



Objection to Douglas Mountain Ranch mining application for permit

Sheila Carlon <scarlon@wisptel.net>
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To: Peter.Hays@state.co.us

Wed, Dec 5, 2018 at 6:36 PM

December 5, 2018
ATTN: Peter Hays, petey.hays@state.co.us, 1313 Sherman St. Room 215, Denver CO 80203
RE: Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project, Permit #M2018016
To the Department of Reclamation, Mining and Safety:

I am part of a group of concerned citizens, Friends of Clear Creek, who oppose the development of a strip-mining operation in our county. I am also a Board Member of the Douglas Mountain Residents Association which is a neighborhood just off of Highway 6 and 119 bounded by Douglas Mountain Drive and Robinson Hill Road. I would like to share my concerns and objections regarding the proposed development of the **Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project in Clear Creek County** which would be located at or near Section 28, Township 35, Range 74W, 6th Principle Meridian in Clear Creek County; namely Empire Junction and westward to the town of Empire.

Water Issues: This 200-foot-deep proposed mine will damage/deplete the local water systems of Bard Creek, The West Fork of Clear Creek, the Clear Creek Watershed, and the ground water and natural springs on the plateau. The amount of water needed to run this type of operation and mitigate dust in this high wind location would far exceed the amount estimated in the permit application. The Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project has junior water rights to Bard Creek, so allocating water to a strip-mine in an already over taxed watershed is inappropriate and wasteful. Also, the mining operations will divert the natural flow of the West Fork of Clear Creek, impacting the West Clear Creek Watershed Basin (HUC-0103) and the property owners downstream. [The Upper Clear Creek Watershed Plan Update 2014](#) proposes to develop mitigation projects to repair and improve this valuable resource and lists metal and aggregate mining as one of the seven primary sources that have the potential to impact water quality.

Wildlife Issues: Land erosion would be significant, potentially contaminating Clear Creek with toxic soil and debris thereby disturbing/destroying the fish habitat which includes the **threatened Greenback Cutthroat Trout** that has been reintroduced to this area and is our State Fish. Elk, deer, moose, and bear roam this plateau with eagles and falcons soaring above. Their habitat would be devastated. Also thriving in this area is a substantial **Big Horn Sheep** population whose range and migratory patterns are well documented in the Colorado Parks and Wildlife report entitled "[Population Estimation, Survival Estimation and Range Delineation for the Georgetown Bighorn Sheep herd](#)". This is the largest Big Horn Sheep population in the nation and our State Animal. They are very susceptible to stress, and the mine would disrupt migration, grazing, breeding, lambing, and wintering. In addition, this plateau could be home to the **threatened Preble Meadow Jumping Mouse**, and we are requesting from Colorado Parks and Wildlife that a study be done to determine if the mouse is present.

Air Pollution and Health Issues: This area deals with constant heavy winds. The air pollution due to the massive amount of dust entering the environment through the strip-mining operation and the hundreds of trucks daily transporting materials would cause health issues for many residents. **The Easter Seals Rocky Mountain Village Camp** was established in 1951 and is directly across the highway from this proposed mine. The dust and other pollutants would negatively affect the 1200+ campers with special needs that attend this camp every year to enjoy the Rocky Mountains and the clean fresh air. The proposed mine would jeopardize the health and wellbeing of this sensitive population because many of these individuals deal with respiratory issues and as a result, the Easter Seals Rocky Mountain Village could potentially close. Also, the town of Empire is .5 miles to the west of the proposed mine and has concerns about air quality, especially during summer upslope weather systems when the wind blows from east to west, potentially carrying pollutants directly into town.

The Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project would destroy the only plateau in Clear Creek County! It is a unique geological feature, unspoiled by development, that supports many wildlife species and therefore, should be protected. Our State and County needs a positive, eco-friendly, tourism friendly and wildlife friendly use for this land; that is our future economy. Please, I am asking you to deny the permit application of the Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project.

Best Regards,
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