

From: [Glenn and Margie Patterson](#)
To: [Cunningham, Michael](#)
Cc: [Colleen Williams](#); [Eric Schroder](#); [Jonathan Ashton](#); [Annear, Julie](#); [Kathy Peterson](#); [ken lenarcic](#); [Martinez, Karen](#); [Pete Lawrence](#); [sue schaufler](#); [Williams, Mark](#)
Subject: Comments from LWOG on Bueno Mine reopening
Date: Sunday, May 06, 2012 11:33:19 PM

Dear Mr. Cunningham:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed reopening of the Bueno Mine near Jamestown. The Lefthand Watershed Oversight Group (LWOG) was established in 2003 in response to a recommendation from a water quality task force convened by Boulder County. The mission of LWOG is to monitor, protect and restore water quality in Left Hand Creek and its tributaries, James Creek and Little James Creek. To further this mission, LWOG participates in volunteer monitoring of water quality and quantity of these creeks, restoration projects to improve and protect water quality, clean-up events, public outreach, and educational activities. Much of LWOG's work is carried out on a volunteer basis, under the guidance of a professional technical advisor and a professional coordinator. LWOG is a registered Colorado nonprofit and a 501(C)(3) charitable organization, with a Board of Directors comprising citizen representatives of communities in the watershed, plus representatives from public agencies and utilities with an interest in the watershed. As a longstanding entity with a strong stake in decisions affecting management of land and water in the Left Hand Creek Watershed, LWOG requests to be included when future notifications are distributed regarding opportunities to comment on upcoming decisions of this sort.

The quality of water in Left Hand Creek is important for several reasons. Three water-supply utilities, the Town of Ward, the Town of Jamestown, and the Left Hand Water District, rely on source water from this watershed to supply drinking water to 19,000 customers in their service areas. Those customers rely on their utilities to consistently provide high-quality, safe drinking water. In addition, numerous farms rely on water from Left Hand Creek to irrigate crops for human consumption. And finally, Left Hand Creek and its tributaries support aquatic ecosystems and recreational opportunities that are also dependent on clean, safe water.

The past century and a half has seen the establishment of numerous mining enterprises in the watershed. LWOG recognizes that these enterprises created jobs and contributed to the culture of the area. We also recognize that most of these enterprises were abandoned with little or no regard to lasting effects on health, safety, and water quality. We can point to stream reaches where water quality has, as a result, been degraded to the extent that aquatic life disappeared for many years, and is only now beginning to return. The gradual improvement in water quality has been due in large part to a series of restoration projects at abandoned mine sites, under the direction and funding of entities ranging from private landowners to local, county, state, and federal agencies. The position of LWOG is that the progress made in improving water quality during this long series of coordinated restoration efforts must not be lost as new mining activities take place. We are interested in helping to see that proper decisions are made in the processes of permitting, design, construction, operation, and restoration of mining activities, to ensure that old contaminants stored in mine pools or waste rock piles, or new contaminants from renewed mining activities, are prevented from entering Left Hand Creek and its tributaries. These potential contaminants of concern include acid-

bearing minerals that lower pH of the streams, metals, sediments, nutrients, microbial pathogens, solvents, leaching agents, and other chemicals.

LWOG is prepared to work alongside State and local government agencies and their permittees, as a constructive partner in the process of monitoring, protecting, and restoring water quality in the creeks. To be true to our mission, we also are prepared to speak up to stakeholders and the public if we become aware of activities that cause demonstrated degradation of water quality. We look forward to being an active participant in these processes, and hope that the State will take all appropriate measures to ensure full compliance with existing laws and regulations pertaining to site management and water-quality protection.

Sincerely,
Glenn Patterson, Coordinator
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