



US Army Corps
of Engineers

Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice

Number: 200475332

Date: August 16, 2004

Comments Due: August 31, 2004

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct a road entrance into the new Coal Ridge High School Project, which would result in impacts to approximately 1.219 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, along the shoulder of U.S. Highway 6 & 24 east of the Town of Silt. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/regulatory.html>.

AUTHORITY: This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

APPLICANT: Garfield Public School District No. RE2
Attn: Mr. Mark DeWolfe
215 East 30th Street
Rifle, Colorado 81650
Telephone number (970) 625-7998

AGENT: Walsh Environmental Scientists and Engineers, LLC
Attn: Ms. Janetta Shepard, P.W.S.
4888 Pearl East Circle, Suite 108
Boulder, Colorado 80301
Telephone number (303) 443-3282

LOCATION: The project site is located approximately 2.5 miles east of the Town of Silt within the SE 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 1, Township 6 South, Range 92 West, Garfield County, Colorado, and can be seen on the New Castle USGS Topographic Quadrangle.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The applicant is proposing to construct additional turning, acceleration and deceleration lanes entering the new Coal Ridge High School from the north side of U.S. Highway 6 & 24. A total of 8,100 cubic yards of native backfill will be required for the roadway expansion improvements. Expansion to the south will extend for 3,380 linear feet and is intended for a passing lane to bypass the new left-hand turn lane for eastbound traffic. Northern expansion of the roadway will extend for 2,241 linear feet to provide acceleration/deceleration lanes. The estimated width of expansion is approximately 14 feet on each side of the highway, which will accommodate both additional lanes and adequate shoulder width.

Based on the available information, the overall project purpose is to construct roadway widening and additional lanes necessary to safely accommodate anticipated increased traffic associated with the construction of the Coal Ridge High School. The applicant states that the project purpose will improve

ingress and egress to the new campus, provide added safety for the students, faculty and roadway users and alleviate traffic congestion. The attached drawings provide additional project details.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Environmental Setting. There are approximately 1.84 acres of wetlands along the north and south sides of U.S. Highway 6 & 24 sourcing from the flow of the Ware and Hinds irrigation ditch with return flows to the Colorado River. With the exception of the road improvements, construction of the high school facility, including infrastructure and amenities (i.e., utilities, athletic fields, bike and pedestrian paths and parking lots) will not impact jurisdictional waters of the U.S.

Alternatives. The applicant has provided some information concerning project alternatives. The applicant states that alternative locations for placement of the high school entrance were investigated; however, access into the property is restricted by physical factors and adjoining private property. The applicant's preferred alternative was selected based upon the safest and most efficient access to service the needs of the community and to fulfill project goals. Additional information concerning project alternatives may be available from the applicant or their agent.

Mitigation. The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The applicant has proposed to mitigate for all 1.219 acres of wetland impacts occurring within the Colorado Department of Transportation easement resulting from the construction of the road-widening project.

The agent is currently working with the school district to determine the extent of sustainable wetlands that could be created onsite. Offsite mitigation options in the vicinity of the high school on land that is also owned by the district are also being investigated in the event that insufficient acreage is available onsite to compensate for wetland losses.

The Corps of Engineers will not make a permit decision on this application until a mitigation and monitoring plan is submitted for this project.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS: Water quality certification or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, is required for this project. The applicant has indicated they have applied for certification.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: Based on the available information, cultural resources are not within the project's area of potential effect.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The project will not affect any Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat that are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant or our preliminary review.

EVALUATION FACTORS: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described 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 described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain 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. The activity's

impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

The Corps 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 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 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.

SUBMITTING COMMENTS: Written comments, referencing Public Notice 200475332, must be submitted to the office listed below on or before August 31, 2004:

Mark Gilfillan, Regulatory Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Colorado/Gunnison Basin Regulatory Office
400 Rood Avenue, Room 142
Grand Junction, Colorado 81501-2563
Email: Mark.A.Gilfillan@usace.army.mil

The Corps is particularly interested in receiving comments related to the proposal's probable impacts on the affected aquatic environment and the secondary and cumulative effects. Anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state, with particularity, the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the Corps determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant, the agent or the Corps' project manager Mark Gilfillan, 970-243-1199, extension 15, Mark.A.Gilfillan@usace.army.mil.

Attachments: 2 drawings