



STOP THE DUMP IN SUNOL

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Local Environmental Groups Unite to Protect Sunol Valley

Save Our Sunol (SOS), Stop the Dump in Sunol (SDS) and the Alameda Creek Alliance (ACA) have formed a coalition to focus and intensify efforts to save the rural character, open space and wildlife habitat of the Sunol Valley. The groups are uniting to combat continuing industrialization of the Sunol Valley, particularly two large-scale quarries and a compost dump approved by Alameda County.

Since 1991, SOS has been leading the fight to prevent Mission Valley Rock Company from excavating a 240-foot deep gravel pit over the next 45 years on publicly-owned prime agricultural land in Water Temple Field north of Highway 680, adjacent to the town of Sunol. Alameda County granted the mining permit in 1995 and the S. F. Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) ignored protests of local residents and proposed alternative uses for the land put forward by SOS in approving the project. The gravel quarry would expose Sunol residents to unacceptable levels of noise and dust, cause siltation of Alameda Creek, disrupt wildlife habitat, and devastate this bucolic area. SOS has led unsuccessful litigation seeking enforcement of Measure D, which disallows new quarries in unincorporated areas without a vote of the electorate.

SOS was formed in 1991 and is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the unique resources in the rural area of Sunol. Sunolians first mobilized to protect their town in 1974 as SCORE (Sunol Citizens Organized Regarding the Environment), to prevent housing tracts from being built on top of the Sunol-Pleasanton Ridge. In 1983, SCORE members and other local citizens mounted the only successful countywide referendum, forcing Alameda County to rescind their approval of the ill-conceived development. SOS was formed when the county approved 2,640 homes in upper Sinbad Canyon. Visit the SOS web site at www.sunol.org.

In 1984, Alameda County approved the Apperson Ridge Quarry, a hard rock mine proposed east of the Sunol Valley, midway between Sunol Regional Wilderness and San Antonio Reservoir. Oliver de Silva, Inc. plans to begin mining soon and destroy 680 acres of prime wildlife habitat in the heart of the home range of the San Antonio tule elk herd. The quarry will feature daily dynamite blasting that will be heard in Sunol Wilderness and the town of Sunol as well as up to 1,000 trucks per day on Calaveras Road. Alameda County conducted the EIR for the quarry in 1984. Since that time the Alameda whipsnake, California red-legged frog, and California tiger salamander, rare species all inhabiting the quarry site, were listed under the Endangered Species Act. Despite inadequate or non-existent mitigations for the quarry's impacts on these species, the county has refused to conduct further environmental review and will allow the quarry to go forward with full knowledge the quarrying will evict the San Antonio elk herd.

The ACA was formed in August of 1997 after steelhead trout in the Central California Coast were listed as a federally threatened species. ACA works to protect and improve the habitat for

endangered, threatened and native species and to restore the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek watershed. The ACA has been leading efforts to restore salmon and steelhead trout to Alameda Creek and the Sunol Valley. The ACA has also been alerting Bay Area residents to the devastating impact the Apperson Quarry will have on Sunol's wildlife and attempting to have the county re-open the environmental review process for the quarry. Visit the ACA web site at www.alamedacreek.org.

SDS was formed in the summer of 2004 to challenge and prevent siting of a 40 acre compost dump on SFPUC land on Andrade Road next to the driving range in Sunol. Alameda County has misclassified this project as a composting facility. The Alameda County Waste Management Authority is moving forward at an alarming pace to build this recycling dump that will initially accept over 600 tons of rotting food daily, generating in excess of 52 tons of ammonia into the air and our water system annually. This amount could easily double or triple as the dump expands. The EIR for the project exposes 12 significant and unavoidable impacts to the environment. This plant will generate litter, toxics, an inconceivable odor and infestations resulting in potential health problems for people living miles away. The site is currently publicly-owned open space grassland that provides habitat for numerous rare birds of prey. The Andrade Road site is an inappropriate location for a facility of this type. Visit the SDS web site at www.stophedumpinsunol.org.

As a result of their first meeting together, the groups realized that the potential devastation of the Sunol area was far greater than any one group had previously believed. For instance, the proposed dump on Andrade road will produce an extra 500 truck trips per day on local roads and freeways, and add to that the 1,000 truck trips a day from the Apperson Quarry. Air and water quality impacts are likewise accumulative. Relying on the county or the courts to enforce Measure D has not been successful thus far in preserving agricultural open space in the Sunol Valley. The groups will be pursuing a long range strategy to protect the region. They urge the citizens and local governments to support the struggle in preserving this piece of heaven.