



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D., Governor

Water Resources Department

Water Resources Department

700 Dimmick St. Suite C

Grants Pass, OR 97526-1013

May 13, 2014

Josephine County Planning
700 NW Dimmick, Suite C
Grants Pass, Oregon 97526

RE: Sunny Valley Sand and Gravel, Conflict Minimization Hearing May 12, 2014, Groundwater

Dear Ms. Zilverberg:

The following are questions in response to the testimony by Gary Peterson for Sunny Valley Sand and Gravel (SVSG), regarding water use for the mining operation.

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) recognizes that all existing wells are not represented in our database for well logs nor on the mapped well locations. How was the map created that showed the locations of wells within the 1500 feet injury mitigation zone? If the well logs from our WRIS database were the source, the locations are often incorrect in terms of quarter quarters and the list is incomplete. The only way to have an accurate representation of the existing wells within the area would have been to complete a door to door approach.

As to the comment that Grave Creek would provide a buffer that would prevent interference to wells north of the creek, sufficient evidence of this statement was not provided. In the event that Grave Creek goes dry adjacent to the site, the dewatering impact to neighboring wells is unknown.

Mr. Peterson stated that the dewatering of the excavation pits would not impact groundwater or local wells. He said with the completion of each excavation, the pit would refill with water and the surrounding area would be remediated with the pits left open as ponds. The map submitted to OWRD for Groundwater (gw) Application 17580 shows 10 pits located across the 200 acres. He does not address the loss of water through evaporation from the 10 pits.

GW17580 requests 8.43 cfs of groundwater for mining operations. The three reservoir applications that were submitted to OWRD by SVSG, R87930, R87931, and R87932, requesting a total of 215 acre feet of water, are currently on administrative hold, as requested by SVSG's attorney, Martha Pagel. If approved, these applications would interface with groundwater. Tim Wallin, Manager for the OWRD Water Rights Program has stated that "All the applications seem to suffer from the same difficulty, namely that according to their own geologist's report, the excavations will intersect GW that is hydraulically-connected to Grave Creek, from which water is not available. It seems unlikely that we could approve *any* water-use authorization that would involve intersection of the GW table." As it appears that OWRD will not issue any consumptive use water rights, has SVSG considered alternative water supplies?



Mr. Peterson was asked by one of the commissioners if Grave Creek ever goes dry. He stated he didn't know. Data from both OWRD's website and the USGS website provides historic data that demonstrates Grave Creek has gone dry in varying months of some years.

As was discussed during the May 12, 2014 Hearing, please submit these questions to Gary Peterson and the questions with responses to the Josephine County Planning Commissioners. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathy Smith

Watermaster, District14