



The Gateway Neighborhood Association

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Press Release

In response to Crystal Geyser purchasing the empty Coca Cola water-bottling plant, a local group of 27 private home owners are participating in the “Mt. Shasta Big Springs Area Groundwater Elevation Survey.” Their domestic production wells are being measured for groundwater levels on a quarterly basis. The survey is designed to follow the guidelines of the California State Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program. Testing started in November of 2013.

Results will show historical groundwater levels at the time of well drilling and current groundwater levels. These measurements are being documented quarterly for at least a full year prior to the planned opening of the Crystal Geyser bottling plant and well into the future. **The majority of current groundwater elevations are showing significant decreases from historic groundwater elevations.**

Due to the critical drought we find ourselves in and the information known (and lacking) about the water recharge for the Big Springs aquifer, this testing is crucial in understanding our water situation.

Tests are being implemented by Robert Blankenship of Harrison/Roberts Environmental Management. Mr. Blankenship is a graduate of CSU Long Beach and holds professional certification in Environmental Auditing and Site Assessment and Remediation from the University of California Irvine. He has over 20 years of experience personally supervising the installation, measurement and sampling of hundreds of groundwater monitoring wells throughout California.

Local landowner, Raven Stevens, of Mt. Shasta is handling the coordination of the groundwater monitoring effort and is assisting with the testing. She is the Community Liaison for the Gateway Neighborhood Association whose water source is at risk.

“Local citizens have been asking Siskiyou County and the Mount Shasta City Council for a full and impartial Environmental Review on the project. When the plant originally opened, there was no CEQA review or EIR ever done. The county wants to move ahead based on “former use” even though the plant will be bottling beverages and brewing tea. In addition, we are in a historic drought. If you want to talk about “former use,” Dannon had agreed to import water by tanker trucks at the rate of approximately 148,800 gal/week of water from Dunsmuir to mitigate its water usage from the aquifer because “...the sensitive nature of the groundwater extraction issue and stated public concerns about the groundwater levels dropping has warranted this conservative approach.” (2001 MND, Dannon Waters.) We want Crystal Geysers to have to be held to these same mitigations.

They were clear in the public meeting on March 24, 2014 that they don't have to conduct an EIR because of the Siskiyou County's position. We are asking for an EIR so that we can gather the most up to date information available to allow us to make the best decisions possible. It is the right thing to do for our community. Crystal Geysers will not talk with us about our concerns or put in writing limits on water extraction. We believe they must adhere to the mandated 25% water use reduction, imposed on the entire state.

We are at the source of the Sacramento River and we believe we have a responsibility to protect the people locally and downstream by gathering up to date information and putting into place the proper mitigations if the bottling plant goes forward.

For further information contact Raven Stevens at 530-926-4339 or at flyraven@sbcglobal.net.

“Uniting our neighborhood for our common good, to insure our safety, security and quality of life.”