

# Supervisors Approve Rock Quarry Project

**Tina Falco, My Mother Lode News, 4-6-11**

SONORA -- The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved plans for the Cooperstown Quarry project.

The rock quarry near Jamestown would entail the removal of 56 million tons of crushed rock over a 75-year period.

The proposed site owned by Jack and Tricia Gardella, would be located off Cooperstown Road in southwest Tuolumne County next to the Stanislaus County line about nine miles south of Knight's Ferry.

In a public hearing last month, the project had raised concerns with Oakdale and Riverbank officials regarding possible negative impacts on traffic and the environment. Some residents that were opposed to the project also recommended that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) be conducted.

Although an EIR had not been made, a Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared and was in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

"There were a lot of concerns about the failure to do an EIR versus a Mitigated Negative Declaration," said District 3 Supervisor Evan Royce. "But this is a very extensive environmental document and I think we've done a good job to work with all the concerns."

In endorsing the project back in February, the Tuolumne County Planning Commission made a series of recommendations. They include that the applicant make improvements to Cooperstown Road, plant new oak trees to offset those that will be removed, the hours for loading train cars should be 5am to 10pm, and rock products loaded in cars should be watered down to control dust. With the reduced amount of operation hours, the number of jobs created from this project would decrease from 45 to 30.

In addition to the Planning Commission's recommendations, the staff also included an indemnification agreement, to encourage the operator to hire local vendors, to establish a location for a helicopter landing spot by the mine, that trains would be limited to 60 cars, and the mine operator would participate in a stake holders group with Oakdale, Riverbank, Stanislaus County and the Sierra Railroad to address train issues.

The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors approved both the Planning Commission's recommendations and the additions.