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RIDGE SUES SUNCADIA OVER FAILURE TO PURCHASE WATER RIGHTS

This week Roslyn WA based, citizens group, RIDGE, filed a breach-of contract lawsuit against Suncadia LLC. The suit calls on Suncadia to honor its 2001 contract commitment to purchase in stream water rights. In stream water rights are dedicated to the river for protecting habitat for endangered salmon. Specifically, the suit, filed in Kittitas County Superior Court calls on Suncadia to spend the amount of money necessary to purchase the quantity of water rights for in stream flow that could have been purchased for \$50,000 in each of the six years between 2001 and 2007 as required by the 2001 RIDGE Settlement Agreement. Suncadia has produced no evidence that it purchased the rights. Meanwhile, today Suncadia and the Washington State Dept of Ecology announced an offer of 353 acre-feet of Suncadia's previously-purchased mitigation rights for sale to Upper Kittitas County water users facing curtailment in dry years. "We find it curious that Suncadia has water rights for sale to serve new development, but not the water rights to protect the river as called for by our Settlement Agreement. In 2001 we accepted these and other developer promises to protect the environment and our community from resort development in return for our right to appeal permits and water transfers needed to build the Suncadia Resort. It's a shame that eight years later we must turn to the courts to have Suncadia honor its contract commitments. A promise is a debt" said Doug Kilgore, RIDGE President and spokesperson.

RIDGE is a citizens group that has been based in Roslyn since 1988. It organized to address impacts on Upper Kittitas County communities and ecosystems from excessive logging and real-estate development. In the late 1990's it challenged plans to convert a 14,000 acre forest surrounding Roslyn for real-estate development. Its 2001 Settlement Agreement with Resort Developer Trendwest resulted protection of more than 750 acres of new open space inside and outside the Resort, reduction and limitation of the resort's size, public access to open space, and funds to restore fish runs in Big Creek, a Yakima River tributary. RIDGE has worked since 2001 encourage Suncadia to complete its contract obligations but this is the first time it has been forced to go to court to do so. RIDGE has also taken legal action in collaboration with its partners, KCC and Futurewise to reform the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan to bring it into compliance with State Law.