

## Proposed Expansion of Frei-Walstrum Gravel Quarry

Here are some of the important concerns regarding the Frei-Walstrum gravel quarry expansion in a “short form” kind of way

SOLVE requested that the county work with Frei-Walstrum to assure the following:

- The quarry and its operation will not be visible from US-6, or from the Greenway.
- Easement for the Greenway that is part of the Peaks to Plains trail will be possible all the way through Clear Creek Canyon.
- There is no significant increase in truck traffic on US-6, regardless of what legal limits may exist.
- Additional contingencies be included for the rock wall that is to remain between the quarry and the highway, for the safety of rock climbers and hikers, as well as motorists – over and above what was proposed at the state level, which only considered the average strength of the rock, not its weakest point.

Ed Dentry, in a 4-page email to Dan Gibbs of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, is concerned with the following:

- The proposed expansion will remove the tops of three peaks and a ridgeline above the creek. Canyon walls, including popular rock-climbing areas will be drastically shortened.
- Both Clear Creeks will be precariously situated and water quality will continue to be under threat.
- Bighorn sheep, which trade along an ancient, well-documented migration corridor between Georgetown and Golden, will suffer more migration detours and loss of habitat.

Emily Andrews, PhD, in a 29-page report as a Background Paper written to show the Assessment of the Impact of the Proposed Douglas Mountain Ranch Mine had concerns which also pertain to the Frei-Walstrum expansion:

- Significant increases in respiratory ailments are a concern for residents near sand and gravel mining. A host of studies connect air pollution to respiratory illness and school absenteeism.
- Even though the quarry expansion may not create additional truck traffic it is still very detrimental to current roads. Heavy trucks cause much more highway damage than passenger cars. One round trip of a gravel dump truck would create roughly the same wear and tear as 270,000 average 4,000-pound cars. This would cause a significant increase in road damage, particularly for the access ramps on and off I70.
- While gravel dump trucks pay more in highway taxes per mile than passenger vehicles the differential in tax receipts does not make up for the differential in wear and tear on the highway.

- Locating a gravel pit on the primary access road to a growing recreational area can have a far greater adverse economic impact than in locations that are insulated from economic activity outside their boundaries. The impact of the risk to highway congestion and increased highway repair costs will only become truly apparent after the damage is done. The risk to tourism from additional traffic congestion on I-70 would reach beyond Clear Creek, reducing commercial revenue for neighboring counties.
- In view of wildlife objectives for bighorn sheep and Peregrine falcons, the balance between herd containment, hunter recreational opportunities, and wildlife concerns would appear to take precedence over quarry expansion.
- The Clear Creek watershed is characterized by beautiful mountain scenery and outdoor recreation. Clear Creek is valued for its fisheries, and is utilized extensively for kayaking, rafting, swimming, and small-scale, recreational placer mining.
- It also provides the water supply for a number Colorado communities. These uses are all heavily dependent upon acceptable water quality. As Clear Creek flows through the watershed, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive materials from rock surfaces and the riverbed. Rockslides or landslides, runoff from forested areas, animal activity, or human activities all may affect water quality in Clear Creek. In 1983, because of mining-related water quality problems, the US Environmental Protection Agency established the Clear Creek/Central City Superfund Study Area and placed it on the National Priority cleanup list. This was the beginning of a series of activities around the Clear Creek Watershed that have continued up to today. A number of Colorado cities (Golden, Georgetown, Idaho Springs, Black Hawk, Arvada, Northglenn, Thornton and Westminster use Clear Creek Water or water from tributaries of Clear Creek for their domestic household water supply.
- Risks include:
  - Challenges of Rehabilitation
  - Vulnerable property owners face reduced real estate sales price,
  - Families exposed to mine dust may be subject to serious respiratory ailments, especially the very young and the very old. Clear Creek middle and high school is close by.
  - Motorists face greater traffic congestion with increased vehicle operation costs, such as cost of gasoline while sitting in a traffic jam.
  - Businesses could face reduced revenues, particularly those engaged in outdoor recreational tourism.