

Darrah issue looked into

Anthony Bator, Siskiyou Daily News, 4-7-11

Letter to the editor

We have all read the handful of emotional letters penned by Fred and Beverly Overmiller. As residents of Mount Shasta, they have repeatedly expressed their fears of the ill health effects caused by gravel mining at the toe of Black Butte. Specifically, they have alerted the public to take action against a neighboring business operated by Keith Darrah.

Their concerns seem rational, perhaps even heart-wrenching. Mrs. Obermiller in particular has publicly shared her personal bout with a rare respiratory disease. She also shares her view that her condition may be directly related to the gravel mining occurring on land next door.

At first read I shared the Obermiller's outrage! Their letters to the editor are emotional and share their story of personal tragedy allegedly caused by the conduct of one neighbor. While I have no personal "dog in this fight," the Obermillers' letters motivated me to look into the matter for myself.

What I discovered is truly outrageous!

Fred and Beverly Obermiller are apparently in the gravel mining business themselves. A quick drive to their property on Truck Village Drive and Birch Lane revealed a commercial rock pit, complete with a dump truck, front-end loader, bulldozer, material screens, stockpiles of rock, and a large pit surrounded by steep banks. A very messy and dusty operation. By simply asking around I learned that the Obermiller's have allowed another neighbor, Monte Mort (recently deceased), to sell gravel from this pit on their land!

Do I smell a conflict of interest here?

Being a rational person I wonder whether the dust created from the Obermiller's rock pit, which is much closer to their home than the activities of Mr. Darrah, is any less hazardous to their health, especially given the rare respiratory ailment purportedly caused by area dust. I looked further into the matter. I called the planners at the County to learn whether the Obermiller's quarry was legal, whether they had the necessary permits to operate, whether they were subject to periodic inspection by governmental agencies, whether there is any record of sales tax payments for the rock sold, whether they were required to use any techniques to minimize dust or noise, etc. The answer is NO!

Shame on you Fred and Beverly Obermiller. You have abused my sympathies for personal gain. I shall not be misled by you again!