



Response to Reclamation Permit Application Consideration

DATE: September 16, 2024

TO: Brock F. Bowles, Division of Reclamation, Mining & Safety (DRMS), brock.bowles@state.co.us

CC: Division 1 Office, District 2 Water Commissioner, alec.hernandez@state.co.us

FROM: Wenli Dickinson, P.E., State Engineer's Office (SEO), wenli.dickinson@state.co.us

RE: **Sweet Valley Pit, File No. M-2024-015**

Applicant: Randy Ray, Central Colorado Water Conservancy District
3209 W. 28th Street, Greeley, CO 80634
(970) 330-4540.

Contact: J. C. York, J & T Consulting, Inc.
305 Denver Ave, Suite D, Fort Lupton, CO 80621
(303) 857-6222

Location: Part of NE ¼ of Sec. 30, Twp. 4 North, Rng. 66 West, 6th P.M., Weld County

CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

The proposed operation will consume groundwater by: ☒ evaporation, ☒ dust control, ☒ dewatering, ☒ water removed in the mined product, ☒ washing, ☐ concrete production and ☒ reclamation.

- ☒ Prior to initiation of these uses of groundwater, the Applicant will need to obtain either a gravel pit or other type of well permit, as applicable.
- ☒ Prior to obtaining a well permit, an approved substitute water supply plan or decreed plan for augmentation is required.
- ☒ Prior to approving a well permit, the Applicant must conduct a field inspection of the site and document the locations of all wells within 600 feet of the permit area. The Applicant must then obtain a waiver of objection from all well owners with wells within 600 feet of the permit area or request a hearing before the State Engineer.

COMMENTS: The subject amended application is for a surface mining and processing operation on approximately 150.92 (an increase of 3.09 acres from 147.83 acres) of which 75.53 acres will be mined, generally located in the NE ¼ of Sec. 30, Twp. 4 North, Rng. 66 West, 6th P.M., Weld County. The permit boundary has been modified to allow for the addition of an access road. **This letter acknowledges the increase in permitted area and references the correct file no. M-2024-015**



(previous letter incorrectly referenced file no. M-2023-033). All other comments contained in this letter are the same as our April 25, 2024 letter since no additional information except the increased permitted area was provided with this referral.

The mining operation consists of mining and processing sand and gravel to produce construction materials. The area will be revegetated and reclaimed as a lined groundwater storage reservoir. The mining plan calls for an average excavation of 650,000 tons of material per year for an estimated 11 years and 8 months. The primary materials to be mined at the site are sand and gravel. Mining will occur in the alluvium of the South Platte River. Estimated depth to groundwater is 13 to 18 feet. Mining will be accomplished in two phases by dry-mining method within slurry walls to be installed prior to mining. A north reservoir (32.42 acres) and south reservoir (40.10 acres) are proposed as part of this operation. Groundwater will be consumed by evaporation, dust control, dewatering, water removed in the mined product, washing, and reclamation.

Prior to the use or exposure of any groundwater, the Applicant must first obtain a well permit and a substitute water supply plan ("SWSP") or decreed plan for augmentation to replace depletions caused by groundwater consumption. The site must continue to be operated under a SWSP or plan for augmentation until such time as the proposed reservoirs are lined (lining approved by this office, backfilling is completed, and replacement of lagged depletions shall continue until there is no longer an effect on stream). The application indicates that the Applicant will apply for a gravel pit well permit, subject to the 600-foot spacing requirement, and an SWSP to augment river depletions.

Additionally, according to our records, there are several wells located on the subject property. Such wells must be operated in accordance with their permitted conditions and applicable statutes. Such wells cannot be used for the mining operation unless they are permitted for such use. If any wells will be plugged and abandoned, they must be plugged and abandoned in accordance with the Well Construction Rules 2 CCR 402-2 and a [Well Abandonment Report](#) must be filed with this office.

Additionally, in certain areas of the South Platte River Basin, SEO staff have observed groundwater problems that appear to be related to the lining of gravel pits located near streams, and in particular, these problems occur when multiple liners are located adjacent to each other. DRMS should consider the siting and design of lined gravel pits to ensure that they will not individually or cumulatively result in impacts to the timing and quantity of groundwater flow from upgradient locations back to the stream system. In addition to impacts to property, such as flooding upgradient and reduced water levels downgradient of the liner, there are decrees of the court that specify the timing, quantity, and amount of water depleted from the streams by wells and accreted to the stream through recharge operations. The installation of a gravel pit liner should not result in changes to the timing, location, and amount of such groundwater flows. In anticipation of this concern, the application indicates that mitigation measures such as dewatering wells or a perimeter drain will mitigate any mounding. While the application indicates that water levels may drop 3.5 feet adjacent to the slurry wall, the report indicates that groundwater may be infiltrated downgradient to mitigate this shadowing effect. Lastly, the application states the Applicant will monitor the groundwater levels to address impacts to the groundwater table.

The Applicant may contact the SEO at (303) 866-3581 with any questions.