



Public Notice

US Army Corps
of Engineers

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice Number: 200175537

Date: December 17, 2001

Comments Due: January 17, 2002

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

SUBJECT: Application for a Department of the Army permit under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and for water quality certification under Section 401 of the CWA to discharge approximately 26,000 cubic yards (cy) into 2.0 acres of wetland, as shown in the attached drawings.

APPLICANT: Routt County
Yampa Valley Regional Airport
Post Office Box 1060, 11005 RCR 51A
Hayden, CO 81639

LOCATION: The Yampa Valley Regional Airport (YVRA) property is located approximately 2 miles southeast of the City of Hayden and approximately 22 miles west of the City of Steamboat Springs within Sections 11, 12, 13, and 14, Township 6 North, Range 88 West and Section 18, Township 6 North, Range 87 West, Routt County, Colorado (Figure 1).

PURPOSE: The specific purpose of this project is to implement a portion of the YVRA's Master Plan. This portion of the Master Plan includes the proposed construction of a new general aviation (GA) facility at the airport. A variety of aircraft storage facilities is planned in the GA area, which include T-hangers, executive hangars, and large corporate hangars, including Fixed Based Operator facilities and a tie down apron.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A large area of general aviation development, consisting of approximately 100 acres, is to be located near the east end of the runway, on the north side of the airport (Figure 4). Site grading for the GA facility will generate approximately 23,000 cy of excess material. The GA facility will be built entirely in upland, however the waste material is proposed to be discharged into a borrow area located on the airport property (Figure 5). This borrow area was created in 1991 for the dual purpose of obtaining fill for the construction of a runway and taxiway and to provide a disposal site for fill generated from construction of the GA facility. Between the time the borrow area was created and now, it has developed wetland characteristics in the bottom (Figure 3/Wetland L). The total area of wetland in the borrow site is 1.79 acres (Figure 5).

In addition to wasting the material in the borrow area, the construction of a service road will require fill in the same borrow area and in another wetland site (Wetland I) to the northwest (Figure 4). Approximately 0.2 acre of the area identified as wetland I would be filled with 3,000 cy to accommodate the service road (Figure 5). All of the GA facilities are designed to restrict or limit vehicular access onto the aircraft operating areas to authorized vehicles only. To eliminate conflicts between the airport service vehicles and aircraft taxiway traffic, a 50 foot buffer is required between the edge of these two transportation corridors. The edge of the proposed service road is aligned exactly 50 feet from the edge of the taxiway. This safety margin places the service road in a portion of the wetland I. Therefore, to facilitate the limited vehicular access, construction of the service road connecting the GA facility with the terminal is necessary.

ALTERNATIVES: The acreage demands for future aviation facilities cannot be accommodated in the existing location for the 20 year planning period. The current airport layout plan calls for the relocation of the existing GA development area to accommodate the expanded development requirements and improve security at the commercial service ramp. There were three alternatives evaluated in the current Master Plan Update process. All three alternatives included plans to fill wetlands in the borrow area, since the borrow area was originally excavated with that use in mind. The cost to haul away 23,000 cubic yards of excess material to be deposited at the Routt County Landfill is prohibitive. There are no other suitable areas on the airport to dispose the fill. If the borrow area were not to be filled, the only alternative would be to stockpile waste material in upland sites on the airport property. Piling the material would be unsightly, restrictive, pose airport security concerns and create potential future problems when the piles may be required to be moved again. In light of the current situation the YVRA does not believe that any other practicable alternative exists. Similarly, based on available space and separation requirements between aircraft and service vehicles, YVRA does not believe that alternatives exists to the proposed location of the service road.

AREA DESCRIPTION: The YVRA property, prior to use as an airport, was historically utilized as agricultural land. Currently the property provides similar natural resource values to those that exist on ranch land throughout the lower Yampa Valley. Property not otherwise utilized within the airport boundary has historically been planted in winter wheat and other crops. At the current time this process has been halted and the entire site within the airport boundary has been seeded in native grasses in order to reduce soil erosion that has been a problem in the past. The property is situated in mostly upland. A total of 7.34 acres of wetland and 0.68 acre of other waters have been delineated by Western Bionomics and verified by the Corps of Engineers (Figure 3). The wetland plant communities delineated on the airport property include sedge/rush, sedge/grass and cattail/sedge. These areas are typically associated with intermittent or perennial headwaters that drain to the Yampa River. The remaining 680 acres are upland.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Planning for compensatory mitigation at YVRA is complicated by an FAA requirement to conduct wetland planning for compensatory mitigation projects a minimum of 10,000 feet from the runway (FAAACNo:150/5200-33,5/1/97). This requirement is in place to reduce the occurrence of aircraft/bird interactions at the airport vicinity. Wetlands attract large waterfowl such as ducks and geese, in addition to many other species of birds both large and small. Aircraft bird strikes and jet engine ingestion create

potentially life threatening situations for those in the aircraft and on the ground. Accordingly, on site mitigation is not available nor is it practicable for the currently proposed impacts. The airport does not own any property on which to create compensatory mitigation beyond the 10,000 foot radius.

As a result, YVRA is proposing to contribute funds to a land trust to meet the in-lieu-fee mitigation requirement of a 3:1 ratio. YVRA has negotiated with the Yampa Valley Land Trust to contribute funds to assist with the purchase of a conservation easement on the Crawford Ranch. The ranch is located on the Yampa River above Stagecoach Reservoir and on the slopes of Thorpe Mountain (Figures 6 and 7). The conservation easement would protect in perpetuity a portion (6 acres) of wetland and riparian land on the Yampa River which flows through the ranch. The easement is valued at \$5,000,000.00 or \$2356.00 per acre. The six acres of wetland and riparian land would cost approximately \$14,136.00

The applicant has requested water quality certification from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Written comments on water quality certification should be submitted to Mr. Andrew Ross, Planning and Standards Section, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division, 4300 Cherry Creek Drive South, Denver, Colorado, 80222-1530, on or before **January 17, 2002**.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division also reviews each project with respect to the anti-degradation provision in state regulations. For further information regarding anti-degradation provision, please contact Mr. Ross at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division, telephone (303) 692-3518.

The latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places and its monthly supplements have been reviewed and there are no places either listed or recommended as eligible which would be affected.

This activity would not affect any threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat. The District Engineer has made this determination based on information provided by the applicant and on the Corps' preliminary investigation.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments on or before **January, 17 2002**. Any person may request, in writing, within the comment period specified in this notice that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests for public hearings shall state, with particularity, the reasons for holding a public hearing.

The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality,

energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

For activities involving 404 discharges, a permit will be denied if the discharge does not comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's Section 404(b) (1) guidelines. Subject to the preceding sentence and any other applicable guidelines or criteria, a permit will be granted unless the District Engineer determines it would be contrary to the public interest.

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity.

Written comments on this permit application should be submitted to the District Engineer at the address listed above. Please furnish a copy of your written comments to the attention of Randy Snyder, Western Colorado Regulatory Office, U.S. Army Engineer District, Sacramento, 402 Rood Avenue, Room 142, Grand Junction, Colorado 81501-2563. For further information, please contact Mr. Randy Snyder, at telephone number (970) 243-1199, extension 12, or email rsnyder@spk.usace.army.mil.

Michael J. Conrad, Jr.
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Enclosures: 7 Drawings