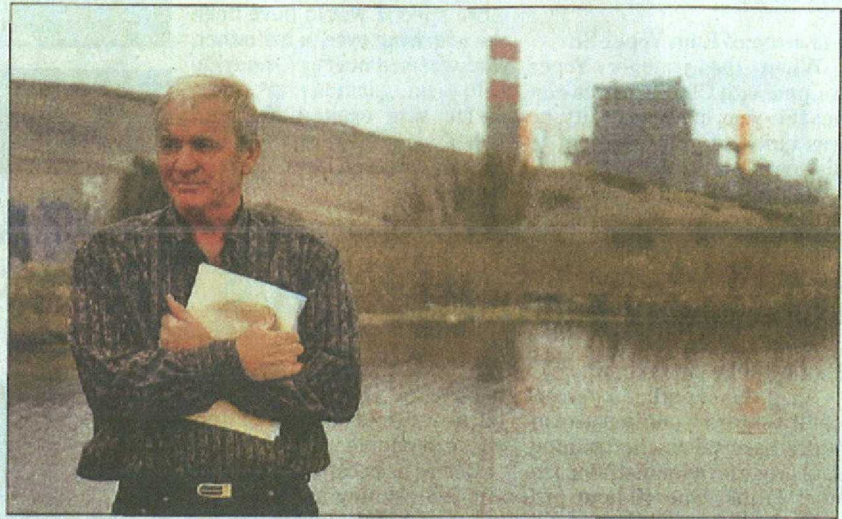
"People are stalling, and they stalled so long in shutting it down," said Jim Hensley, deputy director of the League of United Latin American Citizens in Oxnard. "We want it cleaned up."

Halaco had a checkered history during the 40 years it operated on the site at the end of Perkins Road in south Oxnard. The company, which closed in 2004, recycled mostly aluminum and magnesium. It was the target of repeated complaints about pollution from its smokestack and wastewater.

Over the decades of operation, it produced a small mountain of heavy metals and slag that grew to more than 700,000 cubic yards of waste. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finally stepped in and took over the site in 2006, and a year later, it was listed as a Superfund cleanup site.

But the methodical and long process of first studying and then developing a cleanup plan for the 40-acre site has left many residents impatient for results and suspicious about whether it will ever be cleaned up.

Wayne Praskins, the EPA's project manager for the Superfund program and the

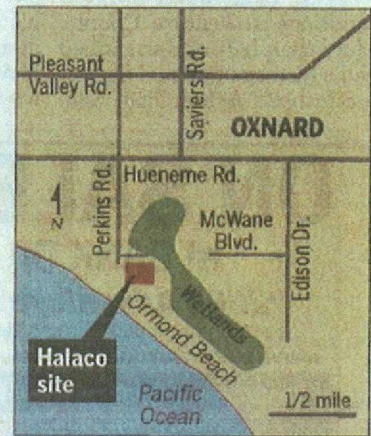


"This is a phenomenal natural area," said Trevor Smith, conservation chairman for the Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club, which wants the site cleaned up and integrated into surrounding wetlands.

Halaco site, said the agency is still developing a cleanup plan. One estimate to haul the waste material out of the site puts the cost at nearly \$100 million. Capping the pile somehow and leaving it on site would cost "tens of millions," he said. Other ideas include using some sort of on-site treatment, or reprocessing the waste magnesium for other purposes.

In any event, nothing has been decided, and a cleanup plan is more than a year away, Praskins said.

Oxnard city officials had been optimistic about getting federal stimulus money to help tear down the old structures on the site, which they say are public safety hazards that



See HALACO on B3

Star staff

HALACO

From B1

attract trespassers and graffiti artists.

But Praskins said Thursday that it doesn't look like there will be any federal money for demolishing the buildings. While they are a potential physical hazard, they're not considered an "environmental hazard," Praskins said.

City officials want them gone but don't want to assume the potential liability of dealing with contamination if they step in and tear them down. EPA officials say it could cost about \$500,000 to demolish the buildings, but city leaders say disposing of the hazardous materials could more than double that cost.

Martin Erickson, an assistant city manager in Oxnard, said the city is still working with officials in Washington, D.C., on finding money to take the buildings down.

Denis O'Leary, an Oxnard School District board member who was there Thursday with



son Dominick, said he believes the cleanup just isn't a priority for the officials. In early April, he and his son found two boxes of "environmental sampling" jars filled with material taken from the waste pile. The jars were dated June 2007.

"We called (the EPA) and were told they'd be cleaned up by the next day," O'Leary said. "Well, some of them are still there."

The EPA did remove the bulk of the material, but at least one jar was still at the site Thursday, within arm's reach of the gate.

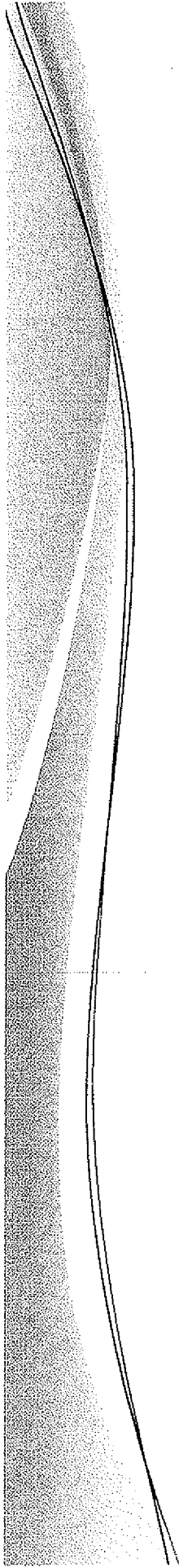
On hand with Hensley and O'Leary were representatives of the Sierra Club local chapter, Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy,

Ormond Beach Observers, Saviers Road Design Team and the Coastal Protection Network as well as representatives from the city and EPA.

All those who spoke Thursday said they wanted the site cleaned up and integrated into the surrounding wetlands.

"Why wouldn't you want the Coastal Conservancy or some other agency like that to integrate it into the entire system?" said Trevor Smith, conservation chairman for the Los Padres Chapter of the Sierra Club.

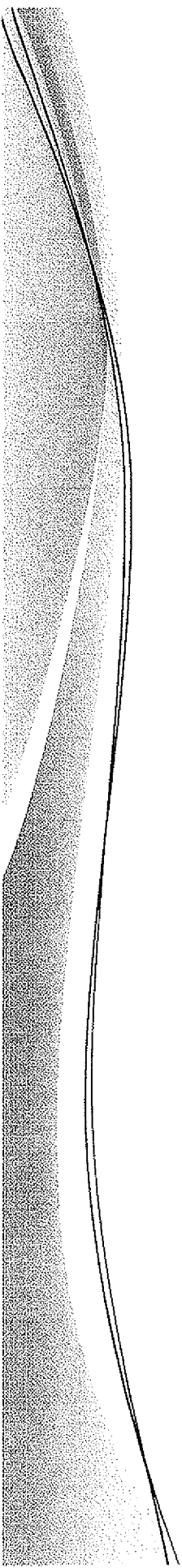
Looking at a lagoon dotted with ducks and the surrounding wetlands, he added, "This is a phenomenal natural area."



Ormond Beach Wetlands



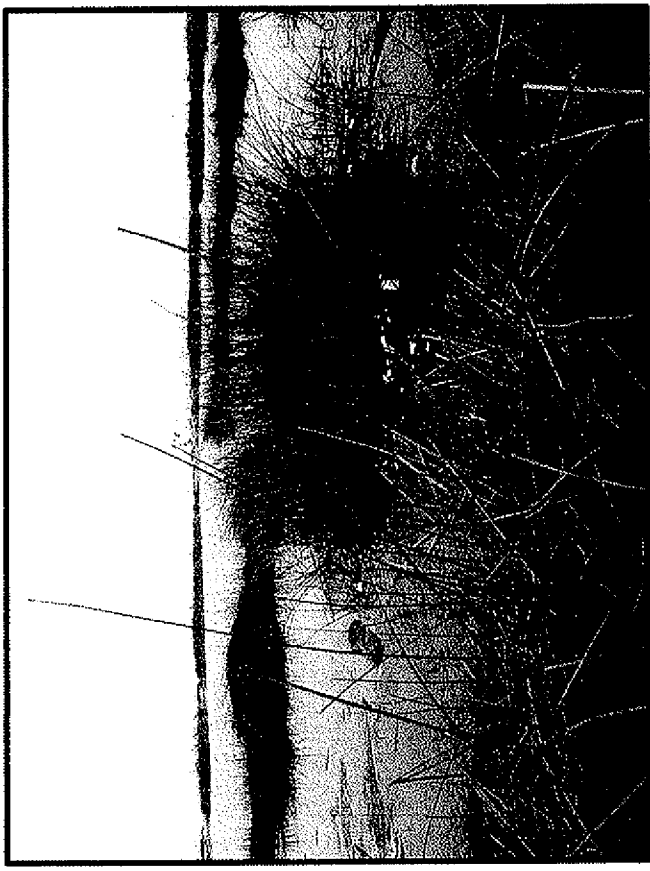
Oxnard's Future National
Coastal Visitors Center



Ormond Wetlands



- Natures' preserve back into prehistory
- Natives established use of its abundance of life thousands of years ago



Today's scenic view

The criminal damage begins

- August 1965:
Halaco builds
its recycling
plant on top of
the old Oxnard
city dump.




July 1969:
Halaco
licensed for
smelting
magnesium
alloyed with
radioactive
thorium.

Halaco photo 1972



1972 Halaco Hill growth filling in Ormond
Lagoon – Settling ponds in back of hill



How we care for

empties trash in Wetlands





Ormond Beach Wetlands

- Oxnard's toxic cesspool for 50 + years
 - Pesticides – from major Ag/Industrial drains
 - Bacteria – Industrial drains used for dumping trash
 - Heavy metals – slag heap & smelter.
 - Trash/Burn Dump
 - Smelter Plant uncontrolled, slag heap filling lagoon
 - Testimony of buried radio active materials.
 - All exposed to ocean tides and aquifers





Ormond Wetlands?

Officials argue to build

The old way,

- Use and abuse for profit?
- Light industrial to create jobs?
- Parking for auto shipping?
- Condo's?

Restoration - Save Wetlands

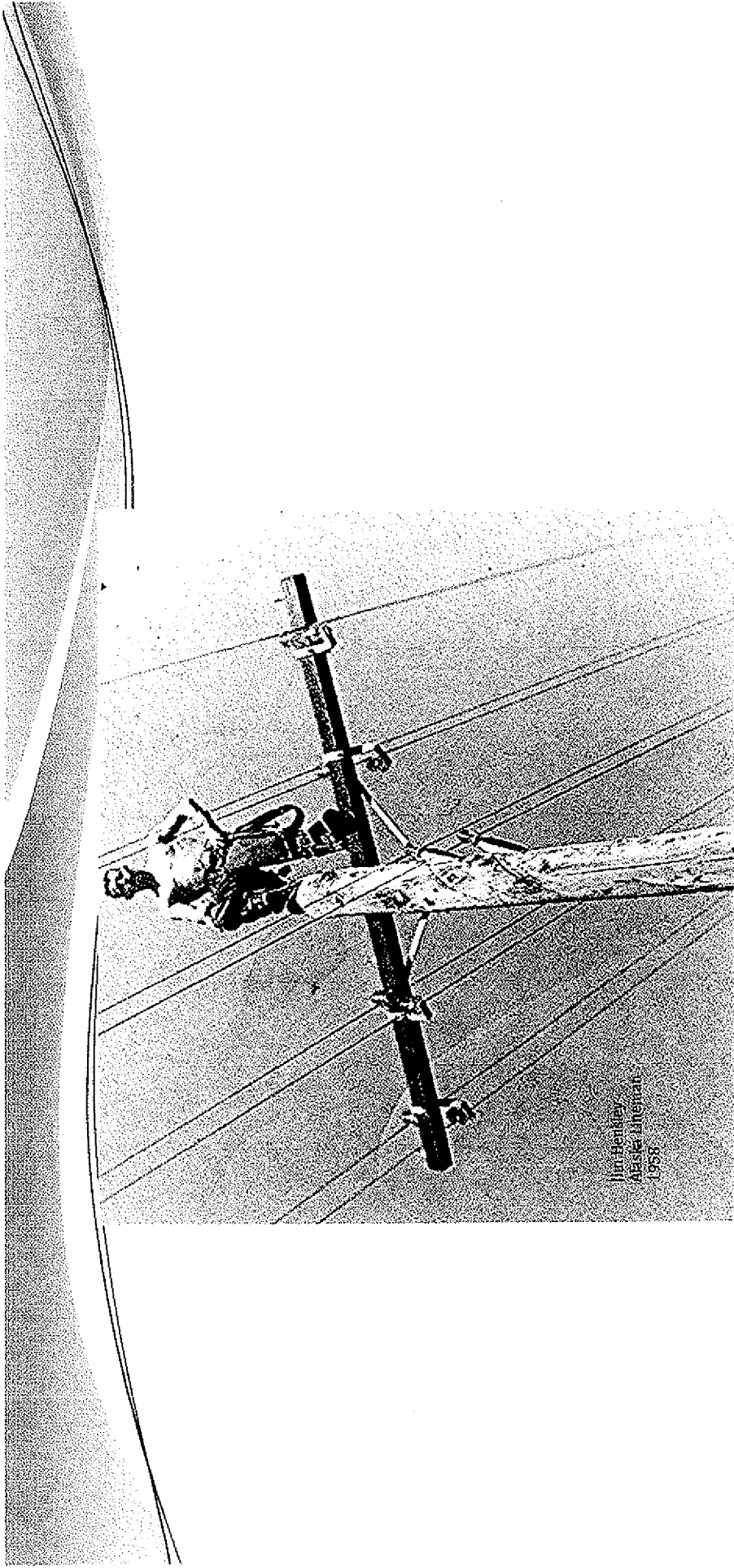
New Age thinking

- Valuable resource – habitat
- Empty industrial vacancies
- Restoration creates jobs.
- Parks & visitors center.
- National preserve will be valued tourist destination
- Condo's on other side of Hueneme Road



Ormond Wetlands future

- Currently, property negative value
- Allow environmental groups/agencies work for EPA clean up
- Sell property to Coastal Conservancy
- Turn property into State or National Park
- Employment with maintenance and tourism
- 5% of California Wetlands left
- Ormond Beach Wetlands becomes valuable historic asset



Jim Hensley
Alaskan Lineman
1958

An Alaskan Lineman Production by

Jim Hensley