



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning

*Planning for the Challenges Ahead*



Richard J. Bruckner  
Director

August 1, 2011

TO: Paul McCarthy, Hearing Officer

FROM: Susan Tae, AICP *RB for SUSAN TAE*  
Supervising Regional Planner  
Zoning Permits North Section

SUBJECT: **PROJECT NO. 91109-(5)**

**Hearing Officer Meeting: August 2, 2011**  
**Agenda Item No. 4**  
**SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

Attached please find the applicant's landscape architect's report regarding the property's visual screen and the staff biologist's response.

SMT:amc

## **SUE MATHIS LANDSCAPE DESIGN**

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT CA # LA 4223  
9201 SHIRLEY STREET, MOJAVE, CA. 93501-7000  
PHONE (661) 256-4261 + FAX (661) 824-4261



July 26, 2011

Granite Construction Company  
Granite Construction  
Southern California Region  
P.O. Box 5127 Bakersfield CA 93388

Attn: Bill Taylor  
Resource Development Project Manager

**RE: Screen Planting along the East, South and West project boundaries**

Dear Bill,

In response to your recent inquiry about successful screen planting in the Antelope Valley, I have reviewed the Mitigation Measures I Visual Quality set by the original conditions of approval for your Littlerock quarry. The existing requirement is to have a minimum of 60% screen reaching 60 feet in height along the East, South and West boundaries of the project.

### Background

The conditions of approval require that within one year of project approval (June 26, 1996) the phase 1 landscape screen shall be planted with fast growing trees and shrubs along the western, southern and eastern property boundaries to buffer it from the view of drivers traveling on State Hwy. 138 and from residents living in the Crystallaire community located about two-and-a-half miles south of the project area. Since the planting of the landscape material would coincide with the hottest time of the year, landscape plans were prepared for the site and approved by the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning, the staff biologist recommended that planting of the site should be delayed until Sept. 1997. Granite Construction installed and maintained the landscaping as required by the County.

Over the years the landscape has matured and been maintained in a healthy condition. The harsh climate, extreme temperature ranges and severe windy conditions has hampered plant growth and not allowed the plants to reach full mature height of 60 feet. The trees should be pruned periodically to keep them from breaking or blowing over in the wind. The Arizona Cypress shown in exhibit 1 have been attacked by borers and have died.

### Results

The borers have attacked Arizona Cypress and the Leyland's Cypress in the whole Antelope Valley region. It is an ongoing problem and the trees need to be removed and hauled away or

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they will spread to other healthy specimens. The trees started to die about 10 years ago and as a result, they are being used less and less in landscapes around the Antelope Valley.

The oleander shown in exhibit 1 is a pink variety and can sometimes freeze when the temperatures reach 5 degrees and below. While oleander can grow quickly back and are very drought tolerant, they can not reach the 12-15' that could be achieved in other areas of the state in this environment.

The pine trees shown in exhibit 1 are Eldarica Pines and are the variety best suited for the Antelope Valley's arid environment. The existing trees are in good condition and should be maintained according the maintenance recommendations below.

The existing landscape coverage has achieved the 60% required in the conditions. Furthermore, with only the pine trees (spaced at 40' intervals) the landscaping will meet or exceed this coverage requirement. The additional shrubs help with exceeding the coverage requirement. However, due to harsh climate, extreme temperature ranges and severe windy conditions plant growth cannot reach full mature height of 60', and this height requirement should be removed.

#### Recommendations

It is my recommendation the existing landscaping be maintained. Additionally, all current and future dead, diseased and damaged trees and shrubs be removed and replanted with the following replacements:

Pines should be replaced with the *Pinus eldarica*  
Arizona Cypress replaced with *Pinus eldarica* or *Juniperus chinensis* 'Spartan'  
Oleander replaced with *Baccharis centennial*

#### Maintenance

I recommend a once a year fertilization program to help the plants green up and grow a little fuller. I recommend inspecting the irrigation system and make sure it is in good operating condition. The irrigation system should all the plants are receiving water and the watering times are adjusted for the mature plants by season. Make sure the controller is in good working condition and upgrade if necessary.

Overall, this landscape is in good condition and the above listed recommendations will insure a healthy landscape screen. The 1996 conditions were infeasible given the harsh climatic conditions and the client has made a concerted effort to achieve those goals. Removal of the 60' height requirement and continued maintenance as listed above will modify the conditions in a manner consistent with the Antelope Valley environment.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Mathis, ASLA  
Landscape Architect, CA RLA 4223

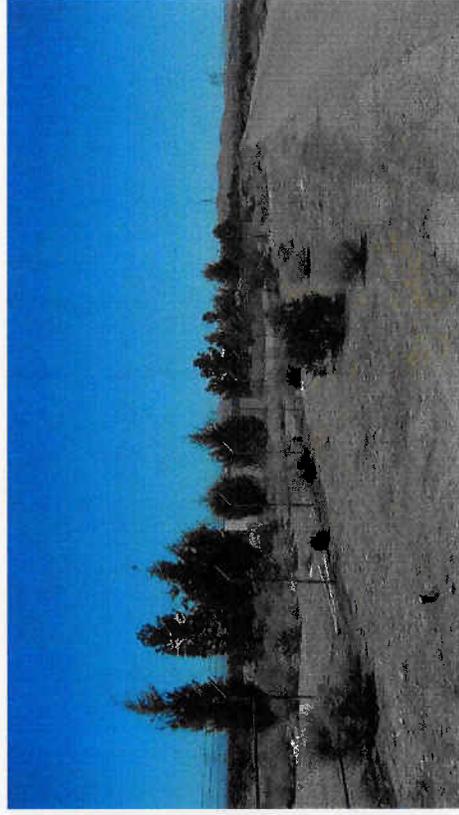
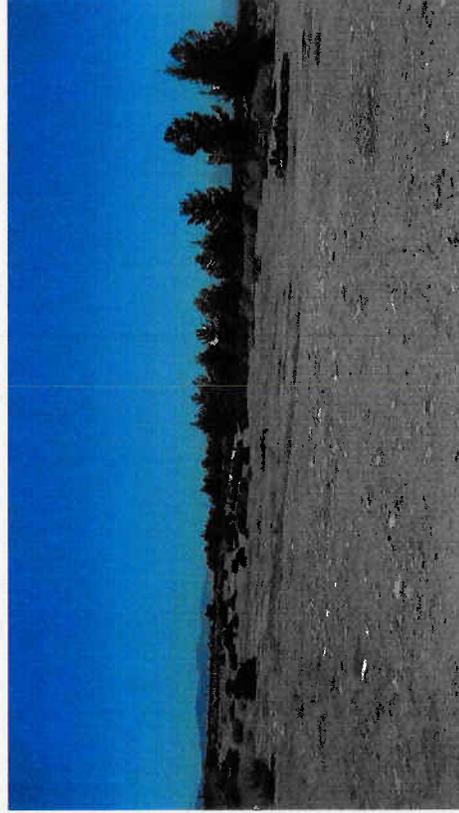
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# Exhibit 1

## Granite Big Rock

South planting Line, looking west      East planting line, looking north



**South planting line, close up**



**Oleander example**



**Oleander, close up**



**Arizona Cypress, dead**



**Arizona Cypress, dead, close up**



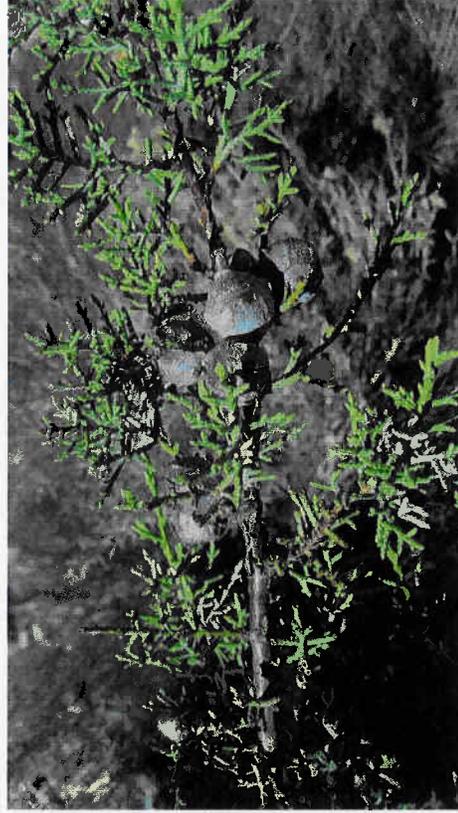
**Arizona Cypress, live**



**Arizona Cypress, close up**



**Arizona Cypress, berries**



**Pine**



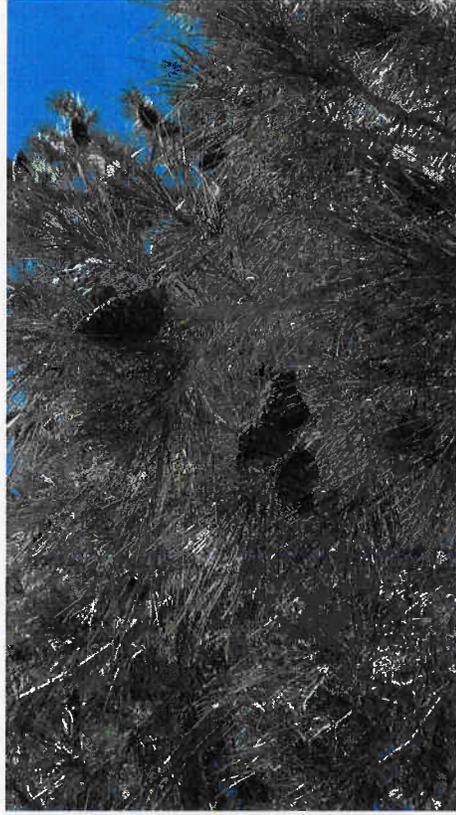
**Pine, close up**



**Pine, needle spread**



**Pine, cone distribution**



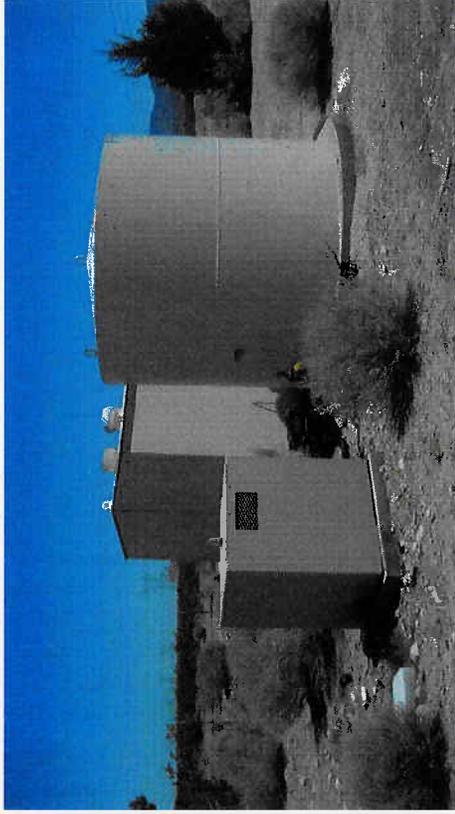
**Pine, Cone close up**



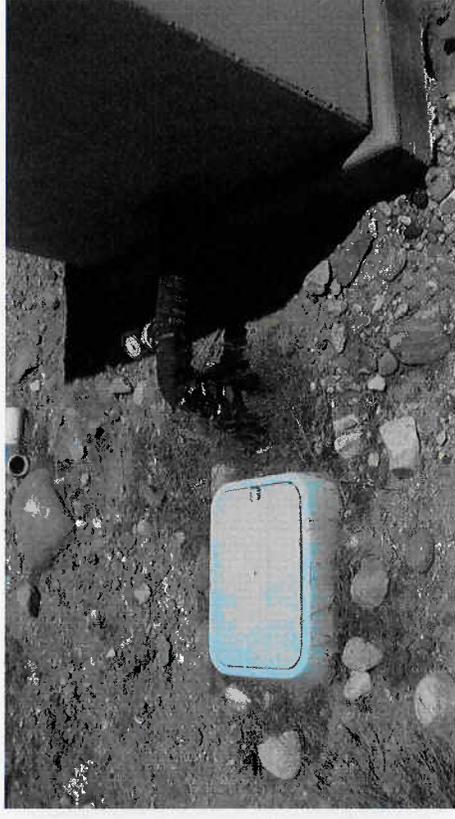
**Pine, close up 2**



**On site well and tank**



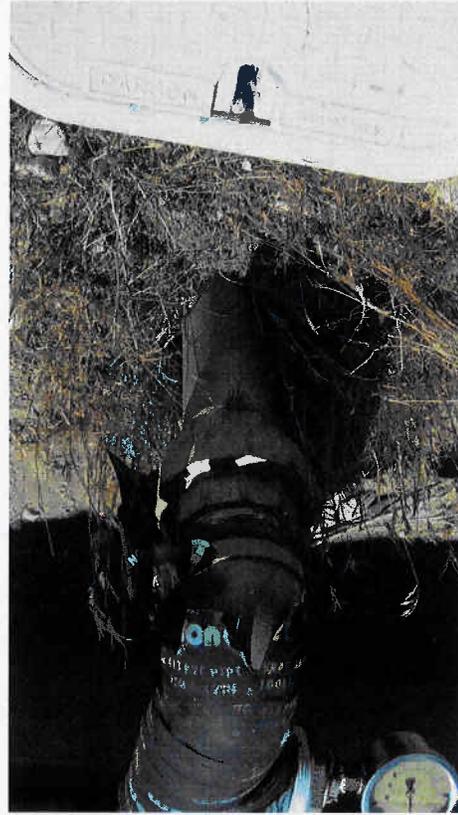
**Underground irrigation**



**Irrigation box**



**2" pipe**



**Irrigation bubblers**



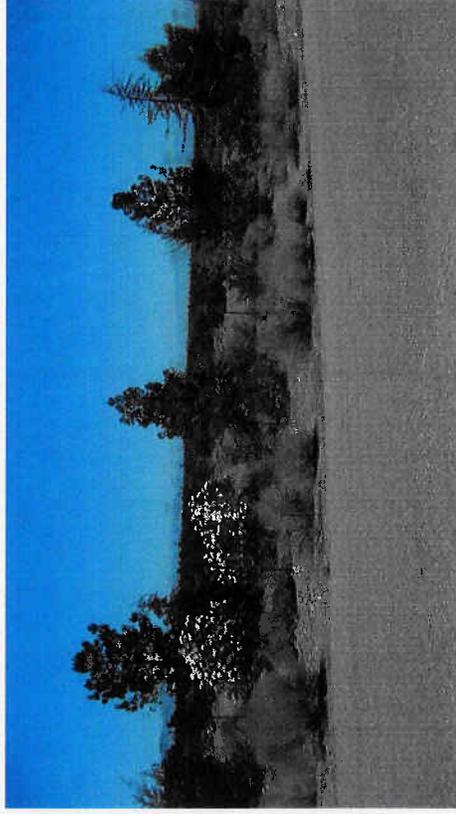
**Bubbler close up**



**Bubbler close up 2**



**Planting spacing**



**Height comparison, 8' fence**



**155<sup>th</sup> Street East frontage,  
looking North West**



## Curzi, Anthony

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**From:** Colvin, Wesley  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 27, 2011 8:02 AM  
**To:** Curzi, Anthony  
**Subject:** RE: Granite Big Rock landscape review

Anthony,

I've read the report by Sue Mathis regarding the Granite Big Rock landscape review. Her recommendations are reasonable.

I would eliminate the 60' height requirement, as suggested, and follow her suggestions for tree replacement and ongoing maintenance.

Cheers,

Wesley Colvin, Ph.D.  
Impact Analysis Section  
213-974-1448

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**From:** Curzi, Anthony  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 26, 2011 5:06 PM  
**To:** Colvin, Wesley  
**Subject:** FW: Granite Big Rock landscape review

Wes,

It finally came. Please review Sue's recommendation as soon as possible.

Thanks,

Anthony Curzi  
Zoning Permits North Section  
213-974-6461

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**From:** Taylor, William [<mailto:William.Taylor@gcinc.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 26, 2011 5:02 PM  
**To:** Curzi, Anthony  
**Cc:** Susan Mathis  
**Subject:** Granite Big Rock landscape review

Hi Anthony,

Attached is a scanned copy of the landscape review by Sue Mathis. The original is in the mail, please let me know if you need it sent to you.

Cheers,

**Bill Taylor**

Resource Development Project Manager

Granite Construction

Southern California Region

P.O. Box 5127 Bakersfield CA 93388

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