

Gerald Bietz  
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August 21, 2020

Reeve Greg Boehlke  
Rocky View Council  
262075 Rocky View Point  
Rocky View County  
T4A 0X2

Dear Mr. Boehlke:

Regarding: Mountain Ash/ Summit Gravel Extraction Proposal and Risk to Big Hill Springs Provincial Park and Bighill Creek

Bighill Creek Preservation Society was registered as an Alberta Society in 2015. We are the stewards of the municipal lands within the Bighill Creek drainage. Our overarching objective is the preservation of the unique natural and historic attributes of entire Bighill Creek watershed. To this end we have worked to develop a Watershed Plan for the entire basin. We have raised funds and carried out studies of water and sediment quality, fish populations and habitat, riparian health, terrestrial and aquatic insects, and eDNA. We have installed continuous water temperature monitoring at 12 sites. In 2020, with the University of Calgary we commenced a broader evaluation of the numerous springs which support this regionally extraordinary habitat. Due to COVID restrictions, this work has been postponed.

Big Hill Springs Provincial Park, a significant regional asset is located in the Bighill Creek drainage. In 2019 it is estimated to have received 175,000 visitors. Due to over use the Park is currently under renovation.

**Studies by the University of Calgary have determined that the source waters for the Park and about 50% of the flow into Bighill Creek emanate from an aquifer which extends generally north and west of the Park. The proposed mine would be located on the aquifer and immediately adjacent the main springs which sustain the Park. Mining would remove the protective over burden, exposing the aquifer to contamination. Breaching the aquifer would require dewatering the pit, thus diminishing flows to the Park and Creek, placing in jeopardy a much loved Park, a diverse ecological system and; as the Creek flows though Cochrane, a valuable recreational/ecological asset of the town.**

Earlier, when this and two other open pit gravel mines were proposed, adjacent to each other just west and north of the springs and Park, BCPS registered its concerns with RVC Council. Now, BCPS asks that RVC reject any consideration of the Mountain Ash/Summit Pit proposal

due to the significant risk of damage to the aquifer underlying these mines and therefore the viability of the Park and drainage. There is possibly no more environmentally sensitive development proposal in all of RVC. To put this artifact in jeopardy for common gravel would be a travesty. In our region, gravel is virtually everywhere. It can be sourced from a less sensitive place.

As more people move into RVC the demand for parks and recreation trails such as those associated with Big Hill Springs Park and our Creek will only increase. We ask that RVC consider equally the value of the springs, the Park and area recreation when it makes any decision regarding the Mountain Ash/Summit Pit proposal or the other proposed pits.

Yours sincerely,

Gerald Bietz,  
President, Bighill Creek Preservation Society  
cc RVC Councillors and Jessica Anderson, RVC Planner