September 18, 2014

County Commissioners – Coos County Planning
Re: McWilliams’s Mud Mania – Red Rock MX - Gaylord, OR

My name is Terry Magill and I live at 46760 Hwy. 242, adjacent to the Gaylord Bridge which leads across the Coquille River to the McWilliams property. I did not receive notification of this hearing even though I have been on record as an interested party both in 2011 and this most recent time. Was this a slight?

I am asking the County to stop the unpermitted commercial use of this ranch property that is zoned exclusively for agricultural use. The mud bog, ATV, and motorcycle events they offer have always been commercial since they began in 2007. I have seen the toll booth and registration setups down at the bottom of McWilliam’s driveway at the time of events. Once when some women tried to park their cars in my yard and walk up to the races with their coolers and lawn chairs, they told me the cost to enter a vehicle and the cost for spectators. At the last commissioner’s meeting I attended on this subject in January, 2011, several people from the Coos Bay Speedway testified that they had come up to help Tanya run the toll booth and concessions and what wholesome fun it was for all the participants.

Extensive permanent alterations have been made to this farmland by creating miles of dirt tracks and installing permanent water tanks, as recently as this past year. There is so much soil erosion created that it is an egregious violation of any farming practices. The dust blows steadily, coating the properties to the South and Southeast with unhealthy amounts. When there are mud bog events, we neighbors have to endure mud for miles, towards both Myrtle Point and Powers. I have witnessed participants showing off their caked rigs, with unsafe driving practices, and then coming back for more mud late in the day, because these events run into the night. No one ever cleans off the bridge or Hwy. 242.

These events are terribly noisy. In my case I hear the primary roar of the engines, then I secondarily get the reverberation off the mountain scarp just to my East. I have suffered ingress/egress difficulties as well as surly, intimidating behavior on the road by some drivers who appear to be inebriated. We, the other residents of this beautiful valley should not have to suffer through another neighbor’s money-making scheme. The motorsports venture McWilliams have launched degrades my property values as well as being unhealthy and unpleasant. The County has looked the other way long enough and needs to put a stop to this now.

Thank you for your consideration.
Terry Magill, Gaylord, OR

Exhibit 3
Date: 9/16/14
Couple cited for weddings on ag land

SISTERS (AP) — A Central Oregon couple has been fined more than $2,000 for hosting weddings on their property near Sisters, where they've held about 18 weddings this summer in violation of the zoning code.

Their land is zoned exclusively for agricultural uses — a significant designation in Oregon, where the land-use laws are designed to protect farmland and ranch land from encroachment.

Weddings and commercial events on agricultural land have been a frequent issue for Deschutes County in recent years. Some landowners have given up trying to hold them.

John and Stephanie Shepherd first held weddings on their property in 2011 for members of the church congregation that meets in their home with John Shepherd as pastor.

Today, the officiates at about half of the weddings on his property. Wedding parties pay about $1,500 to use the property.

The couple has been trying since 2012 to get county approval for the events, and most recently applied to have two of their 216 acres designated as a private park so they can hold weddings. The Bulletin newspaper reports.

The application was initially rejected because weddings weren't considered recreational. The Shepherds say they've spent about $15,000 and reworked the application in hopes of gaining approval.

The Shepherds have submitted additional requested materials since August while a wildlife biologist with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is scheduled to inspect the site as well.

With wedding contracts established far in advance, the Shepherds continued to have events on their property while their application is in front of county officials. Five citations have been issued this summer, and the county has gone to court to ask for an injunction against weddings. The Shepherds said they stopped advertising for 2015 weddings.

County officials said they're trying to reach a resolution, but they have to respond when they get complaints about violations.

"We're putting a lot of resources in cooperation with Mr. Shepherd and working on his application," said Nick Lelack, the county's community development director. "We're hopeful that all the issues can be addressed and then we can move forward."

The couple has court dates in October for the citations.

"We're doing everything we can to comply," said John Shepherd. "We are waiting for them. They are taking a long time doing this. While they are dragging their feet, we are being issued citations. That's just not fair."