

HOOD RIVER NEWS
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
February 26, 2003

Clear Crystal

The people of Hood River Valley need our leaders to protect and preserve our water supplies. Now. If people don't have clean drinking water they are deprived of a vital necessity. No amount of economic development can make up for such a deprivation.

Crystal Springs Water District supplies Pine Grove and Wy'east Middle schools. It supplies another 5,000-plus people. Mt. Hood Meadows Inc. is attempting to obtain approval to develop lands in the Cooper Spur area. Most of these lands are within the Crystal Springs Zone of Contribution.

Geologists characterize as highly permeable the volcanic materials that underlie most of the lands Mt. Hood Meadows Inc. wants to develop. Highly permeable means any contaminant – from petroleum to fertilizers, pesticides to bacteria and nitrates from septic tanks and drain fields – will readily percolate down through this material. They will contaminate Crystal Springs water. Certainly, the contamination of this vital aquifer will not happen overnight. But, just as certainly, it will happen if new development is permitted.

A perfect example of what would happen to the Crystal Springs aquifer lies across the river in Washington. The community of Carson sits atop volcanic material that is nearly identical to that which underlies most of the Crystal Springs Zone of Contribution. Bacteria from drain fields and septic tanks have contaminated the aquifer underlying Carson community. A well drilled into that aquifer in 1986 was, and continues to be, unusable.

Dealing with a contaminated aquifer, e.g. testing water, treating contaminated water or even developing a new source are extremely expensive propositions for the people dependent on Crystal Springs water. The long term service jobs and business tax income the Mt. Hood Meadows development could create are just not enough to balance out the costs that the people of the Hood River Valley will have to bear when their water supply becomes contaminated.

I urge our leaders to show foresight and consideration for the people of the Hood River Valley. Please, promote the conservation and preservation of Crystal Springs for perpetuity. Do not permit any new development within the Crystal Springs Zone of Contribution.

**Nancy Bright
Parkdale**