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## Fwd: Proposed quarry south of Colorado Springs adjacent to Aiken Canyon

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DRMS - DNR, DMGweb <dnr\_dmg\_web@state.co.us>

Tue, Oct 11, 2016 at 4:02 PM

To: Amy Eschberger - DNR <amy.eschberger@state.co.us>, Wally Erickson - DNR <wally.erickson@state.co.us>, Tony Waldron - DNR <tony.waldron@state.co.us>

This came thru the general e-mail yesterday  
Thank you,  
Johnie Abad  
Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety  
[303-866-3567](tel:303-866-3567) xt 8136

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **nic korte** <[nkorte1@hotmail.com](mailto:nkorte1@hotmail.com)>

Date: Mon, Oct 10, 2016 at 11:54 AM

Subject: Proposed quarry south of Colorado Springs adjacent to Aiken Canyon

To: "DMG\_web@state.co.us" <[DMG\\_web@state.co.us](mailto:DMG_web@state.co.us)>

Date: October 10, 2016

From: Grand Valley Audubon

Re: Proposed Quarry at Hitch Rack Ranch

Grand Valley Audubon Society, representing nearly 500 west slope members opposes the proposed quarry on the Hitch Rack Ranch property in El Paso County. We wish to emphasize at the outset that birdwatching and wildlife watching is a statewide pastime. We have state wide birding lists which can be observed from the Colorado Field Ornithology website. There is also the international list of [ebird.org](http://ebird.org). These lists keep all birders aware of rarities and interesting sightings. It is common for people on one side of the divide or the other to travel quickly to the other side when something interesting is reported. In addition, there are many "county" birders among us—these are birders who specifically attempt to see as many species as possible in Colorado's various counties. Hence, all of us have a stake in what happens anywhere in our state to prime wildlife habitat.

The proposed quarry's location lies due north of, and adjacent to, The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Aiken Canyon Preserve and lease properties. Aiken Canyon has long been a prime birding destination, and hosts over 100 species of birds. It is part of a nearly contiguous migration corridor including BLM's Beaver Creek Wilderness Study Area, Aiken Canyon and Little Turkey Creek, and Fort Carson.

Most of the proposed quarry site and access road are contained within the Aiken Canyon Potential Conservation Area, which is considered to be "of Very High Significance" by the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP). El Paso County, in its 2013 Open Space Master Plan, specifically gave the proposed quarry area and Little Turkey Creek drainage very high open space values. According to TNC, "the quarry site is entirely in Critical Habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl, a federally-listed threatened species." It also is home to a rapidly-declining Pinon-Juniper community. Considering that quarry operations create traffic, dust, noise and loss of vegetation, despoilment of this area would be very short-sighted.

This area, including the quarry property, Aiken Canyon, the Beaver Creek WSA and Fort Carson, represents a crucial link between the mountains and the prairies, as well as providing a north-south course along the Front Range. On behalf of the nearly 500 members and the governing board of Grand Valley Audubon Society, we urge you to deny permits for the proposed use.

Sincerely,

Nic Korte, Conservation Chairman, Grand Valley Audubon