

COUNTY OF VENTURA
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY
800 S. Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

1. Entitlement: CUP-4185
2. Applicant: Sespe Rock Products, Inc.
3. Location: (See attached map) The proposed site is located between the Old Telegraph Road bridges to the north and the State Highway 126 bridges to the south within the Sphere of Influence of the City of Fillmore. Mining of sand and gravel is restricted to the East Branch of Sespe Creek. The West Branch is included in the project site as a mitigation measure only. The plant processing site is located south of the State Highway 126 bridges near the confluence of Sespe Creek with the Santa Clara River.
4. Assessor Parcel No(s): 46-01-12, 14, 46; 46-02-01, 07, 13, 08, 11, 10, 06; 46-03-33, 28, 31, 26; and 46-05-02.
5. General Plan Designation: Open Space and Agriculture on the Open Space Element of the Ventura County General Plan.
6. Existing Zoning: "O-S-160Ac", (Open Space 160 Acres), "O-S-10Ac" (Open Space 10 Acres) and "A-E" (Agriculture Exclusive).
7. Proposal: The primary objective of the proposed sand and gravel mining operation is the removal of excess material from the East Branch of Sespe Creek, as required by the Ventura County Flood Control District, through the use of a commercial sand and gravel mining company (Sespe Rock Products, Inc.). The mining limit (Red-Line) as established by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors will be strictly enforced to assure that the creek will be mined only to the extent necessary to prevent loss of life and property. The amount of sand and gravel mined each year will be dependent on the amount of material deposited every year by the creek.

Under the supervision of the Ventura County Flood Control District, a diversion channel is being constructed in the West Branch of Sespe Creek with the objective of removing excess sand and gravel, and to create a low flow channel which will be kept open from January 1 to June 30 of each year. This will allow any anadromous fisheries to use the creek as an annual spawning ground and/or migration corridor. The West Branch will not be mined or otherwise disturbed again until such a time as the Ventura County Flood Control District deems it necessary in future years.

8. Size of Permit Area: Permit area: 239.3 Acres
9. Excavation Area: Mining and excavation will occur on 98.8 acres in the East Branch of Sespe Creek only, as shown on Plot Plan "B-1."
10. Time Limit: Permit life is proposed to be 30 years.
11. Hours of Operation:
 - a. Days of plant operation: 7 days per week.
 - b. Hours of excavation operation:
 - (1) Monday through Friday - 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 - (2) Saturday and Sunday - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

- c. Hours of processing plant operation: 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 - d. Shipping of materials and products from processing site - 24 hours a day.
 - e. Receiving of materials and products at processing site - 24 hours a day.
12. Proposed Reclamation Plan: Reclamation of the mining operation is limited to the processing site. This Plan must meet the requirements of the State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 and any local ordinances related to the project. Its principal provisions include:
- a. That the final reclaimed use of that portion of the permit area within the floodway (and as it may be changed) shall be a natural river environment.
 - b. That reclamation shall begin by the permittee removing all structures, facilities, stockpiles, surplus, wastes, debris and hazardous features or conditions related to the use of the permit and thereafter relying on the natural action of the river to revegetate and refill previously excavated areas.
 - c. That unless otherwise specified, the final slopes in the permit area, with the exception of those associated with the gradient and profile of the flood channel shall be left at a 2:1 (horizontal to vertical) or lesser gradient, unless the permittee can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County Public Works Agency that a steeper slope will be stable. Final gradients and profile of the flood channel shall be consistent with the operator's Water Course Permit and current development plan.
13. Responsible Agency: California Division of Mines and Geology, California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Transportation.

B. STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS:

An Initial Study was conducted by the Planning Division to evaluate the potential effect of this project on the environment. Based on the findings contained in the attached Initial Study it has been determined that this project could have a significant effect on the environment. These potentially significant impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated through adoption of the following identified measures as conditions of approval.

C. MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED TO AVOID POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS:

A. PUBLIC WORKS AGENCY

1. Transportation/Circulation

Potential Impact

The Public Works Agency comments that there is concern that truck movement exiting and entering the permit area could have a potential adverse impact on traffic circulation on Telegraph Road (State Highway 126). These concerns were identified by the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) in 1983, and the City of Fillmore in its letter dated May 9, 1985.

The requirements imposed by CALTRANS in 1983 obligated the applicant at that time to improve the ingress and egress accesses to CALTRANS standards and to restrict truck movement to right turns only.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

The Public Works Agency considers the requirements imposed in 1983 to be adequate mitigation for the subject proposal.

The following conditions shall be imposed:

- a. Access to Highway 126 shall be provided at two locations to allow right turns only.
- b. Improve driveways and highway shoulders sufficiently to allow truck turning moves to be made safely without interference with opposing traffic.

The applicant shall submit the "As-Built" Plans to CALTRANS for confirmation and approval prior to the issuance of a Zoning Clearance. Evidence of the approval shall be submitted to the Public Works Agency.

2. Degradation of Groundwater (Hydrology)

Potential Impact

The Public Works Agency comments that the proposed project could potentially have significant adverse water resources impacts. Analysis of submitted material concluded that the proposed excavation in this portion of the Sespe Creek on the proposed "Red-Line" should not cause a significant increase in rising water. The Public Works Agency has concerns with the excavation operations inadvertently dropping below the proposed "Red-Line."

Proposed Mitigation Measures

The provisions of the Mineral Resources Management Program shall be imposed for monitoring the "Red-Line" restrictions for the proposed project.

B. PLANNING DIVISION

3. Aesthetic/Visual Impacts

Potential Impact

The rock and gravel processing plant off State Highway 126 south of the two bridges, and the associated sand, gravel and rock piles, are visible to the general public from the highway, which may be offensive to some people traveling on State Highway 126.

Proposed Mitigation Measure

Proposed landscaping along the entire length of the processing site with fast growing tall trees and shrubs shall screen the plant site and mitigate the visual impact to an insignificant level.

4. Noise Impact

Potential Impacts

The sound emanating from the back-up horns of trucks and skip loaders operating in the creekbed and the falling of rocks from the skip loaders onto the truckbeds have the potential of being heard at existing and future residences located in the vicinity of Sespe Creek near the excavation area.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

The noise level shall be reduced to insignificant levels by the following methods:

- a. Applicant shall install and continually use, low decibel horns (BAC-A-LARM horns, model BAL-124) on all trucks and skip loaders. Horns will be mounted with the directional axes directed to the rear of the equipment.

- b. Applicant shall ensure that the lowest volume level horn adjustment setting is maintained at all times.
 - c. Applicant shall use rubber mats in truckbeds to muffle the sound of rock falling onto the truck bed. Only trucks used for working in the West Branch of the creek are required to have rubber mats.
 - d. Hours of operations at the plant and in the East and West Branch of Sespe Creek shall be limited as follows:
 - (1) Days of plant operation - seven days a week
 - (2) Hours of excavation operation -
 - (a) Monday through Friday - 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
 - (b) Saturday and Sunday - 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 - (3) Hours of processing plant operation - 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 - (4) Shipping of materials and products from processing site - 24 hours a day
 - (5) Receiving of materials and products at processing site - 24 hours a day
5. Biological Impacts (Plants and Animals)

Potential Impact

The proposed project will remove most of the existing indigenous vegetation from the East Branch of Sespe Creek. This loss of vegetation will be relatively long term, given the continued clearing of sand and gravel in the creekbed throughout the life of the permit. Associated with this loss of vegetation will be a net reduction in wildlife population. Also, the noise and human activities associated with the mining operation will have some adverse off-site effects on animal life.

The excavation activities will interfere with the normal flow of water in the East Branch and consequently interfere with the migration of anadromous fisheries in the creek, and prevent them from spawning in this area.

Proposed Mitigation Measures

Any loss of the limited vegetation in the East Branch will be mitigated to an insignificant level by the off-site increase in riparian habitat in the West Branch and the plantings of a landscaping screen along the site of the processing plant.

- a. To reduce the impact of the excavation on plant and animal life in the East Branch of Sespe Creek, a diversion channel shall be constructed in the West Branch, which will result in an increase in riparian habitat and will be particularly beneficial during times of low flow, because water will potentially be available throughout the year. The diversion channel will aid in the growth of plants and provide an alternative channel for anadromous fishes who use Sespe Creek.

The diversion of water into the West Branch will outweigh the disturbance created by mining activities in the East Branch of the creek. Through stringent conditioning, the West Branch will not be disturbed unless the Ventura County Flood Control District and/or the California Department of Fish and Game determines that the build-up of material makes it necessary for the preservation of life and property.

- b. The proposed landscaping along the full length of the processing site (1070 feet) is primarily designed to screen the site from the highway, and shall add to the vegetation of the otherwise sparse plant life. The landscaping consists of fast growing shrubs and trees.

D. PUBLIC REVIEW:

1. Legal Notice Method: Direct mailing to property owners within 300 feet of proposed project boundary.
2. Document Posting Period: September 16, 1985 - October 16, 1985
3. Environmental Report Review Committee Hearing: October 16, 1985

Prepared by: Ingrid Kainline

Reviewed by: Robert K. Jupp

The Environmental Report Review Committee recommends that the decision-making body of the proposed project find that this document has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Bruce Smith
Chair, Environmental Report
Review Committee

10/16/85
Date

IH:d/I46

Attachments:

Mining and Reclamation Plan
Initial Study Checklist
Initial Study Explanation of Answers
Bibliography
Noise Consultant's Report, BBN Laboratories