

**FRIENDS OF CLEAR CREEK**

is a group of engaged citizens from the communities of Clear Creek County Colorado, who respect and protect the air, water, natural landscape, wildlife, and quality of life for all who reside in and visit our beautiful county.

[www.FriendsOfClearCreek.com](http://www.friendsofclearcreek.com)

October 1,2018

ATTN: Adam Springer

Senior Planner, Clear Creek County Planning Department

aspringer@co.clear-creek.co.us

P.O. Box 2000, Georgetown CO 80444

303-679-2361

RE: Douglas Mountain Ranch Mining Project, Permits #M-2018-016, #AX-2018-0003, and #RZ-2018-0001

Dear Mr. Springer:

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. We attended a public meeting on May 23rd which was hosted by the applicant. The meeting was attended by at least 50 unhappy local residents. According to information provided by the applicant, the expected area of disturbance will be 92 acres. The depth of the disturbed area will be 150-200’ below its current elevation. This will lower the meadow to just above the current water level of Clear Creek. This will be the final elevation of area. The meadow will not be restored to anywhere near its current condition. Wildlife will lose this prime large grazing area for the next 20-30 years.

This project will permanently change the valley and have a huge negative effect on the environment, wildlife, residents, and tourism in Clear Creek County.

Our concerns include:

* The West Fork of Clear Creek runs along the northern boundary of the slope below the meadow. This portion of Clear Creek is classified as a Class I Coldwater Fishery by CDPHE. It is home to Cutthroat, Rainbow, and Brown Trout. This project presents a hazard to water quality and the aquatic life of the stream due to sediments in runoff from the site.
* The proposed mine site includes the largest accessible meadow in Clear Creek County. It is home to large numbers grazing animals including Big Horn Sheep, Elk and Deer. This project will destroy valuable habitat for all animals.
* Big Horn Sheep in this area make up the largest herd in North America. Colorado Division of Parks and Wildlife routinely harvest sheep from this herd to establish and/or populate herds in other areas around the State and Country. Destruction of this valuable habitat will have a major negative impact on the herd.
* Raptors regularly seen above the meadow include Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, Falcons, and numerous species of Hawks. This project will destroy a valuable hunting area for these animals and their prey.
* Seismic equipment was installed on the mountainside north of the meadow and US Highway 40. This equipment was installed to monitor earthquake activity which has been determined to be high in this area. Mining activity such as the proposed gravel pit exacerbate earthquake potential and increase the risk of harmful earthquakes.
* Air quality is a large concern. Prevailing winds are from the west. They are strong throughout the year. This land disturbance will result in large amounts of dust. The Easter Seals Rocky Mountain Village (RMV) is located to the east and downwind of the meadow. RMV is utilized by 1,200 campers each summer. Many of the campers have major health issues. Dust from the gravel pit could prove fatal to those with respiratory issues.
* Access to the site would be from the I-70 frontage road. The frontage road is located at the bottom of the access road. The road to the site is approximately 1,500 LF long. The average grade of the road is approximately 10.5%. The road crosses a property owned by the Norsemen of the Rockies. The Norseman property is located in the eastern third of the road. The portion of the road which crosses the Norsemen of the Rockies property has a grade of approximately 12%. These grades exceed Clear Creek County regulations for local roads which have a maximum allowable grade of 8% and present an unsafe condition for those using the road. According to the applicant, there will be up to 300 trucks using this road daily.
* Access road is on a north facing slope and generally runs east-west. This area is shaded throughout the winter. The access road will have up to 300 trucks per day. The road will be icy for several months each year. According to the applicant, trucks will not be allowed to use compression (Jake) brakes. This creates an extremely dangerous and unsafe situation for both the truck drivers and the public traveling on the I-70 frontage road.
* During the public meeting, the applicant stated that the property would be used as a gravel pit and be reclaimed as a meadow (only 150-200 feet lower). The applicant’s application to your department is centered around construction of a reservoir to be open to the public for recreation and fishing.
* Another point made by the applicant was that the gravel pit would be in operation for between 20-30 years. The meadow is visible from many of the residents of Empire. Construction and operation of the gravel pit will change the quiet and peaceful feeling of the Town for the next 20-30 years and reduce our quality of life.
* Many businesses and residential properties in Clear Creek County along with many visitors would be directly impacted by the on-going gravel pit operations; with the 200-300 trucks leaving the pit each day and the almost constant noise and air pollution.
* Several years ago, the applicant drove some test holes in the meadow. The noise carried to many houses and could be heard throughout even with the windows closed. The applicant stated in its application that operations would be daily from 7AM -7PM but they reserved the right to operate 24 hours per day. These operations would make our homes unlivable.
* The mine will not benefit residents of the valley. It will destroy a beautiful wildlife habitat and decrease the quality of life for the residents due to noise and air pollution and increased heavy truck traffic. It will also decrease the number of visitors to the area and therefore decrease tourism dollars for the entire county. It is estimated that 1,000,000 tons of material will be taken from this mine each year by up to 300 trucks per day.

In conclusion, this project will permanently change the valley and have a huge negative effect on the environment, wildlife, residents, and tourism in Clear Creek County. This application should be denied, and the project should not be permitted.

Thank you for your consideration,

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Street Address:

Mailing Address (PO Box):