

Rock plant sparks debate

Quarry planned on Flintstone Ave. in Mountain Gate area

Damon Arthur, Redding Record-Searchlight, 11-25-11

A proposed rock plant on Flintstone Avenue has caused a few ripples of controversy.

Neighbors Bob Sweet and Sheryl Sampley are friends. They talk regularly over coffee, but they disagree about the proposed Moody Flats Quarry that would be built about a half-mile from where they live on Flintstone Avenue in Mountain Gate.

Sweet believes that if officials with Moody Flats LLC want to build an aggregate plant on 345 acres about a half-mile from his home, that is their right.

"They own the property and they should be able to do what they want with it," Sweet said.

But Sampley, who lives down the street from Sweet, is adamantly against the plant.

"My thought is, it stinks," Sampley said.

Both will get the opportunity to learn much more about the plant and offer their opinions. The Shasta County Board of Supervisors has agreed to hire the De Novo Planning Group of Sacramento to prepare an environmental impact report on the project. De Novo will be paid \$424,506 for the report and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

Moody Flats LLC, a subsidiary of the 3M company, is paying for the reports. Shasta County Assistant Planning Director Rick Simon said county officials did an initial assessment of the project and determined it would have numerous significant environmental impacts, including air quality, traffic, noise and aesthetic.

Simon said he didn't know the extent of the environmental impacts, but they would be determined through environmental review and available in the report.

A report on the project prepared in December 2009 and updated in May 2010 by Benchmark Resources of El Dorado Hills, says there would be rock crushing plants on the site, as well as an asphalt plant, a ready mix concrete plant and a concrete recycling plant.

Materials would be removed from the ground through drilling, blasting and using excavating equipment. Blasting would occur on weekdays and not on weekends and holidays, the report says. Operators foresee quarry pits reaching 425 feet deep.

"Explosive materials, typically ammonium nitrate and fuel oil (ANFO), may be stored on site," the Benchmark report says.

The quarry would generate 51,765 one-way vehicle trips daily per year, or 489 one-way trips a day, the report says. At full build out, the report says there would be two trains a day — each one hauling 100 cars — leaving the site.

The plant would employ 25 to 50 people and would be located about a mile west of Interstate 5, near the Wonderland Boulevard exit and just north of the city of Shasta Lake.

The proposed quarry would dwarf all of the existing 28 aggregate plants in Shasta County. The Moody Flats plant would produce from 1.5 million to 2 million tons of aggregate a year, according to De Novo's proposal to prepare the environmental report.

The aggregate plants currently operating in Shasta County produce about 1.4 million tons annually, or about 50,000 tons per plant, Senior Shasta County Planner Bill Walker said earlier this year.

About 75 percent of the rock from the plant would be shipped out of the area, much of it to the Bay Area, Walker said. In addition to trucking their products, Moody flats also wants to build a rail spur to haul their materials by train.

About 80 percent of the property is already zoned for mineral resources, but the remainder would need to be rezoned from suburban residential and rural residential to mineral resource, according to De Novo's proposal.

Flintstone Avenue resident Pete Droesch said he didn't think there would be too much noise or traffic created by the project. He was concerned about dust, but he said he lives in the country where already it is dusty.

"I don't have a problem. Progress is progress," Droesch said.

Sheryl Sampley's husband, Rob, said he was more concerned Moody Flats would hurt his welding business. Sampley said he does welding for many of the existing quarries and aggregate plants in the county.