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Lacy J. Dalton says a proposal to mine a scenic ridge top would ruin some of the "best horseback riding trails" in the county.

Country star puts spotlight on Zayante ridgetop

By JOHN ROBINSON
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ZAYANTE — Country music star Lacy J. Dalton joined a group of Zayante residents and environmentalists to protest the proposed strip mining of a scenic Zayante ridge top.

Dalton said Sunday that mining the "south ridge," a sandy mountain that separates a subdivision off West Zayante Road from the Quail Hollow Quarry, would destroy the natural beauty of the land.

"I really am sick that this beautiful county is running out of natural resources," Dalton said. "There are plenty of other places to get sand. This has some of the best horseback riding trails in the area, and I'd hate to see it destroyed."

Dalton lives in Ben Lomond and pastures a horse at the base of the mountain. She offered her help and called a news conference after

being told of the ongoing controversy over the proposed mining.

The south ridge area is owned by Granite Rock and leased to Santa Cruz Aggregates. The companies want to expand the Quail Hollow Quarry into the south ridge, and strip mine the sand, which is used in the manufacture of glass and fiberglass.

The plan has met resistance from local groups since it was formally proposed early last year.

Residents claim that the proposed mining might affect local water supplies, pose a health hazard due to dust and destroy the beauty of the area.

The proposed mining would strip the top of the ridge from elevations 800 feet down to 550 feet in some places, residents said.

If the ridge is mined, residents say they will be looking at an open pit and heavy machin-

ery that produces large clouds of dangerous dust, rather than a sandy mountain with broken pine trees and brush.

The mining company, Santa Cruz Aggregates, claims that it has a vested right to mine the area. The county Planning Commission, however, ruled against the mining proposal in February of 1989, saying that the original permits issued in 1955 do not cover that area of the quarry.

Celia Scott-Von der Muhll, an attorney representing the South Ridge Watershed Association, said that the company does not have a vested right to mine the ridge, as they have not been mining the area continuously.

Both Santa Cruz Aggregates and Granite Rock appealed the decision to the Board of Supervisors, which will consider the proposal Tuesday at its regular meeting.