


**COLORADO**Division of Reclamation,  
Mining and Safety

Department of Natural Resources

**MINERALS PROGRAM INSPECTION REPORT****PHONE: (303) 866-3567**

The Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety has conducted an inspection of the mining operation noted below. This report documents observations concerning compliance with the terms of the permit and applicable rules and regulations of the Mined Land Reclamation Board.

<b>MINE NAME:</b> Airport Gravel Pit	<b>MINE/PROSPECTING ID#:</b> M-1983-039	<b>MINERAL:</b> Sand and gravel	<b>COUNTY:</b> Las Animas
<b>INSPECTION TYPE:</b> Monitoring	<b>INSPECTOR(S):</b> Jared L. Ebert	<b>INSP. DATE:</b> March 19, 2019	<b>INSP. TIME:</b> 10:00
<b>OPERATOR:</b> Las Animas County	<b>OPERATOR REPRESENTATIVE:</b> John Lucero	<b>TYPE OF OPERATION:</b> 112c - Construction Regular Operation	

<b>REASON FOR INSPECTION:</b> Normal I&E Program	<b>BOND CALCULATION TYPE:</b> None	<b>BOND AMOUNT:</b> \$0.00
<b>DATE OF COMPLAINT:</b> NA	<b>POST INSP. CONTACTS:</b> None	<b>JOINT INSP. AGENCY:</b> None
<b>WEATHER:</b> Cloudy	<b>INSPECTOR'S SIGNATURE:</b> 	<b>SIGNATURE DATE:</b> March 26, 2019

**The following inspection topics were identified as having Problems or Possible Violations. OPERATORS SHOULD READ THE FOLLOWING PAGES CAREFULLY IN ORDER TO ASSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE PERMIT AND APPLICABLE RULES AND REGULATIONS. If a Possible Violation is indicated, you will be notified under separate cover as to when the Mined Land Reclamation Board will consider possible enforcement action.**

**INSPECTION TOPIC:** Hydrologic Balance

**PROBLEM:** The Division has no evidence that the operator has a valid well permit, substitute water supply plan, or approved water augmentation plan for the exposed groundwater at the site. This is a problem related to 34-32.5-116(4)(h) of the Colorado Revised Statutes and 3.1.6(1)(a) of the Construction Materials Rules and Regulations governing injury to existing water rights.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:** The operator shall demonstrate that the operation is in compliance with the Office of the State Engineer, show evidence that the operator is taking measures to bring the site into compliance with the SEO, or backfill the pits to at least two feet above the groundwater surface by the corrective action date specified.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION DUE DATE:** 4/30/19

**INSPECTION TOPIC:** Topsoil

**PROBLEM:** The topsoil stockpiles do not have established vegetation on them and are therefore susceptible to erosion. Also these piles have steep side slopes prone to erosion. Rule 3.1.9(1) states if topsoil is not replaced into the backfill area within a time short enough to avoid deterioration of the topsoil, vegetative cover or other means shall be employed so that the topsoil is protected from erosion.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:** The operator shall grade and configure these piles in a stable configuration and seed the stockpiles with the seed mix that was submitted as part of the approved Reclamation Plan. The Operator shall

demonstrate compliance by submitting seed tags, a bill of sale or photographs of seeding activities.

**CORRECTIVE ACTION DUE DATE: 4/30/19**

### **OBSERVATIONS**

This was a monitoring inspection of the Airport Gravel Pit, Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety (DRMS or Division) permit number M-1983-039 operated by Las Animas County. I, Jared Ebert with DRMS conducted the inspection. Mr. John Lucero with Las Animas County accompanied me during the inspection.

This site is a 112c permitted mining operation with a permit area of 175 acres. The site was not actively being mined at the time of the inspection. The acreages reported in the annual reclamation report for the 2017-2018 report appears to be accurate. When one enters the site on the north east side from County Road 36 a flat area exists where a stockpile of recycled asphalt has been stockpiled. The active mining area is located south of this area where the most recent pit excavation is located. A portion of this land between the active pit area and the asphalt recycling area has been backfilled and graded. An area west of the active pit area is an older pit excavation with an old crusher located next to a shallow irregular shaped pit. A backfilled, graded and topsoiled area is north, northwest and northeast of the old pit area/processing area.

#### **Backfilling and Grading:**

The backfilled and graded area depicted on the 2017-2018 annual reclamation report map appears graded and stable with a gentle configuration that blends in well with the surrounding topography.

The active mine area on the southeast portion of the site consists of a shallow pit ranging in depth from five to fifteen feet deep with near vertical pit slopes. There appears to be plenty of room to backfill and grade the pit highwalls.

The older pit excavation located west of the active pit area consists of a shallow irregularly shaped pit with angle of repose pit slopes to near vertical slopes in places. It does not appear this area has been actively mined for a long time. Mr. Lucero indicated the County may continue mining in this area in the future but was not sure. There appears to be room to cut and fill and pit slopes to the required 3H:1V ratio.

#### **Hydrologic Balance:**

A smaller pit basin east of the active pit area has been excavated below the groundwater table. A submersible pump was staged next to the exposed groundwater and according to Mr. Lucero the County uses this water to fill water tankers. A crushed rock access road with a looped turn around has been constructed to provide access to this fill point. The Division does not have evidence on-file that Las Animas County has an approved well permit and/or substitute water supply plan for this activity. This issue is cited as a problem at the beginning of this report. Las Animas County will need to provide DRMS with evidence they are using this water in compliance with the Colorado Division of Water Resources or they will need to backfill this pit area above the groundwater table by the corrective action due date.

#### **Gen. Compliance With Mine Plan:**

The approved mining plan allows the Operator to work 10 acres at a time. It appears the active pit area is within this threshold.

Reclamation Success:

Sparse vegetation has established within the backfilled, graded and topsoiled area. However, as this area was not observed during the active growing season, the observations made regarding vegetation may not be representative. Las Animas County is encouraged to evaluate the reclaimed area during the growing season to ascertain if additional revegetation work is warranted at the site.

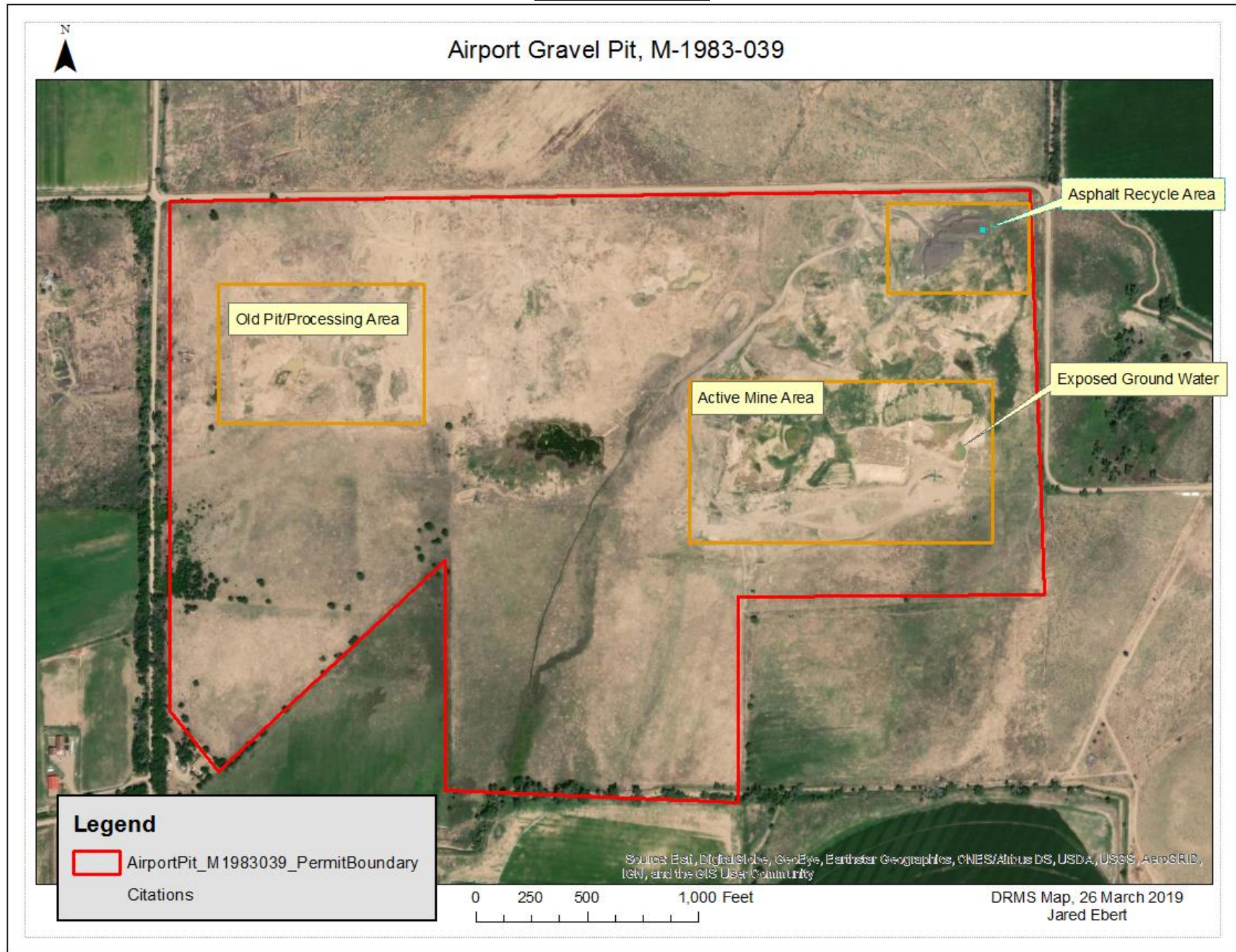
Signs and Markers:

The mine entrance sign was posted at the entrance to the site and the permit area is fenced.

Topsoil:

The topsoil stockpiles observed east and north of the active pit area had very little vegetation established on the piles and they were configured with steep side slopes. This is an intermittent operation and it appears the site sits for long periods of time without activity. The approved reclamation plan for the site requires the operator to stabilize topsoil stockpiles with vegetation by seeding them with the approved seed mixture. Las Animas County will need to grade these piles to a stable configuration and seed these piles with the approved seed mixture. Documentation these activities have been completed will need to be submitted by the corrective action date noted at the beginning of the report.

## PHOTOGRAPHS







**Figure 1. From the northwest corner of the active pit area.**



**Figure 2. Exposed groundwater and pump.**



Figure 3. Old processing equipment near old pit area.



Figure 4. From the east side of the old pit looking west.

### **GENERAL INSPECTION TOPICS**

The following list identifies the environmental and permit parameters inspected and gives a categorical evaluation of each

(AR) RECORDS----- <u>Y</u>	(FN) FINANCIAL WARRANTY----- <u>NA</u>	(RD) ROADS----- <u>Y</u>
(HB) HYDROLOGIC BALANCE----- <u>PB</u>	(BG) BACKFILL & GRADING----- <u>Y</u>	(EX) EXPLOSIVES----- <u>NA</u>
(PW) PROCESSING WASTE/TAILING---- <u>NA</u>	(SF) PROCESSING FACILITIES----- <u>NA</u>	(TS) TOPSOIL----- <u>PB</u>
(MP) GENL MINE PLAN COMPLIANCE- <u>Y</u>	(FW) FISH & WILDLIFE----- <u>Y</u>	(RV) REVEGETATION---- <u>Y</u>
(SM) SIGNS AND MARKERS----- <u>Y</u>	(SP) STORM WATER MGT PLAN---- <u>NA</u>	(RS) RECL PLAN/COMP-- <u>Y</u>
(ES) OVERBURDEN/DEV. WASTE----- <u>NA</u>	(SC) EROSION/SEDIMENTATION--- <u>Y</u>	(ST) STIPULATIONS----- <u>NA</u>
(AT) ACID OR TOXIC MATERIALS----- <u>NA</u>	(OD) OFF-SITE DAMAGE----- <u>Y</u>	

Y = Inspected and found in compliance / N = Not inspected / NA = Not applicable to this operation / PB = Problem cited / PV = Possible violation cited

#### **Inspection Contact Address**

Phil Dorenkamp  
Las Animas County  
2000 N. Linden Ave.  
Trinidad, CO 81082

EC: phil.doreankamp@lasanimascounty.org