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## FALLBROOK: Gregory Canyon landfill permit scheduled for Wednesday hearing

PUBLIC COMMENTS TO BE HEARD ON LONG-DELAYED CONTROVERSIAL **PROJECT** 

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By GARY WARTH - gwarth@nctimes.com | Posted: Monday, February 21, 2011 10:00 pm | 🔍 No Comments Posted |

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**Gregory Canyon** dump site 76 Pala DETAIL (76) AREA Oceanside Escondido 1 MILE

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ANDRELL BOWER | NCT

A revised application to operate a landfill in Gregory Canyon will be discussed Wednesday night in a Fallbrook public information meeting that is expected to attract a large crowd.

Landfill developer Gregory Canyon Ltd. has been working to gain approval for the project for about 17 years. The project has faced opposition from environmental groups and the Pala Band of Mission Indians, who say the landfill would be on sacred

Nancy Chase, the Gregory Canyon Ltd. government affairs director and spokeswoman for the developer, said the public hearing is designed to allow people to learn about the project. She said she expects the solid waste facility permit needed to operate the landfill to be approved by the county Department of Environmental Health within 30 days.

"They've already stated that the project meets the state's minimum standards and can operate as a landfill," she said. "We've had a solid waste permit in the past. Nothing's changed, except maybe it's gotten a little better."

The landfill would be developed on 308 acres of a 1,770-acre hillside above the San Luis Rey River off Highway 76, about three miles east of Interstate

15 near the Pala Indian reservation. It could take in 1 million tons of solid waste each year for 30 years.

Supporters include the San Diego Taxpayers Association, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce and Utility Consumers' Action Network Executive Director Michael Shames.

A public hearing will be held at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Fallbrook Public Library, 124 S. Mission Road, on the developer's application for a solid waste facility permit needed to operate the landfill. Other permits still would be required to build the landfill.



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Attorney Pamela Epstein, of the Sierra Club, said she will attend Wednesday's meeting, along with representatives of the Surfrider Foundation, the Environmental Health Coalition and the Pala Band of Mission Indians.

"It's a bad project in a bad location, especially now that we're moving toward a more sustainable future and zero waste." she said.

Chase said a need still exists for a new landfill, which she said is long-overdue for North County.

"When we started this process, North County didn't have a landfill for its own trash. Seventeen years later, North County trash continues to go everyplace except North County."

The area's trash goes to two landfills in San Diego County and as far away as Arizona, she said.

Gregory Canyon Ltd.'s website also states that North County produced 500,000 tons of trash a year in 1994, and by 2008 the amount had grown to 1 million tons.

The permit being discussed Wednesday had been previously granted, but the city of Oceanside, the environmental group RiverWatch and the Pala Indians sued Gregory Canyon Ltd. and the county Department of Environmental Health, arguing that the environmental impact report for the report was inadequate.

A judge agreed that the report did not address all the issues required by the California Environmental Quality Act, and he called for rescinding approval of the permit.

Opponents of the landfill later learned that the permit was never rescinded, and last year a judge ruled that Gregory Canyon Ltd. would have to reapply for the permit, which it since has done. The public hearing is in response to the new application.

Potential harm to the water supply has been one of many concerns about the proposed landfill, which the developer plans to seal with a liner.

"This is not a question of if a landfill liner will leak, but when," Epstein said. "We know to date there are no landfill liners that haven't leaked."

Epstein said the permit application also should address greenhouse gas restrictions that went into effect last March.

"We shouldn't be looking at laws that were in effect in the 1980s," she said. "They're doing a revised permit, so they should be beholden to the laws that exist today."

The county Department of Environmental Health must approve the solid waste facility permit for the project to go forward for additional permits.

Call staff writer Gary Warth at 760-740-5410.

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