

Oil transfer station at Kodak site angers environmentalists

Expected to come within a few hundred yards of the Poudre River, a planned major crude oil "transloading" station at the former Eastman Kodak site in Windsor is angering environmentalists who fear oil spills and leaks could ravage the river.

As a sign of the local impact of Northern Colorado's Niobrara shale oil play, the Musket Corp. announced in January that it plans to redevelop part of a 320-acre parcel of the Kodak site, now part of the Great Western Industrial Park, to build a storage facility for up to 48,000 barrels of crude oil. The facility is expected to employ eight people.

In its announcement, the company said the site will be able to store, load and transport up to 5.8 million barrels of oil annually.

Musket announced its plans two weeks before Halliburton said it would build a sand terminal within the industrial park to serve oil and gas companies drilling the Niobrara shale in Weld, Larimer and other northeast Colorado counties.

Four new miles of Great Western Railway track will serve both the Halliburton sand

terminal and the Musket crude oil transloading site, which the company calls a "pipeline-by-rail" facility capable of handling trains of up to 110 cars carrying Niobrara crude.

The Windsor Planning Commission on Wednesday recommended that the Windsor Town Board annex the Musket site.

"Crude oil will be brought to the site via truck transport, pumped either directly into staged rail cars for shipment offsite or pumped into storage tanks temporarily for future loading onto rail cars," a site plan amendment document filed with Weld County in January states.

Each day, up to 94 heavy trucks would ship loads of crude oil to the storage tanks and rail line via Colorado Highway 257, generating up to 212 daily truck trips to and from the oil fields, according to a traffic impact analysis for the facility filed with Weld County.

"The project is still in the permitting

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process, so we're just in the very beginning stages," said Kyla Turner, communications manager for Musket, adding that no further information about the company's plans was available Thursday.

Windsor Mayor John Vazquez said Musket will have a positive impact on Windsor because of the jobs it will create, but the town does have concerns about how rail traffic will be managed.

"We feel we can work through some of the details," he said.

Members of the Fort Collins environmental group Save the Poudre said they're worried that oil spills from the site could contaminate the Poudre River.

"The property is about 400 yards from the Poudre River, slightly uphill, with a ditch flowing directly and into the Poudre River off of the property," said Gary Wockner of Save the Poudre. "Save the Poudre has ongoing concerns about this proposed development, in addition to Halliburton's proposed development on the property next door, in such close proximity to the Poudre River."

He said he wonders if the town of Windsor can assure the public that Musket's operations won't contaminate the river.

"Really, that's incumbent on the operator," Vazquez said. "This isn't the first oil repository that's existed in close proximity of a river system. Look at Commerce City, they have a boatload of them" along the

South Platte River.

The Suncor oil refinery in Commerce City has been found to be heavily contaminating both Sand Creek and the South Platte River via a toxic seep of benzene.

"We encourage citizens who use the Poudre River Trail beside this (Musket) property to keep an eye out for air and water pollution in and near the ditch that flows from the property into the river," Wockner said.

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