



January 5, 2010

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## **Request for Coverage**

### **Neighbors Object to Rock Crushing Operation by Owner of Helotes Mulch Fire Site**

**When:** Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

**Where:** Entrance to Ranchland Oaks, intersection of FM 1283 and CR 273

**What:** Representatives from the Ranchland Oaks, Kings Gate and Bear Spring Ranch subdivisions in Medina County protest Zumwalt Construction Company's application for a permanent rock crushing operation and quarry next to their neighborhoods.

Zumwalt Construction Company has applied to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for permission to operate a limestone quarry and a permanent rock crusher within proximity of approximately 200 homes on a site owned by H. L. Zumwalt. Mr. Zumwalt was responsible for the infamous Helotes Mulch Fire that burned from December 26, 2006 through February 2007. Residents share concerns about traffic, dust and noise typical to quarry and rock crushing operations and will be urging the TCEQ to deny the permit applications. As with the Zumwalt quarry project, most Edwards limestone quarries are outside of any municipal jurisdiction, and so are not subject to zoning laws that can prohibit incompatible land uses.

The Zumwalt property is on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone. The Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA) will be studying potential impacts of this operation on the Edwards Aquifer. Additionally, GEAA is concerned that the TCEQ has inadequate regulations to require reclamation of quarry sites. GEAA staff regularly addresses similar issues associated with quarries throughout the Edwards Region.

All parties concerned contend that the permits should be denied based upon Zumwalt's past performance and disregard of TCEQ rules regarding safe operation of the H.L. Zumwalt Tree Disposal's recycling facility, which resulted in a smoldering pile of ash eight stories tall and hundreds of feet long.

To quote former Mayor of Helotes Jon Allan (recently deceased) on the Mulch Fire, "You know, this isn't just an isolated incident. It's a symptom. We're just not doing a very good job protecting the environment in Texas." We might add, nor is Texas doing a good job of protecting the property rights of individual homeowners such as the residents of Ranchland and Oaks, Kings Gate, and Bear Spring Ranch.

**XXX**