

Jim Steele, Public Comment at Lake County Board of Supervisors Appeal Hearing on Monte Cristo Permit (December 13, 2022) with timestamp.

“3:51:00

supervisors and staff for the record Jim Steele I've got a extensive letter on

3:51:06

file and I hope you've all read written it or read it I've written it you read it

3:51:12

this this project you know is one that's very similar to just about 6 000 secret

3:51:19

documents that I've read when I was professionally employed to do so and I've seen all of the different

3:51:27

misdirections that actually come up they're misdirections not on purpose but

3:51:32

for not the purpose of the actual analysis on the key items and therefore

3:51:37

we've come up with cumulative effects evaluations which have been missed because there's been all of this other

3:51:43

noise in the system I've tried to be very specific to one item and that's the water

3:51:49

Lake county is in an intercoastal range aquifer system with three different

3:51:54

aquifers that occur here and you need to know something about each individual

3:51:59

aquifer type and then where the aquifer occurs and then something about the particular

3:52:07

recharge rate how it might affect other people which is not straight line and is

3:52:12

not by elevation one of the things that I heard were some credentials and I thought maybe it's important to review

3:52:19

some of mine just to throw them out there obviously I was a former elected County

3:52:25

supervisor but before that I was a consultant to the the County under Lake under aquatic resources I'm a retired

3:52:32

Chief The Aquatic biologists for Department of Fish and Game a forced

3:52:37

ecology for them as well uh California registered professional Forester and a

3:52:43

California Association professional scientist a freshwater ecosystem consultant even today and a former

3:52:49

Adjunct professor for freshwater ecology at Sac State and I taught with regard to freshwater ecology groundwater

3:52:57

and groundwater has a very specific role within freshwater ecology whether it's

3:53:02

on the surface water if somebody's using it pulling it out the same kind of analyzes that I saw here were the kinds

3:53:08

of analyzes I saw used in the Central Valley in order for one farmer to say I'm not affecting your farm on the other

3:53:14

side all of this showed that the wells were not affecting each other while the entire system collapsed

3:53:21

and that was a big lesson for everybody and you can look into Professor yacht's work at UC Davis and all of that but

3:53:27

over the years as when I was the president of the American Fisher Society we had these people come in to actually

3:53:34

give those kinds of analyzes saying look you guys have got to look at your groundwater differently because it

3:53:40

affects the surface water and it affects the livelihood of a lot of surface species but people don't seem to

3:53:46

understand it so here there is some misunderstanding to what I'm hearing based on what I know it's not

3:53:51

necessarily that I'm an expert or know enough to say but I do know there's not enough information to be able to say

3:53:57

that this is not going to be harming the groundwater so let's put that on the table a little bit

3:54:03

the um first off as far as downslope

3:54:08

if we're in the same aquifer I believe we are I have watched the well that we

3:54:13

have downslope of the High Valley go from Artesian style well where we went

3:54:21

down 300 feet to actually hit a confined aquifer and the water came back up the well came back up the well to within a

3:54:27

few feet of the top we had very low pumping pressures and that was nice over the years as the drought progressed and

3:54:34

as High Valley progressed with the implanting of grapes and Vineyards and

3:54:41

all these folks coming in here I've watched that Artesian effect go right on

3:54:47

down and it's just almost I mean you can't believe how much it's had an effect I was a stunned we have an

3:54:53

Artesian well on the property next door they used to flow all the time I was on Spring Valley Road and so it was a

3:55:01

spring and it's an Artesian style it doesn't flow anymore and this is just just kind of the classic thing that

3:55:07

happens over drought and overuse that these things start to dry down now one of the we're not we're having

3:55:14

plenty of water we're okay but I'm looking at this I'm thinking we're not necessarily going to be okay in all of

3:55:20

the conditions and we have a climate change scenario right now where we're not guaranteed the same kind of

3:55:25

replenishment we have in the past and so the last few years has been a little bit

3:55:30

of a surprise and a wake-up call for everybody and if you look at the history of climate here in this and we're really

3:55:38

in a desert region if you look at that there was seven uh about a thousand years ago extreme drought in this

3:55:45

particular area and where the native tribes actually had to change their conditions so with all that said uh

3:55:52

there's cumulative effects is one of the issues within Lake County and we're not

3:55:57

addressing it properly I would really like to see us go back and say look we

3:56:02

don't have the ability to actually address some of these these water issues

3:56:07

and if we did I think that we would start pulling back a on some of the

3:56:12

projects and I'm not just talking about the Cannabis project I believe these people but here's the thing if you're

3:56:20

going to do this you've got to divorce yourself from all of the emotion and all of the appeals to uh

3:56:27

appeals to a motion that is going on here but you've got to do this you've got to say

3:56:32

the grapes the area the community all that needs to be looked at as primary and these people

3:56:40

are coming in an increase in or making an effect to the folks that are already here or else you're going to have a

3:56:45

significant effect going forward and I don't want it to be in our area I don't want it to be in our County and our

3:56:51

county is unique amongst all counties so with that if I come back up later and somebody asks me a question I've got

3:56:56

lots here and I hope you read it and I was hoping for questions about what I put in because there's some significant

3:57:02

issues going on not just with this project and a lesson for having a project you're trying to do something it's with the county and this particular

3:57:10

region is extremely sensitive to water and downslope is just as sensitive if

3:57:16

not more so than upslope because there they see it we're going to get it we're never going to have a recovery so that's

3:57:21

that's the problem with it so I would say this one needs to be denied and go back to planning and fix some of these

3:57:27

issues just because it should be done that way in the county thank you

3:57:34

so um let's see I have to is there someone else in the chambers or should I go on to the zoom

3:57:41

briefly I'll do it okay

4:41:40

yeah so thank you for that point and I know that uh Jim did you want to

4:41:47

come up and yeah I didn't quite finish with a couple of points I missed over him I forgot him

4:41:54

anyways we're talking about the three cumulative effects factors in Lake County uh two of them have already met

4:41:59

us and one of them is the lake and so the lake has gone South on us and now we're spending millions of dollars trying to restore the Wetland and then

4:42:05

the other one is fire everybody knows about the fires they didn't understand about you know fire ecology that sort of thing and the third one is a Statewide

4:42:12

problem not just here and as groundwater and this is a special kind of groundwater here because it's a it's a

4:42:19

intercoastal range groundwater and there's I have personally when I was on the board and before that and after it

4:42:25

I've heard people tell me about their dry Wells I said why don't you put that on the records so that people will know

4:42:30

about that we understand that Wells are going dry and the reason they don't they don't want to diminish their property

4:42:36

values so they don't say anything a lot of times what they'll do is try to go through until the wells kind of come back or they'll have water shipped in or

4:42:43

they will sell the property and they get out as soon as the water comes back into the well and whatever it is there are

4:42:49

drywall cells in there so there's something to look at on this dry water some of one of the things that causes that is counter depression and over

4:42:56

pumping that sort of thing and it's low transfer of water through the type substrate there's also a lowering of the

4:43:01

water level and particular types of um of Wells but there's three uh types of

4:43:08

um aquifers that we have to look at that see alluvial plane aquifer and the volcanic field aquifer and a fractured

4:43:14

Rock aquifer which this one is and it's the least known aquifer of all of them within this coastal range and our

4:43:20

coastal range type of water regime at least that can be known uh so yeah I

4:43:27

think one more thing to say and that is it's very difficult to note anything about fractured Rock aquifers from just

4:43:35

Wells there's a it's one of the things that really has a problem with being studied I don't want us to be in the

4:43:40

same kind of situation for kiln 2 impacts on Wells and groundwater so notwithstanding they are in the area

4:43:47

that has the most types or overdrawn groundwater in the in the entire Lake

4:43:53

County that's in that High Valley area and from two of the three of those that

4:43:59

I mentioned and the third one is the fractured Rock aquifer which nobody knows anything about so thank you thank