

# New Report On Impact of Hermosa Mine On Patagonia's Water Supply

By PRT Staff

Patagonia Area Resource Alliance (PARA) and Earthworks have released a new peer-reviewed report on the impact to Patagonia's water supply from the proposed Hermosa mine, to be sited within the upper reaches of Harshaw Creek—a portion of Patagonia's Municipal Supply Watershed. Earthworks is an established national environmental organization whose mission is to protect the environment from the impacts of irresponsible mineral and energy development. The primary focus of their study was the effect of the mine on our avail-

able water supply, acid mine drainage, heavy metals leaching, and groundwater contamination.

The report concludes that the Hermosa silver mine could deplete the town's drinking water and perpetually contaminate area groundwater with acid mine drainage, as well as threaten the drinking water wells of surrounding residents.

The mine would be 4,000 foot wide and 1,500 foot deep. It would consume 670 million to 1.2 billion gallons of groundwater per year - up to 53 times

the amount of water the town uses today. The report concludes that the mine's water consumption will lower the recharge rates for the aquifer on which the town depends, and is also likely to produce acidic runoff, requiring ongoing treatment in perpetuity.

Because the mine is proposed within the Coronado National Forest, it is subject to the 1872 Mining Law. Federal land managers interpret that law as requiring them to permit mines, whether or not the land is better used for other purposes - like protecting a town's drinking water supply wa-

tershed.

"Because the Hermosa mine proposal threatens area water supplies, it obviously should not be permitted," said report author Pete Dronkers of Earthworks. He continued, "That it's being considered at all is a strong argument for reforming the 1872 Mining Law to allow for the consideration of other potential land uses."

The report also analyzes other adverse impacts, such as air pollution and endangered species. It can be found online at [www.hermosa-report.earth-worksaction.org](http://www.hermosa-report.earth-worksaction.org).

## PRT Teams Up With PUHS Journalism Class

You may have already noticed a new addition to *Patagonia Regional Times*—Lobos News—which first appeared in our previous issue.

The journalism class at PUHS, taught by Journee Hayes, is going to contribute student articles each month, in a special section that will replace the monthly PUHS newsletter mail-out. The arrangement will give the class a chance to be published more

widely, and to learn more about the process that all writing goes through at *PRT* before it goes to print, while eliminating that cost from the school's budget

We are pleased to be a part of this venture, and to be able to showcase these young journalists' writing and photography skills. We think their work will grow in professionalism as the year goes on, and we hope that they will do some

reporting that goes beyond the boundaries of the school so you can get a youthful viewpoint on some of the town's news (such as Exelee Budd's article on the Fall Festival, page 14).

This is our fifth year anniversary and our first color edition, and it

seems a perfect time to add this educational element to the paper as well. As always we encourage readers to write to us and let us know your views - and that includes the student work. They will like having feedback.

