



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Sacramento District
1325 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2922

Public Notice

Public Notice Number: SPK-2008-444

Date: June 27, 2008

Comments Due: July 27, 2008

In reply, please refer to the Public Notice Number

SUBJECT: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct the Walltown Aggregates Quarry project, which would result in impacts to approximately 10.54 acres of waters of the United States, including wetlands, in or adjacent to Carson and Coyote Creeks. 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: Granite Construction Company
P.O. Box 15287
Sacramento, California 95851
Attn: Grant Williams
916-855-4400

LOCATION: The ± 1,061-acre project site is located west of Latrobe Road, south of White Rock Road, and east of Scott Road. Undeveloped pastureland and ranches surround the project site. The property corresponds to portions of Sections 28, 32, and 33, Township 9 North, Range 8 East; and Section 4, Township 8 North, Range 8 East of the "Folsom SE, California" 7.5-minute quadrangle (U.S.G.S. 1980) in Sacramento County, California. The approximate center of the property is located at 38° 35' 26" North and 121° 06' 15" West within the Upper Cosumnes Watershed (#18040013, U.S.G.S. 1978). In addition, the permit area will include off-site infrastructure improvements (infrastructure improvements) along the unimproved road between the northwestern corner of the project site and White Rock Road. The road alignment measures approximately 6,100 linear feet and is 120 feet in width. The infrastructure improvements are included in this application as they are necessary components of the Walltown Quarry project. If the road improvements are implemented by an adjacent, unrelated mining project prior to Walltown Quarry moving forward, then the infrastructure improvement area will be removed from the Walltown permit area.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Granite Construction Company (Granite) is proposing a construction-aggregates production facility in eastern Sacramento County (Walltown Quarry) involving a hardrock surface mining operation and processing facilities. The permit area is comprised of production facilities, the active mining area, and an access road. The ultimate mine site (inclusive of the processing area and access roads), will cover approximately 614 acres of the approximately 1,061-acre permit area. Aggregate production is planned for the operational duration of 75 to 100 years.

The applicant indicates that the overall project purpose of the Walltown Quarry is to provide high quality, Portland Concrete Cement-grade aggregates to help ensure that the building and infrastructure

needs of the greater Sacramento area are adequately met. The project will supply a local source of high quality aggregates to meet the projected demand for such materials in a manner that will decrease the need for importation of aggregates to the region and thereby reduce environmental (air quality) and safety impacts associated with increased transportation distances. As opposed to more traditional methods of aggregate mining (i.e., alluvial sand and gravel mining), mining at Walltown Quarry reduces the footprint needed to produce the same volume of materials, and thereby reduces the footprint of potential environmental effects. The attached drawings provide additional project details.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Environmental Setting. A total of 31.818 acres of potential waters of the U.S. has been mapped for the on-site permit area. The jurisdictional status of these features is subject to Corps verification. In addition, a total of 0.064 acres of potential waters of the U.S. has been mapped for the infrastructure improvements. Proposed on-site impacts total 10.543 acres, including 0.144 acre of vernal pool, 0.999 acre of seasonal wetland, 6.151 acres of seasonal wetland swale, 0.436 acre of seep, 0.028 acre of constructed ditch, 1.354 acres of ephemeral drainage, 1.313 acres of intermittent drainage, and 0.118 acre of Carson Creek. In addition, the applicant is requesting authorization to impact and/or fill off-site wetlands and waters of the U.S. associated with infrastructure improvements. Proposed impacts total 0.064 acres, including 0.022 acre of vernal pool, 0.002 acre of seasonal wetland, and 0.040 acre of ephemeral drainage. The project site is composed of gently rolling terrain and is situated at an elevational range of approximately 240 feet to 476 feet above mean sea level. The eastern corner of the site is occupied by an oak savannah, while the majority of the remainder is occupied by an annual grassland vegetation community. The Carson Creek corridor, which bisects the project site, is fed by effluent from the El Dorado Hills wastewater treatment plant and supports a riparian community. The annual grassland is dominated by medusahead grass (*Taeniatherum caput-medusae*), sticky tarweed (*Holocarpha vergata*), and filaree (*Erodium* sp.). Other species commonly observed in this community include Mediterranean barley (*Hordium marinum*), cut-leaf geranium (*Geranium dissectum*), yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), peppergrass (*Lepidium virginicum*), and few-seed bitter-cress (*Cardamine oligosperma*).

A riparian community occurs along portions of Carson Creek as it runs through the project site. This community typically consists of a multi-layered canopy of tall and medium-sized trees. The tree canopy is made up of such species as Fremont's cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and willow (*Salix* sp.). Shrubs such as Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) and wild rose (*Rosa californica*) are found beneath the tree canopy. Annual grasses and forbs, such as bull rush (*Scirpus* sp.) and cattail (*Typha* sp.), form the ground level herbaceous vegetation layer. Slate outcroppings and rock fences are present throughout the property. The Permit Area, as well as surrounding properties, is currently used for livestock grazing.

Alternatives. The applicant has not provided information concerning project alternatives. Additional information concerning project alternatives may be available from the applicant or their agent. Other alternatives may develop during the review process for this permit application. All reasonable project alternatives, in particular those which may be less damaging to the aquatic environment, will be considered.

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 unavoidable direct and indirect habitat impacts. Mitigation for habitat loss is proposed to

occur off-site at an agency-approved location at approved ratios.

OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORIZATIONS: Water quality certification or a waiver, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act from the State of California is required for this project. The applicant has not yet applied for such certification or waiver. The applicant has stated that the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) will be contacted for impacts to ditches and drainages that have a defined bed and bank, and the affected portion of Carson Creek.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES: Based on the available information, potentially eligible cultural resources may be affected by the proposed project. The Corps will initiate consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer under Section 106 of the National Preservation Act, as appropriate.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Based on current focused survey data prepared by the applicant, no threatened or rare plants or animals are known to occur on-site. However, surveys are currently underway for the northern portion of the permit area, and additional surveys may be required in some areas within the proposed project. Protocol-level surveys for listed aquatic invertebrates were negative. Protocol-level surveys for Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle (*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus*) failed to find elderberry shrubs, the species' host plant. Potential California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*, CTS) breeding habitat is present at the stock pond and at three vernal pools. According to the applicants, the stock pond appears to be perennial in most years, however, the presence of non-native predatory fish and bullfrogs reduces the overall quality of the habitat for breeding. Based on surveys, the applicant believes that the remaining aquatic features on-site do not appear to have adequate water depths and are not inundated for a sufficient period to support successful reproduction by CTS. The Corps will initiate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as appropriate.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT: The proposed project will not adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) as defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The above determinations are based on information provided by the applicant and 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 SPK-2008-444 must be submitted to the office listed below on or before July 27, 2008

Zachary Simmons, Project Manager
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Sacramento Office
1325 J Street, Room 1480
Sacramento, California 95814 2922
Email: Zachary.M.Simmons@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 or the Corps' project manager Zachary Simmons, 916.557.6746, Zachary.M.Simmons@usace.army.mil.

Attachments: 3 drawings