

MILL CREEK ENTERPRISE



Enterprise/DUSTY LOCKE

Wyn Morgan's Bothell home is one of 14 in a proposed site for the Brightwater sewage plant planned by King County. Morgan and her neighbors are against the project and contend that there are other suitable sites that would not displace homeowners. Morgan and her husband, Michael Challenger, are especially attached to their home because they have spent 10 years landscaping their backyard where three of their cats are buried.

The dark side of Brightwater

By **Jana Alexander**
Mill Creek editor

Doris Smith and Wyn Morgan live on the same street, and have joined in the same fight.

The two are homeowners within the 144-acre Thrasher's Corner site, still on King

County's wish list for location of the regional Brightwater Sewage Treatment Plant that will serve King and Snohomish counties. Thrasher's Corner is one of the six sites left for consideration by King County.

"Out of the 28 years I've lived here, I've never seen the community so united

over something as they are" in opposition of the Brightwater project, Smith said.

On Mother's Day weekend, a group of Ninth Avenue neighbors had plans to walk their street with picket signs, opposing placement of the Brightwater treatment facility where their homes now sit. Smith and Morgan have marched up and down their street, informing other residents of their fight.

Tucked away in a natural oasis from city life is Ninth Ave. SE. Morgan and her husband have lived there for 12 years. Smith and her husband, 28 years. They have carefully sculpted their land

into trails and paths. Morgan said she avoids using "Weed and Feed" because of the close proximity her land has to salmon habitat.

From their homes, heavy traffic that plagues south Snohomish County is almost inaudible. Trees shade the properties on their street. Signs remind homeowners and those that use the roads that they are in the North Creek watershed.

Both homeowners are well aware of their pristine location. Morgan's husband commutes to Everett for work. To live like they do now, in natural surroundings

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neighbor. They said they can design the plant to fit with community like the West Point treatment plant. Brightwater documents state wherever the treatment plant is sited, government will be given the opportunity to hone natural habitat and protect species that live there.

The county will do that with mitigation fees, funds are intended to make the sewage treatment plant a welcome addition to a community, rather than a smelly burden.

"Most communities wouldn't want this, but it's a \$500 million project they're promising — 10 percent mitigation. So you have many communities now lining up and asking for it because they want the \$50 million check," said Mayor Terry Ryan at a May 8 council meeting.

Ryan and Bothell mayor, Mike Noblet, are representing their cities on the Brightwater Site Advisory Committee. Ryan said Mill Creek is not likely to benefit from the mitigation fees offered by King County. He said if Thrasher's Corner was chosen as the site, Mill Creek could argue for mitigation but

probably wouldn't get it. Ryan and community development director Bill Trimm were invited to represent the city of Mill Creek on the Site Advisory Committee. That committee met last week to discuss the pros and cons of each of the sites left on the list.

For Thrasher's Corner, displacing homeowners was high on the list of concerns, but not considered serious enough to suggest it be removed from the list of proposed sites. Other concerns included increased traffic and odor control.

But even if the committee did suggest removal of the

site, it has no power over decisions made regarding the site.

When asked if the county could turn it down if it didn't want the plant, Popinwy said, the county understands "that this is a regional project and we do need a sewage treatment facility somewhere."

He said King County has provided service to south Snohomish County for 35 to 40 years.

"It's an essential public facility and so no community can say no," Popinwy said. "What they can say is 'it's inappropriate for these reasons.'"