

STATE OF
COLORADO

Zuber - DNR, Rob <rob.zuber@state.co.us>

timely comments

1 message

Karen Johnson <kaj5greensquares@yahoo.com>
To: "rob.zuber@state.co.us" <rob.zuber@state.co.us>

Sat, Sep 17, 2022 at 3:33 PM

Hello Rob,
TOPIC 1

My name is Karen Johnson. I live, with Richard Grassl, at [24350 Compo Rd.](#) in Greeley --- in the neighborhood of Dos Rios, close to the site of the proposed gravel pit. [Two Rivers Sand, Gravel and Reservoir Project. In fact we live *just about* across the road from the *current* proposed site of the processing plant.

I'm attaching a copy of a letter I wrote to the Colorado Dept. of Reclamation, etc. , dated April 26. As suggested by the poster, attached, I sent a hard copy letter to the Dept. of Reclamation, etc. at the address given. I know they got the letter because someone from the Dept. called me. He was very friendly. Very nice. Very polite. And he basically told me my time would be better spent if I went to see the Weld County Planning Division in Greeley, which I did. That man was also very friendly and nice and he told me my time would be better spent if I went to see --- Ann Best-Johnson, the planning director in Evans. I went to see Ann Best- Johnson. She also was very nice --- and told me she didn't know anything about it.

So then I called Garret Varra, who has been extremely friendly and nice. I suggested it would be good for his soul if he just gave the land to some organization like Nature Conservancy. I did not know at that time that he was no longer the owner of the land, but now simply the project manager. We had a good talk and I invited him to come up to Greeley and sit on our front porch so he could see and understand the consequences of --- what he was planning to do.

He's a busy man and it took a while but he did eventually come --- and he DID sit on our front porch --- for about two hours. We didn't talk business so much. I think [or so it seemed to me] that we were both trying to allow ourselves to appreciate the humanity of the other.

Back to the letter I wrote and which is dated April 26. I can't prove that I mailed that letter. I simply put it in the mailbox. Nor can I prove that The Dept. Of Reclamation, etc. got it, or that anyone from there called me. But if you believe me, then you should add my name to the list of "Timely objections".

TOPIC 2

I would like amend some of the remarks I made in the April 26 letter. At that time --- , I was apparently trying to be --- cooperative. Rather than demanding that the gravel pit permit be denied altogether, I suggested it might be palatable if all project traffic be required to stay off of 54th St. Rd. and, instead, exit out the south side of the dirt Rd. CR396.

I would like to change my position on that. I firmly believe the entire proposal should be denied. The third attachment is a copy of the letter I sent to Governor Polis, and Hickenlooper and Bennet, asking for their combined help to prevent the gravel pit project. I sent a hard copy letter to each, along with several hard-copy photos of the land.

Instead of digging up the land, cherish the land --- and let THE PEOPLE enjoy the land. All of the people. The people who live nearby. The people who drive by every day and enjoy the peaceful scenery. The quiet. The open space. The corn. The people who could come and walk along the river if a walking trail was created. The people who could bring their picnic baskets and lunch by the river. An educational center could be created in what I believe is now an empty house and barn on the dirt road. Environmental education. Climate change education. Sustainable energy education. Sustainable farming techniques. All things that would make our dear Mother Nature proud. Perhaps an array of solar collectors ---to supply electricity to ---- People. Farmers are having a tough time in this time of climate change. Perhaps demonstration fields which would work toward finding ways to successfully farm in drought conditions. Support the farmers. They feed us. Support the wildlife. Support the air we breathe.

I believe you may have already talked with my husband about this but I will repeat the invitation. Please come up and sit on our front porch with us.

TOPIC 3

The argument has been made that the gravel must be dug up because --- gravel is needed for construction and development.


OK --- but it's not a black or white issue. It's not that there is either --- gravel or no gravel. The issue at hand is should gravel pits be located *willy-nilly-anywhere* --- OR, should one be *thoughtful* when choosing the location of a gravel pit. I would argue that it's better to be thoughtful when making choices that affect people's lives --- and the quality of their lives, and the quality of the environment. Don't leave the human heart and soul out of your calculations. Don't ignore the tremendous health benefits to people when they have the opportunity to --- look out across a field of corn, through the trees, to the river, to the eagle flying overhead --- the sun and clouds above and the clean fresh air filling their lungs and their soul.

Sincerely,
Karen Johnson
970-371-2502 [text only]
kaj5greensquares@yahoo.com

3 attachments



IMG_4925(1).JPG
132K

 **colorado division.docx**
15K

 **polis.docx**
17K

PUBLIC NOTICE

This site is the location of a proposed construction materials operation. Varra Companies, Inc. whose address and phone number is 8120 Gage Street – Frederick, CO 80516 Telephone (303) 666-6657, has applied for a Reclamation Permit with the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board.

Anyone wishing to comment on the application may view the application at the Weld County Clerk to the Board's Office at 1150 'O' Street, Greeley, Colorado 80632, and should send comments prior to the end of the public comment period to the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining & Safety, Office of Mined Land Reclamation – 1313 Sherman Street, Room 215 – Denver, CO 80203.

RECEIVED

April 26, 2022

To: Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety

From: Karen Johnson, concerned homeowner

MAY 02 2022

Re: County Road 396 proposed gravel pits

DIVISION OF RECLAMATION,
MINING & SAFETY-MINERALS

To whom it may concern,

My name is Karen Johnson. I live at 24350 Compo Rd. . The address is technically outside of the Greeley city limits, but the mailing address is Greeley, Co., 80634. Our house is on the corner of Compo Rd. and 54th St. Rd. --- and right across the street from what is currently dirt road 396.

I like to take walks on the dirt road. In the summertime, fields of feed corn and sometimes cabbage and/or onions. The South Platte River can be seen, and sometimes heard, through the trees. Hawks. Wild turkey. One time I saw the most amazing murmuration performing a ballet high above the trees along the river. Someone from your office should drive up and see what I'm talking about.

About a week ago I noticed a PUBLIC NOTICE poster tacked onto several fence posts. A proposed "construction materials operation", by Varra Companies , Inc. But we know what that means. Gravel pits. Sigh.

I called Mr. Garret Varra and politely suggested that he donate the entire acreage to Nature Conservancy. Good karma, I said ---- and a good tax write off. Mother Earth would smile. [I say good naturedly.] He was very friendly and polite and I know that a gift to Nature Conservancy is wishful thinking.

So--- I have a suggestion that might help to make this future aggravation a bit more palatable for the many people who live nearby and will grieve the loss of what is now such a charming landscape and who will undoubtedly be affected, adversely, by the noise and by the TRUCKS. BIG TRUCKS, I imagine.

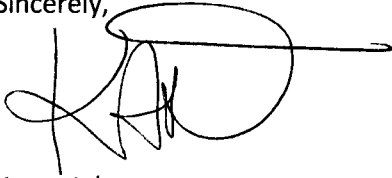
The dirt road 396 runs roughly north-south, opening onto 54th St. Rd. on the north, and opening onto ---- well, it's not clear, from the map, what the road to the south is called. 77th Ave or CR 27 ½ or an extension of Two Rivers Pkwy. The area directly to the north of the dirt road is residential. Quiet. 54th St. Rd. is a small, pleasant, winding country road. If you head East on 54th St.Rd. you will pass by a great number of homes. If you drive west on 54th St. Rd. your intent can only be to get onto 34, but that means passing by the Middle School and then through more residential and commercial.

However, if you exit 396 to the south, onto 77th Ave. you will find yourself on a larger and faster road, with a decidedly more industrial feel to it. And far, far fewer homes. Two, I think. And the homes on 77th Ave. are probably already used to the fast, more commercial traffic.

Therefore, I'm proposing that --- if the Varra Company is granted a permit to develop gravel pits on 396, that it will be conditional on an agreement that truck access to the gravel pits will be exclusively via 77th Ave. ----. No Varra trucks on 54th St. Rd. I believe this is a reasonable request. Trucks will have little impact if they enter and exit 396 from 77th Ave. Trucks will have HUGE quality-of-life impact on a lot of people if they enter and exit 396 from 54th St. Rd.

Please come up and see what I'm talking about.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KJ' with a large, sweeping loop that extends to the right.

Karen Johnson

24350 Compo Rd. Greely, Co. 80634

Cell: 970-371-2502

Home: 970-330-3401

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September5, 2022

To: Governor Jared Polis, Senator John Hickenlooper and Senator Michael Bennet.

From: Karen Johnson

24350 Compo Rd. Greeley, Colorado 80634

Kaj5greensquares@yahoo.com

970-371-2502 (C)

970-330-3401 (H)

Dear Sirs,

I am writing this letter to ask for your help. I live in Greeley, Colorado, just outside the city limits and to the south, in a residential neighborhood called Dos Rios. The name is apt as the Big Thompson and South Platte Rivers flow through the land just across the road in an area that is currently a mixture of open space and farmland, tree-lined rivers, feed corn and, sometimes, hay bales. Sometimes cabbage and onions. From time to time a few cows. And wildlife, including deer, wild turkey, bobcats, owls and eagles --- and the endangered jumping preble mouse. The area to which I am referring is bounded on the north by 54th St. Rd., on the south by Twin Rivers Pkwy, and on the west by 65th Ave. I am uncertain about the bounding on the east. Perhaps dirt road 396, or maybe the South Platte River, or maybe further west. Driving east on 54th St. Rd., from 65th Ave. the land to the south is wilderness, but for a section across from Alto Way that has been designated protected open space.

It is a stark, rugged and beautiful landscape. I have enjoyed many long walks along the dirt road CR 396, in all seasons. I once witnessed a spectacular murmuration, high above the trees lining the South Platte --- a breath-taking and highly synchronized ballet performed by thousands upon thousands of ---- birds, I don't know what kind.

I would like to see the entire area designated protected open space.

AND THERE IN LIES THE PROBLEM.

Originally Varra Companies Inc, and now the Raptor Corporation, has submitted a proposal to the Colorado Dept. of Reclamation , Mining and Safety ----to develop 400 acres of the area for the purpose of --- GRAVEL PITS, a project expected to be running for the next 25 to 30 years.

Cold steel. Noise. Truck traffic. Dust in the air. And the destruction of one of Mother Nature's gifts to -- US. WE the people. Not WE the Corporation, by which money buys power and choice, but We the People who live close to this land and who believe the development of gravel pits in the area will profoundly degrade our experience of HOME. We live here. 54th St Rd. is the entrance to our community. I sit on my front porch and look out at 54th St. Rd., the cottonwoods lining the road, and the view of Long's Peak and Meeker far in the distance. This is my home.

OPEN SPACE. SOUL. CLEAN AIR and the QUIET that allows one to breathe deeply and contentedly.

The prancing deer, the hawks in the sky hunting the prairie dogs. Rabbit brush and tumble weed.

The Raptor Corporation has already submitted plans to the Colorado Department of Reclamation, Mining and Safety. After that plans will be submitted to the City of Evans.

The residents of Dos Rios, and others in nearby areas, don't want this to happen. The residents of Dos Rios are getting organized to do what we can to fight it.

WE say NO to Gravel Pits --- and we need your help.

My idea, personally, is that the State, county, and possibly towns of Greeley and Evans, along with environmental and wildlife organizations such as Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, etc. form a coalition, pool their money and buy the land back from the Raptor Corporation and declare it protected OPEN SPACE.

I wouldn't mind if farmers still plowed the land. Perhaps efforts at sustainable farming in this difficult time of climate change.

Perhaps a small environmental learning center. A path along the river. There is currently no access to the rivers.

But mostly open space. For the SOUL of We the people. Quality of life over the too often accepted destruction of natural beauty as necessary collateral damage in the service of --- you know what. Money. Capitalism. Progress. Sometimes better to slow down, sit back, breathe.

We can do better. We can make better choices.

Please send some one up here to look at the land and to talk with us.

I am including contact information for a few other residents of Dos Rios. These are people who have considerably more expertise than I have regarding the land, the animals and the PROCESS in general. I am simply speaking from the heart.

Thank you for your consideration.

Please help us.

Karen Johnson

Jessica Zumbrun has organized the Dos Rios neighborhood and is the person who perhaps knows best all of the details of the proposed gravel pit project. She and her husband live in Dos Rios.

Jessica and David Zumbrun
(303) 263-2220
davidzumbrun@yahoo.com

Chuck Olmsted is a retired professor, University of Northern Colorado, in the Environmental Sciences Dept. Chuck and his wife Cathy live in Dos Rios.
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Charles.olmsted@bears.unco.edu

Steve Mackessy is a Professor at University of Northern Colorado in the Biology Dept. An expert on snakes. Steve and his wife Kay live in Dos Rios.
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