

STATE OF
COLORADO

Hays - DNR, Peter <peter.hays@state.co.us>

Permit #M2018016, Douglas Mountain Mine Project

1 message

Kathrine Jansen <ktjansen99@gmail.com>
To: peter.hays@state.co.us

Fri, Jun 29, 2018 at 1:19 PM

Dear Department of Reclamation, Mining and Safety:

I am writing out of deep concern over the proposed gravel pit operation on Douglas Mountain in Empire, CO. There are a multitude of problems with this proposal, some of which are described below. A gravel pit operation does not belong in this tight mountain corridor meadow already inhabited by wildlife and humans. Additional trucks do not belong on I-70 and route 6 through an area already concerned about ozone. Please reject this proposal and protect this land.

- Biological diversity: The proposed habitat destruction, pollution and land use change will threaten the area's biological diversity. The meadow must be protected for our mammal, bird species, plant species, and insect species. Dust, noise and vibration will also adversely impact our ecological integrity.
- No restoration required: The proposed gravel pit reclamation plan does not require restoration of the current meadow. The plan is to remove all of the topsoil and leave the entire property at 200 ft. below its current level and at creek level. There is no plan for backfilling using indigenous soils or progressive restoration to leave the meadow intact. We may be left with 150 acres of exposed rock surfaces along the West Fork of Clear Creek instead of the current high meadow. This is a massive change to the current ecosystem.
- Earthquake threat: Mining/pit operations are suspected of causing earthquake activity. Digging a pit in an area already being monitored for earthquake activity is risky and irresponsible. The University of Colorado placed a seismic activity monitor on the mountain overlooking the meadow. The scientist stopped at a neighbor's home (overlooking the meadow on the northside of US 40) and asked if they could place the equipment on the mountain and immediately installed the detector. He explained that most people are unaware of the earthquake threat in the Rocky Mountains and that our area was chosen as a potential earthquake zone. He left a map showing eleven monitored sites in CO
- Wildlife corridor: The proposed plan disturbs the entirety of the only large valley in the vicinity and will disrupt a major wildlife corridor. The wildlife include elk, deer, bighorn sheep, and coyotes. The Division of Wildlife is well aware of this location and has been to our neighbor's home on various occasions, including to set up a listening device for coyote activity. In addition, during the Empire Town Hall meeting with Empire Aggregates on May 28th, the Empire Aggregates Engineering representative bragged that pit operations are beneficial to the elk population because the elk use the heavy equipment to stand by for warmth. This is completely inappropriate interaction with our wildlife population. The elk need the Douglas Mtn valley and mountain side for their natural migrations during the changing seasons. Our family members have been watching a large herd of elk graze the meadow since 1986.
- Reclamation too late: During a town hall meeting in Empire, many answers from Empire Aggregates focused on reclamation of the land and bringing back wildlife and plant life on the inactive site. Unfortunately, the span of time planned for gravel pit activity is 25 years. Any woodland and scrub that might eventually develop on the inactive extraction site will occur far into the future and long after the destruction of the current ecosystem.
- Toxic runoff: The meadow valley sits north of Douglas Mountain. This is an area in which ice/snow accumulate without melting throughout the winter. I am concerned that the frozen ice will contain sediment, chemicals, vehicle oils and dirty water that will be impossible to manage. The entire north side of the property is bordered by Clear Creek and both the creek and downstream communities will be vulnerable to toxic runoff.

Best regards,
Kathrine Jansen
357 Kestrel Ln.
Silverthorne, CO 80498

6/29/2018

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PO Box 402
Dillon, CO 80435

303-526-9515
ktjansen99@gmail.com