

BATTLE ON HORIZON OVER QUARRY

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Philip and Gerry Pederson are concerned about a proposed quarry and asphalt plant adjacent to their property east of Wheatland.

Residents east of Wheatland are teaming up to fight plans for a quarry and asphalt batch plant near their homes.

DeSilva Gates Construction has filed an application with Yuba County for the Ostrom Road Quarry, an aggregate mine on 315 acres northeast of Wheatland adjacent to Beale Air Force Base.

The mine would operate for about 20 years, according to documents filed with the county.

Owners of 15 homes on Eric Lane, just south of the property line, are concerned.

"Most homes on the north side of the road have a clear area view of the property," said Eric Lane homeowner Mike Morrison.

"Without a doubt there will be unfettered direction for noise, dust and chemicals from the batch plant," he said.

The residents have held several meetings to prepare for a public scoping meeting Wednesday to voice concerns about the project. "The meeting is designed for the community to come in and voice their opinions and give comments," said Kevin Perkins, Yuba County's assistant planner. "If it's something that needs to be addressed, it will be addressed in the project's EIR."

DeSilva representative Bob McCarrick will be at the meeting to listen to the residents. McCarrick said he recently learned about their concerns.

Depreciation of property values and the depletion of private wells top the list.

"Most of the folks around here don't have wells that produce a tremendous amount of water," said resident Philip Pederson. "If they start dropping the water table out here, you are looking at a lot of people who are going to be thirsty real fast."

DeSilva estimates water use from on-site wells at 380,000 gallons per day.

"We don't expect any changes to the water table and will monitor to make sure it doesn't happen," McCarrick said.

Many on Eric Lane are angry they weren't informed about the quarry plans earlier.

McCarrick said his company has been working on the project for about three years and turned in an application to the county in April 2005. A notification letter wasn't sent to Eric Lane residents until last month. Residents on the south side of Eric Lane weren't notified at all.

"It is certainly going to have a substantial impact on my property because of the proximity, but I wasn't notified, written or otherwise," Morrison said.

County officials said they recently extended the project's disclosure process to include residents within a half mile of the property instead of the legal requirement of 300 feet.

"And anyone who wants to be added to the list, if they contact us, will be added to the list," Perkins said.

McCarrick said he's also willing to discuss details of the project with residents.

But Eric Lane residents still need convincing.

"I believe they were able to purchase the property at an appropriate price," said Morrison. "And they weren't concerned with what they assumed would be a small number of homes up here that were under-financed and unable to do anything about them moving in."

"It's because they think we are country nincompoops," Virginia Monroy added. "They think if you live out like this, then you don't have any brains. In this case, they ran up against some people who know what's going on."