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Clearing air over asbestos

By Ryan Rose

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Dust in the wind will never be the same.

The threat of possible contamination from naturally occurring asbestos found a new home in the Hollow Oaks subdivision, near the intersection of Stone Hills and Bass Lake roads.

Kathy Prevost, head of the Bass Lake Action Committee (BLAC), wrote Marcella McTaggart, Air Pollution Control Officer for the El Dorado County Air Quality Management Department, to report mitigation violations by construction crews.

Courtesy Residents living adjacent to construction of the new Hollow Oak subdivision have voiced their concerns over possible asbestos contamination.

BLAC, a non-profit organization founded by neighbors to ensure responsible development and "a voice for...dealing with the county and other community agencies," has expressed their worries over possible asbestos contamination in the area.

hazardous chrysotile asbestos.

Studies conducted by the California Department of Conservation have shown the area rests upon a vein of serpentine rock, a rock prone to housing the potentially

According to Prevost, neighbors witnessed dump trucks leaving the area with dirt loads rising above their cargo hold; trucks tracking dirt on nearby Bass Lake Road; and construction vehicles disturbing dust on local roads.

"The legal and regulatory requirement that dust mitigation plans be prepared and followed is based on legitimate concerns for the health and well-being of the community," Prevost told McTaggart. "Compliance with a dust mitigation plan at the mechanically minimum level when that minimum effort does not effectively provide protection to the community is not true compliance."

Prevost asks that construction crew water down streets frequently and follow the Mitigation Work Plan "to prevent the generation of visible dust during all grading and construction activities."

"We urge that these (mitigation) measures be implemented at once," Prevost advised.

McTaggart reported the land developer, Pulte Homes has conducted an investigation reviewing their Mitigation and Management Plan. Using reports submitted by Teichert, a general contractor working with the project, and geotechnical consulting company Youngdahl, McTaggart said violations were not observed.

According to the Teichert report, Prevost's concerns are not valid because the area where she photographed the acts is not the same location where Youngdahl found a possible threat of asbestos.

That said, the group that does many of the geological surveys for local developments, was the same firm that did not know building with serpentine rock could be hazardous.

According to Mike Queipo, project manager for Teichert, Prevost's conclusions are "erroneous."

"It is Teichert's opinion that we have been and are operating within the parameters established in the (Asbestos Dust and

Mitigation Work Plan),” he said. “Furthermore, as compliance with the (Asbestos Dust and Mitigation Work Plan) is optional in the areas identified by BLAC as of concern, we feel we are going above and beyond what is typically required at similar sites for dust control.”

McTaggart also said that she had received no other complaints on the matter and that residents can direct concerns to her at mmctaggart@co.el-dorado.ca.us.

For information on BLAC, visit their Web site at www.basslakeaction.org.