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**OPINION**

**Krouse/Hill river mining again?**

BY STEVE ROUSE

Congratulations to the Applegate community for your support in denying the proposed river mines.

But are the Krouse/Hill mines back in the news again?

To recap, 700 letters from the community voicing their opposition to these mines resulted in denial by Jackson County. The arguments presented by the community were so convincing that Copeland determined that appeals to the Land Use Board of Appeals would be unsuccessful. It became evident during the appeal hearing that North Applegate Road is substandard by today's requirements. It would be too dangerous to be used as a haul route for the Krouse mine. The transportation application was denied.

Jackson County initially approved both floodplain mining applications as submitted. During the appeal, SAVE experts studied the floodplain applications and discovered they did not comply with federal standards. The Copeland studies claimed they "consulted" with the feds and were given permission to modify the requirements. SAVE experts contacted these federal agencies and discovered this was not true. Copeland experts had used reduced peak river flows that understated the impacts of erosion and flooding on adjacent properties from the proposed mining operations. When given the opportunity to rebut these inaccuracies, Copeland experts remained silent. This "modified" data could have threatened people and property if SAVE had not challenged these proposals. Floodplain applications were denied.

So what is going on now?

Copeland is continuing to pursue State mining permits for both Hill and Krouse at the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI). Right now Jackson County is determining John Hill's vested rights under Measure 37. If vesting is granted, this may allow mining outside the floodplain on the Hill property. On March 13 they applied to build a bridge across the Applegate River on the Krouse property. This would provide a way to transport gravel and set the stage to reapply for another mining floodplain application.

Why does Copeland continue to pursue these river mines on land zoned EFU? This

land is the most profitable resource close to their processing plant. Copeland has been controlling the processing of gravel and then selling the public the final product as asphalt, gravel or concrete. Unfortunately, Copeland has not secured adequate resources. We encourage Copeland Companies to develop alternative resources. Bob Copeland has provided generous support to the community in the past. He presently finds himself in a difficult business situation in conflict with the interests of the Applegate community.

Why does SAVE continue to oppose the river mines? The Applegate River historically meanders across the floodplain in this area, creating unstable conditions for any development activity. Federal guidelines are designed to protect this environment from abuse and degradation. Previous river mines downstream have been captured by the river. River mines clearly are an improper development that experts concur could have a devastating and prolonged impact on fisheries and the riparian ecosystem. The current Hill mine proposal threatens similar consequences by excavating 19 feet below the existing floodplain. At the County hearing, the Krouse mine site was proven vulnerable to river channel migration and mine pit capture causing increased erosion and flooding.

How can you help?

- Share this information with friends.
- Send much-needed tax-deductible donations to fund experts supporting our opposition to river mines.
- Write letters of opposition to Jackson County Planning
- Join our email group for updates at SAVE@APBB.net.
- Attend a community potluck fundraising dinner at 6 pm on May 13 at the Applegate River Lodge.

Please send tax-deductible donations made payable to NAWPA to:

NAWPA (North Applegate Watershed Protection Association)  
 1190 Slagle Creek Road  
 Grants Pass, OR 97527  
 For more information, see www.SAVEAPPLEGATE.com or call 541-846-1082.  
 Steve Rouse \* 541-846-1082



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