

Scrap or salvage vehicles ...

Can you imagine allowing new City or County employees to interpret ordinances which have the force of law, without public hearings or adoption by any governing body?

Judge Coates could not.

And in a ruling with far-reaching import, she ruled that she was not "bound" by an interpretation by a City employee and dismissed two of the citations against a county resident.

But how she concluded that this resident was in violation of any county zoning ordinance (and by the way, the county does not have authority to adopt ordinances), remains a puzzle to me.

Don't get me wrong. I think the judge bailed out a county resident who may have been wrongfully convicted of the charges leveled against him in another courtroom. Judge Coates did a masterful job of sorting through these over-charged non-violations and reached, basically, the proper conclusion in terms of the resident storing scrap or salvage vehicles on his property.

But where I believe she erred was in finding him guilty of a charge he did not face.

She commented that she was "troubled" by a picture taken on July 17 by the County employee, which showed "vegetation" under his car. That picture is shown below. Whether there is vegetation present or not is immaterial. He was not charged under the Nuisance Regulations where having vegetation (weeds) could constitute a violation. But then only when those weeds present a much different hazard or health problem than is obviously present in this picture.



Had the resident been charged with a violation of Nuisance Regulations, which was a better alternative and the only place where an unlicensed vehicle is mentioned, he still would not have been guilty of any violation. This vehicle, while unlicensed, would fall under the definition of a "vehicle kept for hobby work."

Section III-A: Exemptions: (6) a) "The maintenance of two (2) inoperable and unregistered vehicles for renovation on property located inside the zoned boundaries of Laramie County shall not be considered public nuisance."

Judge Coates, in my opinion, while disposing of the improper charges of "storing scrap or salvage vehicles," made a correctable mistake by assessing a fine for what she considered a violation of the Nuisance Regulations because the property owner was not cited for that and, if he were, he is allowed two inoperable and unlicensed vehicles on his property if he is repairing them and that is the case with the specific vehicle which, although not identified until trial, was and is undergoing repair and restoration.

All of the County employees involved in this travesty are under the control and supervision of the County Commissioners. The commissioners need to hold them accountable and make certain that such an abuse of discretion and authority does not happen again.

The City must take a message from the Judge's ruling as well. They need to hold public hearings and adopt definitions where vague and uncertain terms can be used in contradiction to code and state law to try to punish residents who are uncooperative but not violating any enforceable rule, ordinance or statute.

The Million water pipeline

Colorado businessman's project will take 250,000 - 450,000 acre-feet of water from Flaming Gorge Reservoir to Colorado Front Range users - ANNUALLY!

Developing ...

In an under-reported story in Cheyenne media, a Fort Collins businessman has designs on building a 400-mile water pipeline from the Flaming Gorge Reservoir in western Wyoming, east across the state - along I-80 to Laramie, down US287 - south as far as Pueblo.

While no approvals have been granted, Aaron Million as recently as last Friday (December 1) briefed the board of directors of Cheyenne's Board of Public Utilities about his plan.

Cheyenne Herald research indicates that Flaming Gorge is entirely within the states of Utah and Wyoming. The land and water is almost equally divided between the two states - over 207,000 acres of land and 3.8 million acre-feet of "conservation pool" water - that is usable water, not counting deal pool.

Tim Wilson of BOPU told the Herald that there may be the volume of water sought available from Flaming Gorge as "Colorado unappropriated" water.

Putting that volume of water into perspective, the City of Cheyenne and other users of water produced by the City, only consume (including irrigation) about 20,000 acre-feet of water per year. The routing, or rerouting, of water from Flaming Gorge into Colorado would amount to over twenty (20) years supply for Cheyenne.

The more precise location of the Reservoir is: The northern tip is just 10 miles southeast of Green River and 14 miles southwest of Rock Springs and 43 miles north of Vernal, Utah.

Colorado is never mentioned in any context having to do with the Flaming Gorge Reservoir - as to entitlement to water.

When asked why the architect of a water pipeline to carry the resource into Colorado met with Cheyenne's BOPU, Wilson said the guy was interested in whether Cheyenne would be interested in accessing water (presumably Wyoming appropriated water) or whether there might be any other interest in the pipeline construction, if accomplished.

The City of Cheyenne has water storage at the Hog Park Reservoir but no means to transport it to Cheyenne. It is now used for trade with the State of Wyoming.

So, if someone can get easements, rights and permits to construct this lengthy pipeline, it would be just as easy to lay multiple pipes as one.

The Flaming Gorge Reservoir is the result of damming the Green River. It was built to "impound spring floods in the Green River and store them for year-round use for Arizona, Nevada, and southern California." At least that is the use of the Utah portion of the water.

Flaming Gorge Reservoir is second only to Lake Powell in size and recreational popularity and is within Daggett County in Utah and Uinta County in Wyoming.



The dam is over 500 feet tall, began construction in 1958 and was completed in 1964.

The Green River flows south from the Wind River Range to the Utah state line in Wyoming. The Wind River Mountains are the source of the Green River. They are the highest mountain range in Wyoming.

Thirteen years ago, the greatest fear for the Reservoir was logging and oil drilling upstream and the resulting watershed damages to streams that flow directly into the Reservoir. Clear cutting forests can have the long-term impact of erosion.

Former Wyoming State Engineer Jeff Fassett is serving as consultant on the project. One of the stated concerns is that this is a private project and that getting approval to build the pipeline would be more likely if it were the State of Colorado fronting the deal.

In the Cheyenne area, approximately 20,000 acre-feet of water serves an estimated 80,000 people, plus irrigation. On that basis, 250,000 acre-feet should be adequate for a million Front Range residents, plus irrigation. On the high end, 450,000 acre feet would nearly double that service population.

Why, if this water can be moved from Flaming Gorge, hasn't the State of Wyoming considered a similar project? Obviously the end users aren't present in Wyoming but half the amount Aaron Million would like to remove from the Reservoir would take care of the entire population of Wyoming.

Who is Aaron Million and what chance does he have of accomplishing this project? Is he another Michael Spitzauer (trash to diesel) or is for real? This story is just beginning. More on him later.

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