

Quarry permit's rocky road still has not been smoothed

SANTA CRUZ — Resolution of a 2-year-old battle over a mining permit for Lone Star Industries' Olympia Quarry in Felton was put off until at least June Tuesday after the company, area residents and environmentalists raised objections to a proposed compromise agreement during a hearing before the Board of Supervisors.

Drafters of a permit submitted to the board for approval had sought to balance company and neighborhood concerns over noise and hours of operation.

Concerns about quarry operations' impact on groundwater, and plant and animal life, also were addressed in the permit submitted to supervisors for approval.

But witnesses who spoke Tuesday

agreed on only one thing: that the proposed permit had addressed none of their particular concerns well.

Representatives of the Zayante Improvement Association told the board that quarry hours had not been curtailed enough. Lone Star spokesmen said they could not be cut back more. Spokesmen for the San Lorenzo Valley Water District and the city of Santa Cruz said permit conditions did not sufficiently safeguard water quality. Others who spoke objected that quarry operations posed a threat to certain plants and a butterfly species in the area and called for stronger environmental protections.

On a motion by Fifth District Supervisor Joe Cucchiara, the board sent a proposed permit draft back to

the county planning staff and county counsel for revisions, with instructions to bring the matter back to the board for further consideration June 10.

The controversy dates from 1983, when the Board of Supervisors first issued a mining permit for the quarry, which has been in operation since 1928. Lone Star, which objected to many parts of the proposed permit, subsequently challenged the county in court.

Saying some of the requirements imposed by the board were either unreasonable or not supported by facts, the court set the permit aside and instructed the county and the company to negotiate an agreement on the disputed permit conditions.