



Water Matters

Protecting Alberta's Watersheds. Inspiring people to action.

December 14, 2009

ATTN: Todd Aasen
Alberta Environment Offices
3d Floor, 4920-51 St.
Red Deer, AB.
T4N 6K8

Dear Todd,

Water Matters is concerned about two aggregate extraction applications by 6M Holdings Ltd., and Howell Excavating Limited (Palkot Farms, land owner). The aquifer where the two proponents plan to mine gravel is located in the aquifer at the confluence of the Red Deer River and Medicine River, to be referred to as the Red Deer Medicine River Aquifer (RMA). These applications are the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act Applicant Number: 001-263515 (September 21, 2009) and 001-261884 (June 23, 2009).

It is our understanding that the first proponent, 6M Holdings Ltd., intends to mine on both sides of Dickson Creek. The proponent proposes to "perch" the creek, resulting in the re-routing of the Medicine River on the flood plain. Meanwhile, we understand that the second proponent, Howell Excavating Ltd., intends to remove alluvial gravel between the Red Deer and Medicine River. The removal of alluvial aggregate from the aquifer is cause for concern because this may threaten the ability of the aquifer to provide essential services to people and the environment. Gravel mining in the aquifer could sever the connection between groundwater and surface water that families, fish, and wildlife depend upon.

It is our understanding that the aquifer provides water to 19 families through the gravel fans that flow through the gradients of the RMA aquifer. Given the geographical location of the aquifer, the aquifer is most likely connected to surface water that supports riparian habitat and fish. As a result, the RMA aquifer most likely supports a valuable wildlife corridor at the junction of the Red Deer and Medicine River for wildlife and fish habitat. Therefore, we are writing you to emphasize our support for a comprehensive study to ensure the best outcome for the environment and surrounding families.

We are very interested in being informed about the Water Act applications that may become part of the process. Please keep us informed as to when this is determined.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our letter. We trust the local office for Alberta Environment is taking every precaution and study necessary to examine the full value of the RMA aquifer, including encouraging the proponents to conduct a thorough assessment of the potential impacts gravel mining activities may have to aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and surrounding families.

Yours sincerely,

Julia Ko
Water Policy and Program Coordinator
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