

Quarry Quandary

Tim Smith, Santa Rosa Press-Democrat, 6-19-10

Smith is a business and estate planning attorney. He has served as mayor of Rohnert Park, chair of the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency and president of the Redwood Empire Municipal Insurance Fund.

A proposal by North Bay Construction to develop a rock quarry along Roblar Road in our south county has so far garnered little attention considering its important implications. While the Petaluma Argus-Courier published a well-researched article by staff reporter Philip Riley last month as well as responses to inquiries made about the proposed project by second district supervisor candidates, otherwise this issue has not as yet seemed to cause concerns county-wide. That's likely to change.

Sonoma County Citizens for Responsible Land Use have united to advocate against the Roblar Rock Quarry for a number of reasons. These include:

- ◆ Many significant environmental concerns caused by development of a rock quarry adjacent to an unlined and uncapped landfill closed years ago.
- ◆ Land subject to the Williamson Act being developed for uses not consistent with the purposes of the Act.
- ◆ Use of land subject to an open space easement that was acquired on behalf of all Sonoma County residents by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District being used for purposes that do not promote agricultural preservation and actually diminish open space protection.

As a former member of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District Advisory Committee appointed by the Sonoma County Mayors' and Councilmembers' Association it is particularly disturbing to learn that this proposal which, if completed, would irrevocably erode public trust in the "Forever Protected" status of lands financed by the District with hard-earned taxpayer funds could even get this far along the California Environmental Quality Act review process.

Those who wish to support the Sonoma County Citizens for Responsible Land Use should plan to show-up in Cotati on July 11, 2010 for a free benefit rock concert at La Plaza Park, co-sponsored by Zone Music, from Noon to 6pm.

Great local performers scheduled include The Pulsators, Danny Sorentino and a reunion of Bronze Hog. Speakers will include Cotati Mayor Robert Coleman-Senghor and Petaluma Mayor Pamela Torliatt.