

## UPDATE ON HIGHWAY 33 TRUCK TRAFFIC

March 20, 2007

I'm writing today to give you an update on efforts to stop excessive gravel truck traffic on Scenic Highway 33. As you know, the proposed Diamond Rock Sand & Gravel Mine and several other existing mines are adding too much truck traffic to Scenic Highway 33. If approved, the Diamond Rock mine *alone* could add as many as 138 truck trips *per day* to Scenic Highway 33. And plans are underway to expand two other mines in the area, sending even more trucks through the heart of the Los Padres National Forest and negatively impacting nearby communities in the Ojai and Cuyama valleys.

### **Announcing "The Committee to Stop the Trucks"**

In January, ForestWatch organized a town meeting in Ojai, and more than 130 people packed Chaparral Auditorium on a rainy night to find out more about this issue. Since then, several community leaders who attended that town meeting have joined together to form the "Committee to Stop the Trucks"! During the next few weeks, the Committee will be busy preparing for the upcoming public hearings (described below). The Committee is moving forward on several effective strategies aimed at stopping excessive truck traffic on Scenic Highway 33.

### **County Receives More Than 300 Letters**

The public comment period for the Diamond Rock Mine's Draft Environmental Impact Report closed on January 31, 2007. We're pleased to report that **more than three hundred individuals, businesses, and organizations wrote letters** to the County voicing their concerns about adding even more trucks to Scenic Highway 33!

ForestWatch submitted a detailed comment letter on the report's inadequate evaluation of impacts to air quality and forest recreation - you can read our letter by visiting our website at [www.LPFW.org](http://www.LPFW.org). Others voicing their concerns during the comment period were: Ojai Chamber of Commerce, Ventura County Supervisor Steve Bennett, Ojai City Council, Ojai Unified School District, the U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Fish & Game, Ventura and Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control Districts, Ojai Valley Municipal Advisory Council, Chumash Council of Bakersfield, Santa Ynez Band of Mission Indians, the Los Padres Forest Association, Keep the Sespe Wild, Sierra Club, Mira Monte Beautification Committee, Ojai Valley Board of Realtors, Ojai Valley Green Coalition, Environmental Coalition of Ventura County, Cuyama Valley residents and landowners, and hundreds of other agencies, organizations, local businesses, and individuals.

Your letters will have a tremendous impact on how decision makers vote on this project. Thanks for taking the time to voice your concerns! Now, our focus shifts to the public hearing.

## **Public Hearing Scheduled for Diamond Rock Mine**

**A public hearing has been set for Wednesday, May 30, 2007 at 9:00am in Santa Maria.** At this hearing, the County Planning Commission will decide whether to approve the Diamond Rock Sand & Gravel Mine and Processing Facility. Despite our requests to have this meeting in Santa Barbara, the County is moving forward with plans to hold the hearing in Santa Maria. We realize that this is a long drive for many of you, but **your attendance at this hearing is very important**, for two reasons. First, it may be the only opportunity we have to address the Planning Commission with our concerns directly, in person. And second, you'll help us pack the hearing room with people, showing our strength in numbers! Stay tuned for information on this critically important hearing, including carpool and/or bus information. Mark your calendars and do not miss this hearing!

## **Public Hearing Expected Soon for Ozena Mine**

Another proposal – this one to expand the existing Ozena Mine located in Ventura County – will be up for review soon and could also have dramatic impacts for the forest and nearby towns. This mine is currently allowed to send as many as one hundred truck trips per day on Scenic Highway 33.

The Ozena mine has submitted an application to double production (and the number of daily truck trips). This proposal was scheduled for approval in Fall 2006, but in response to letters from ForestWatch and other groups, the County postponed the hearing indefinitely. We understand that Ventura County is close to announcing a hearing date, and the mine expansion **may come up for a vote at the Ventura County Planning Commission within the next sixty days.**

Ventura County's Planning Department is refusing to prepare a full Environmental Impact Report for this mine expansion. It will be important to pack the hearing room full of people demanding that they prepare a full EIR, as required by our state's environmental protection laws. We'll keep you updated as soon as we hear more details about the hearing.

## **What You Can Do**

*1. Support Our Efforts*-The applicant for the Diamond Rock mine has hired a corporate law firm from San Francisco, and they're going to great lengths (and spending lots of money) to get as many trucks as they want rumbling down Scenic Highway 33 through our forest and towns. We need your support to counteract the mining company and its attorneys. Fighting a proposal of this magnitude will take a lot of time, effort, and money, but with your support, we can make a difference. **Now is our chance to let our voices be heard!** [Visit our website](#) to find out how you can support our efforts to stop excessive truck traffic on Scenic Highway 33 through our forest and towns.

2. *Plan on Attending the Public Hearings* - Stay tuned for updates - we will post notices of upcoming hearings on our website and this email list. Updates will also be posted at [ojaipost.com](http://ojaipost.com)

3. *Help Spread the Word!* - Forward this email to your friends who might share your concerns about excessive truck traffic on Scenic Highway 33. If they would like to be added to our email list to receive updates, they can send an email to [info@LPFW.org](mailto:info@LPFW.org) with the words SUBSCRIBE TRUCKS in the subject line.

Stay tuned, and thanks for your interest in stopping excessive truck traffic on Scenic Highway 33!

Sincerely,

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*Forest Watch is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization working to protect and restore the natural and cultural heritage of the Los Padres National Forest and other public lands along California's Central Coast. Join us today at [www.LPFW.org](http://www.LPFW.org)*