

Trout Unlimited

To: Clark County Councilors and Hearing Examiners,

From: Jim Byrne, Chapter V.P.

Re: Yacolt Mountain Mine Expansion

The Clark County Chapter of Trout Unlimited, wishes to express our opposition to granting an Expansion of the existing Storedahl mine on Yacolt Mountain. Most of our interest is focused on preserving the East Fork Lewis River and its fish. We have three major concerns. They are:

- LiDAR photography indicates a minimum, of 3 year-around streams drain from the proposed expansion area into the East Fork. This would put the East Fork at high risk and bring the Federal Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Acts into play. Note that over \$23 million has already been spent to improve and protect the river as well as restore its four Threatened and Endangered Salmonid species. Continuing restoration of the basin is proposed, this action negates those efforts.
- An examination of the WA State Landslide & Slope Stability map for the area indicates the area around sloping south to the East Fork Lewis River has nine or more mapped landslide risk areas. Adding additional overburden increases landslide activation risk. – A better option is to consider storing overburden and expand mining to the east; where the ground is much flatter, as compared to proposed very steep South/SE slopes (60% & greater).
- WDFW has designated the East Fork as a steelhead “gene bank”, to protect its wild steelhead population is paramount in the face of declining fish runs. The State record steelhead was angled in the East Fork Lewis. The County has expended much time, effort and money to improve fish habitat in this basin. Why would you put those efforts at risk?

The East Fork is the jewel of Clark County’s rivers. Please do not let short term gains degrade this irreplaceable asset. Reject the Expansion. Improve monitoring and compliance of the existing site. This proponent has a history of abandoning used mining sites (Ridgefield Pits), and not complying with county code and Court compliance agreements. Our County and its citizens deserve better. There are other options to meet our rock & gravel needs.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please reconsider staff’s recommendations and do what is right for the environment and local citizens. Thank you.

Jim Byrne

V.P., Clark County Chapter

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Retired Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife