

<b>DISTRICT COURT, WATER DIVISION 2, COLORADO</b> Pueblo County Judicial Building 501 North Elizabeth Street, Suite 116 Pueblo, CO 81003	DATE FILED: September 22, 2021 1:29 PM CASE NUMBER: 2021CW3010 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>▲ COURT USE ONLY ▲</b></p>
<b>APPLICATION FOR UNDERGROUND WATER RIGHTS AND PLAN FOR AUGMENTATION OF AARON and SARAH ATWOOD, Applicants,</b>  IN EL PASO COUNTY	<p style="text-align: center;">Case Number: 2021CW3010</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, RULING OF THE REFEREE, AND JUDGMENT AND DECREE:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADJUDICATING DENVER BASIN GROUNDWATER AND APPROVING PLAN FOR AUGMENTATION</b></p>	

Claims for adjudication of Denver Basin groundwater and approval of a plan for augmentation were filed in this case on February 26, 2021. All matters contained in the application having been reviewed, such testimony having been taken and evidence presented as was necessary, and being otherwise fully advised in the premises, it is hereby the Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Ruling of the Referee, and Judgment and Decree, as follows:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Name and Address of Applicants:  
  
Aaron and Sarah Atwood  
701 Airman Lane  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921
  
2. Statements of Opposition: No statements of opposition were filed and the time for filing of such statements has expired.
  
3. Subject Matter Jurisdiction: Timely and adequate notice of the application was published as required by statute, and the Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this proceeding and over the parties affected hereby, whether they have appeared or not.
  
4. Consultation: The Water Referee consulted with the Division Engineer, as required by C.R.S. § 37-92-302(4), on the application, on June 25, 2021, and the Division Engineer filed its summary of consultation on July 30, 2021.

**GROUNDWATER RIGHTS**

- 5. Aquifers and Location of Groundwater: Applicants are granted a decree for rights to the groundwater in the not-nontributary Dawson, Denver, and Arapahoe aquifers, and the nontributary Laramie-Fox Hills Aquifer underlying 5.04 acres generally located in the NW1/4 NE1/4, Section 36, Township 11 South, Range 67 West of the 6th P.M., Lot 38, Chaparral Hills, also known as 515 Struthers Loop, Colorado Springs, CO, 80921, El Paso County, State of Colorado, as shown on **Exhibit A** (“Subject Property”).
  
- 6. Well Locations, Pumping Rates, and Annual Amounts: The groundwater may be withdrawn at rates of flow necessary to withdraw the amounts decreed herein. The groundwater will be withdrawn through any number of wells necessary, to be located at any location on the Subject Property. Applicants waive any 600-foot spacing rule for wells located on the Subject Property, but must satisfy C.R.S. § 37-90-137(4), for wells owned by other on adjacent properties. The following average annual amounts are available for withdrawal subject to the Court's retained jurisdiction in this matter.

Aquifer	Saturated Thickness (feet)	Annual Amount (acre-feet)	Total Amount (acre-feet)
Dawson (NNT)	100	1.01	101
Denver (NNT)	325	2.782	278.2
Arapahoe (NNT)	300	0	0
Laramie-Fox Hills (NT)	185	1.4	140

- 7. Decreed Uses: Domestic, commercial, irrigation, stockwatering, fire protection, and augmentation purposes, including storage, both on and off the Subject Property.
  
- 8. Estimated Average Pumping Rate and Well Depths: Wells will withdraw the subject groundwater at rates of flow necessary to withdraw the entire decreed annual amounts of groundwater. The well depths will conform to the locations of the subject aquifers as referenced in the State Engineer’s Determination of Facts for each aquifer or aquifer characteristics.
  
- 9. Final Average Annual Amounts of Withdrawal:
  - 9.1 Final determination of the applicable average saturated sand thicknesses and resulting average annual amounts available to Applicants will be made pursuant to the retained jurisdiction of this Court, as described in Paragraph 26 below. The Court shall use the acre-foot amounts in Paragraph 6 herein in the interim period, until a final determination of water rights is made.

9.2 The allowed annual amount of groundwater which may be withdrawn through the wells specified above and any additional wells, pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-90-137(10), may exceed the average annual amount of withdrawal, as long as the total volume of water withdrawn through such wells and any additional wells constructed subsequent to the date of this decree does not exceed the product of the number of years since the date of the issuance of any well permits or the date of this decree, whichever is earliest in time, multiplied by the average annual amount of withdrawal, as specified above or as determined pursuant to the retained jurisdiction of the Court. See also, Rule 8 of the Statewide Nontributary Ground Water Rules, 2 CCR 402-7. However, amounts set forth in well permits will not be exceeded.

10. Source of Groundwater and Limitations on Consumption:

10.1 The groundwater to be withdrawn from the Laramie-Fox Hills Aquifer is "nontributary groundwater" as defined in C.R.S. § 37-90-103(10.5), and in the Denver Basin Rules, the withdrawal of which will not, within 100 years of continuous withdrawal, deplete the flow of a natural stream, including a natural stream as defined in C.R.S. §§ 37-82-101(2) and 37-92-102(1)(b), at an annual rate greater than 1/10 of 1% of the annual rate of withdrawal. The groundwater to be withdrawn from the Dawson, Denver, and Arapahoe aquifers is "not-nontributary" as defined in C.R.S. §§ 37-90-103(10.7) and 37-90-137(9)(c.5) and will not be withdrawn without a plan for augmentation.

10.2 Applicants may not consume more than 98% of the annual quantity of water withdrawn from the nontributary aquifers. The relinquishment of 2% of the annual amount of water withdrawn to the stream system, as required by the Denver Basin Rules effective January 1, 1986, may be satisfied by any method selected by the Applicants and satisfactory to the State Engineer, so long as Applicants can demonstrate that an amount equal to 2% of such withdrawals (by volume) has been relinquished to the stream system.

10.3 There is unappropriated groundwater available for withdrawal from the subject aquifers beneath the Subject Property, and the vested water rights of others will not be materially injured by such withdrawals as described herein. Withdrawals hereunder are allowed on the basis of an aquifer life of 100 years, assuming no substantial artificial recharge within 100 years. No material injury to vested water rights of others will result from the issuance of permits for wells which will withdraw not nontributary and nontributary groundwater or the exercise of the rights and limitations specified in this decree.

11. Additional Wells and Well Fields:

- 11.1 Applicants may construct additional and replacement wells in order to maintain levels of production, to meet water supply demands or to recover the entire amount of groundwater in the subject aquifers underlying the Subject Property. As additional wells are planned, applications shall be filed in accordance with C.R.S. § 37-90-137(10).
- 11.2 Two or more wells constructed into a given aquifer shall be considered a well field. In effecting production of water from such well field, Applicants may produce the entire amount which may be produced from any given aquifer through any combination of wells within the well field.
- 11.3 In considering applications for permits for wells or additional wells to withdraw the groundwater which is the subject of this decree, the State Engineer shall be bound by this decree and shall issue said permits in accordance with provisions of C.R.S. § 37-90-137(10).
- 11.4 In the event that the allowed average annual amounts decreed herein are adjusted pursuant to the retained jurisdiction of the Court, Applicants shall obtain permits to reflect such adjusted average annual amounts. Subsequent permits for any wells herein shall likewise reflect any such adjustment of the average annual amounts decreed herein.

12. Conditions for Well Operation and Construction:

For each well constructed pursuant to this decree, Applicants shall comply with the following conditions:

- 12.1 A totalizing flow meter shall be installed on the well discharge pipe prior to withdrawing any water therefrom, and shall be maintained and operational at all times for the life of the well. Applicants shall keep accurate records of all withdrawals by the well, make any calculations necessary, and submit such records to the Water Division 2 Engineer upon request.
- 12.2 The entire length of the open bore hole shall be geophysically surveyed prior to casing and copies of the geophysical log submitted to the Division of Water Resources. Applicants may provide a geophysical log from an adjacent well or test hole, pursuant to Rule 9A of the Statewide Rules and acceptable to the State Engineer, which fully penetrates the aquifer, in satisfaction of the above requirement.

- 12.3 Groundwater production shall be limited to the specific identified aquifer. Plain, unperforated casing must be installed and properly grouted to prevent withdrawal from or intermingling of water from zones other than those for which the well was designed.
- 12.4 Each well shall be permanently identified by its permit number, this Water Court Case Number, and the name of the producing aquifer on the above-ground portion of the well casing or on the pump house.

### **PLAN FOR AUGMENTATION**

13. Plan for Augmentation:

- 13.1 Water to be Augmented: 1.4 acre-feet per year of not-nontributary Denver Aquifer groundwater decreed herein.
- 13.2 Water to be Used for Augmentation: Return flows associated with use of the not-nontributary Denver Aquifer and return flows or direct discharge of nontributary groundwater decreed herein.
- 13.3 The Denver Aquifer groundwater will be used to serve two lots. Each lot will have an individual well serving one (1) single-family residence (0.3 acre-feet per residence, 0.6 acre-feet total), irrigation, including lawn, garden, and trees of up to 7,000 square-feet per lot (0.35 acre-feet per lot, 0.7 acre-feet total), and stock-watering of up to 4 large domestic animals per lot, (0.05 acre-feet per lot, 0.1 acre-feet total), through a new well or wells. Conservatively, water use in single-family dwellings will equal at least 0.2 acre-feet of water annually for in-house uses, and that use of non-evaporative septic systems typically results in consumption of approximately 10% of such use, resulting in return flows of at least 0.18 acre-feet annually from in-house use. Various components of this plan for augmentation are predicated on these estimations, and Applicants shall be required to use a non-evaporative septic system to treat and dispose of water used for in-house use.
- 13.4 Replacement During Pumping: During pumping of the Denver Aquifer groundwater, Applicants will replace actual depletions to the affected stream system pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-90-137(9)(c.5). In the 100th year, the total depletion is 13.35% of the amount withdrawn or 0.19 acre-feet total. Return flow from in-house use of the Denver Aquifer water in the two single-family residences is at least 0.36 acre-feet per year as described above and such return flow from use in each residence is sufficient to replace actual depletions for pumping of the entire 1.4 acre-feet per year for 100 years. Return flows accrue to the Arkansas River system via Monument Creek. Because return flows from all

uses are estimated rather than measured, Applicants agree that such return flows shall be used only to replace depletions under this plan for augmentation and will not be sold, leased, traded, or assigned in whole or in part for any other purpose.

- 13.5 Post-pumping Depletion Augmentation: Assuming maximum pumping of 1.4 acre-feet per year for 100 years from the Denver Aquifer, the maximum total depletion to the affected stream systems is approximately 13.35% of the annual amount withdrawn or 0.19 acre-feet in the 105th year. Applicants will reserve 1.4 acre-feet per year, 140 acre-feet total, of the nontributary Laramie-Fox Hills Aquifer groundwater decreed herein for use in this plan, but reserve the right to substitute the use of other nontributary groundwater, including return flows, either underlying the Subject Property, or from another location which is legally available for such purpose, for replacement of post-pumping depletions at such time that post-pumping depletions may begin. The Court retains continuing jurisdiction in this matter to determine if the supply is adequate.
- 13.6 Applicants will begin making post pumping replacements when, (1) the absolute amount of water (140 acre-feet of Denver Aquifer groundwater) allowed to be withdrawn has been withdrawn from the well(s); or (2) the Applicants or successors in interest have acknowledged in writing that all withdrawals for beneficial use of the Denver Aquifer groundwater has permanently ceased; or (3) for a period of 10 consecutive years that no Denver Aquifer groundwater has been withdrawn. Until such time as the post pumping depletions begin the Applicants must continue to replace during pumping depletions to the stream using return flows, by pumping water directly to the stream to replace such depletions or using another replacement source approved by the Division Engineer. At the time that post pumping depletions begin as described in this paragraph, Applicants or successors in interest will be required to construct a well and pump groundwater to replace post-pumping depletions, subject to the terms and conditions of Paragraph 13.5. This condition constitutes a covenant running with the land.
- 13.7 Applicants will replace post-pumping depletions for the shortest of the following periods: (1) The period provided by C.R.S. § 37-90-137(9)(c.5); or (2) the expressed period specified by the Colorado Legislature, should it specify one and providing the Applicants obtain Water Court approval for such modification; or (3) the period determined by the State Engineer, should they choose to set such a period and have jurisdiction to do so; or (4) the period established through rulings of the Colorado Supreme Court on relevant cases; or (5) until Applicants petition the Water Court and the State Engineer's Office and prove that they have complied with any statutory requirement.

14. Failure of Applicants or successors in interest to comply with the terms of the decree may result in an order of the Division Engineer's office to curtail or eliminate pumping of the well. This decree shall be recorded in the real property records of El Paso County so that a title examination of the property, or any part thereof, shall reveal to all future purchasers the existence of this decree.
15. Administration of Plan for Augmentation:
  - 15.1 Applicants shall report to the Division Engineer for Water Division 2 upon request, a summary of the amount of water pumped by each Denver Basin well, the annual depletion, the amount of replacement water provided by each replacement source, the net impact on the stream and any other information required by the Division Engineer to properly administer the decree on an accounting form acceptable to the Division Engineer.
  - 15.2 All withdrawals which are the subject of this decree will be metered.
  - 15.3 Pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-92-305(8), the State Engineer shall curtail all out-of-priority diversions, the depletions from which are not so replaced as to prevent injury to vested water rights.
  - 15.4 The Applicants or successors in interest at the direction of the Division Engineer shall make post-pumping replacements to the Arkansas River stream system via Monument Creek, or its tributaries, pursuant to the amounts to be calculated using the depletion curve attached as **Exhibit B**.
16. Retained Jurisdiction for Plan for Augmentation:
  - 16.1 Pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-92-304(6), the Court retains continuing jurisdiction over the plan for augmentation decreed herein for reconsideration of the question whether the provisions of this decree are necessary and/or sufficient to prevent injury to vested water rights of others. The Court also has jurisdiction for the purposes of determining compliance with the terms of the augmentation plan.
  - 16.2 Any party seeking to invoke the retained jurisdiction of the Court shall file a verified petition with the Court. The petition to invoke retained jurisdiction or to modify this decree shall set forth with particularity the factual basis and the requested decretal language to effect the petition. The party lodging the petition shall have the burden of going forward to establish prima facie facts alleged in the petition. If the Court finds those facts to be established, Applicants shall thereupon have the burden of proof to show: (1) that any modification sought by Applicants will avoid injury to other appropriators, or (2) that any modification sought by Objector is not required to avoid injury to other appropriators, or (3)

that any term or condition proposed by Applicants in response to the objector's petition does avoid injury to other appropriators.

- 16.3 The Court retains jurisdiction for the purpose of determining whether the continued reservation of the nontributary water for use on the Subject Property is required. After notice to the State Engineer's Office, if Applicants can demonstrate to the Court that post-pumping depletions need no longer be replaced, the Court may remove the requirement that the nontributary water must be reserved.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

17. Full and adequate notice of the application was given, and the Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter and over the parties whether they have appeared or not.
18. Applicants have complied with all requirements and met all standards and burdens of proof, including but not limited to C.R.S. §§ 37-90-137(9)(c.5), 37-92-103(9), 37-92-302, 37-92-304(6), 37-92-305(3), (4), (6), (8), to adjudicate the plan for augmentation and are entitled to a decree confirming and approving the plan for augmentation as described in the Findings of Fact.
19. The Water Court has jurisdiction over this proceeding pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-90-137(6). This Court concludes as a matter of law that the application herein is one contemplated by law. C.R.S. § 37-90-137(4). The application for a decree confirming Applicants' right to withdraw and use all unappropriated groundwater from the nontributary aquifer beneath the Subject Property as described herein pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-90-137(4), should be granted, subject to the provisions of this decree. The application for a decree confirming Applicants' right to withdraw and use groundwater decreed herein from the Denver Aquifer should be granted pursuant to C.R.S. §§ 37-90-137(4) and (9)(c.5), subject to the provisions of this decree. The withdrawal of up to 1.4 acre-feet per year and 140 acre-feet total of the Denver Aquifer groundwater, and in accordance with the terms of this decree, will not injuriously affect the owner of or persons entitled to use water under a vested water right or a decreed conditional water right. The remaining amount of Denver Aquifer groundwater decreed herein will not be withdrawn and used until it is included in a separate plan for augmentation.

### **JUDGMENT AND DECREE**

20. The Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law set forth above are hereby incorporated into the terms of this Ruling and Decree as if the same were fully set forth herein.
21. Applicants and/or successors may withdraw the subject groundwater herein through wells to be permitted by the State Engineer's Office located anywhere on the Subject Property

in the average annual amounts and at the estimated average rates of flow specified herein, subject to the limitations herein and the retained jurisdiction by this Court.

22. The groundwater rights described in the Findings of Fact are hereby approved, confirmed and adjudicated, including and subject to the terms and conditions specified herein. No owners of or persons entitled to use water under a vested water right or decreed conditional water right will be injured or injuriously affected by the pumping of Applicants' groundwater resources as decreed herein.
23. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-92-305(5), the replacement water herein shall be of a quality so as to meet the requirements for which the water of the senior appropriator has normally used.
24. The plan for augmentation as described in the Findings of Fact is hereby approved, confirmed, and adjudicated, including and subject to the terms and conditions specified herein.
25. No owners of or person entitled to use water under a vested water right or decreed conditional water right will be injured or injuriously affected by the operation of the plan for augmentation as decreed herein.
26. Retained Jurisdiction:
  - 26.1 The Court retains jurisdiction as necessary to adjust the average annual amounts of groundwater available under the Subject Property to conform to actual local aquifer characteristics as determined from adequate information obtained from wells, pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-92-305(11). Within 60 days after completion of any well decreed herein or any test hole(s), Applicants or any successor in interest to these water rights shall serve copies of such log(s) upon the State Engineer.
  - 26.2 At such time as adequate data is available, any person, including the State Engineer, may invoke the Court's retained jurisdiction to make a Final Determination of Water Right. Within four months of notice that the retained jurisdiction for such purpose has been invoked, the State Engineer shall use the information available to him to make a final determination of water rights findings. The State Engineer shall submit such finding to the Water Court and the Applicants.
  - 26.3 If no protest to such finding is made within 60 days, the Final Determination of Water Rights shall be incorporated into the decree by the Water Court. In the event of a protest, or in the event the State Engineer makes no determination within four months, such final determination shall be made by the Water Court after notice and hearing.

27. Continuing Jurisdiction: Pursuant to C.R.S. § 37-92-304(6), the Court retains continuing jurisdiction over the plan for augmentation decreed herein for reconsideration by the water judge on the question of injury to the vested rights of others for such period after the entry of such decision as is necessary or desirable to preclude or remedy any such injury.
28. The groundwater rights decreed herein are vested property rights appurtenant to the Subject Property and shall remain appurtenant unless expressly severed by conveyance to someone other than the property owner. If any deed for the Subject Property is silent to the conveyance of the water rights decreed herein, it is assumed that the water rights have been conveyed as an appurtenance to the Subject Property, unless all or part of the water rights have been previously severed.

Date: August 30, 2021.



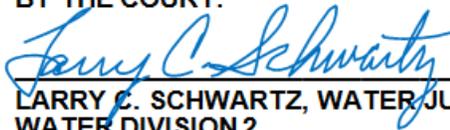
Kate A. Brewer  
Water Referee  
Water Division 2

The Court finds that no protest was filed in this matter. The foregoing is confirmed and is made the judgment and decree of this Court.

Date: September 22, 2021



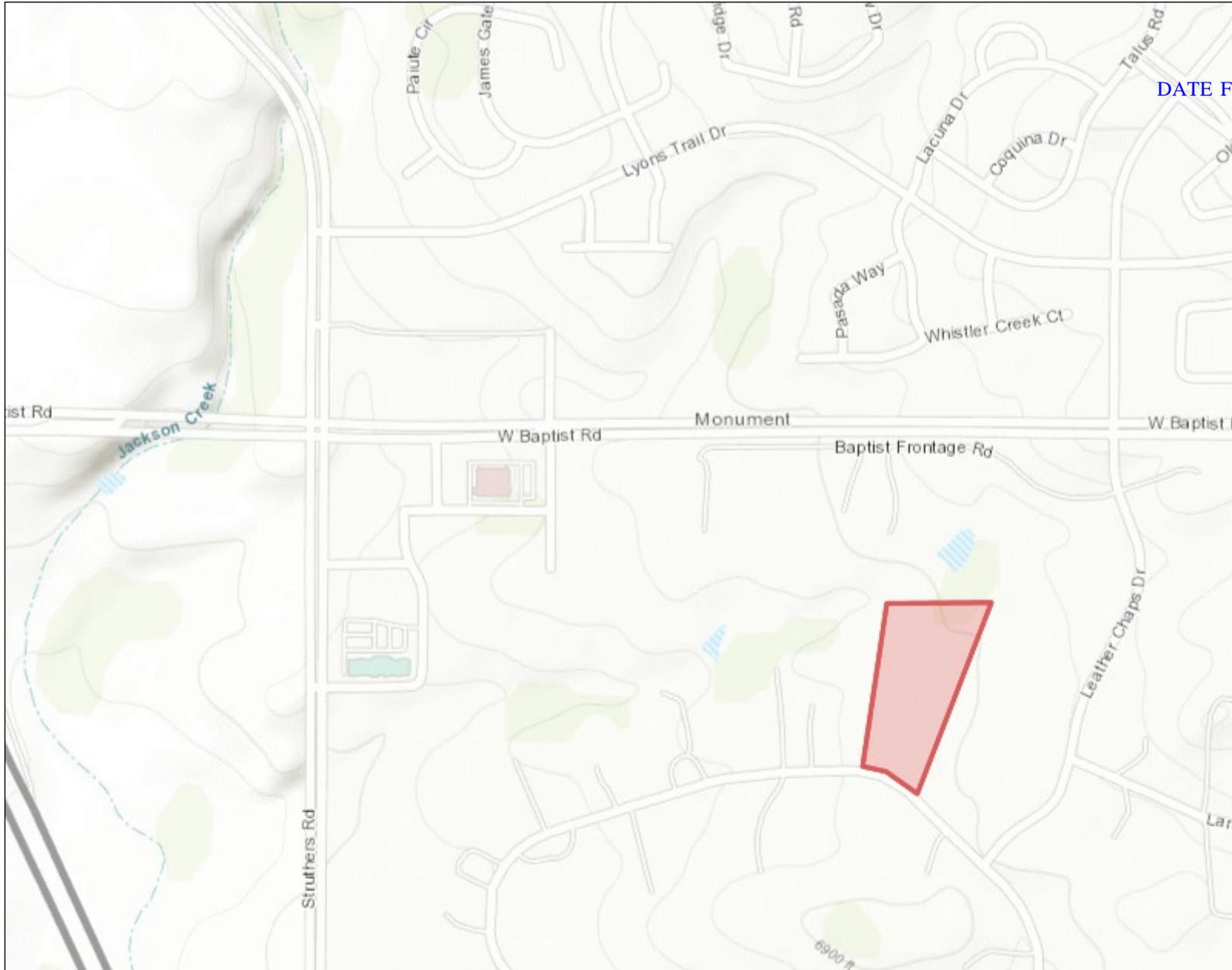
BY THE COURT:



LARRY C. SCHWARTZ, WATER JUDGE  
WATER DIVISION 2



# Exhibit A - Subject Property



DATE FILED: August 25, 2021

## Legend

## Location



## Notes

Atwood, Aaron  
NW1/4 NE1/4, Section 36, Township 11  
South, Range 67 West of the 6th P.M.

1,169 0 585 1,169 Feet

1: 7,016



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Date Prepared: 2/17/2021 2:39:09 PM

Stream Depletion from Pumping in SEC 36 T11S R67W

DATE FILED: August 26, 2021 9:45 AM

