



May 3, 2019

Nina Ruiz
El Paso County Development Services Department
DSDcomments@elpasoco.com

RE: McCune Ranch Subdivision, Preliminary Plan
Part of Sec. 13 & 24, T11S, R65W, 6th P.M.; part of Sec. 19, T11S, R64W, 6th P.M.
Water Division 1, Water District 1
Kiowa-Bijou Designated Basin

Dear Ms. Ruiz:

We have reviewed your recent submittal concerning the above referenced proposal to subdivide 766.66 acres into 143 single-family lots, one (1) commercial lot, streets, open space, drainage way, and trails. Our office previously commented on this development in letters dated November 9, 2018, February 21, 2019 and March 20, 2019.

Water Supply Demand

According to the previously submitted Water Resources and Wastewater Report for McCune Ranch Subdivision dated January 2019 (“Water Resources Report”) the total estimated water requirement is 90.8 acre-feet/year (0.6 acre-feet/year per residential lot for a total 85.8 acre-feet/year for the 143 single family lots, and 5 acre-feet/year for the commercial lot). The estimated water requirement of 0.6 acre-feet/year per residential lot assumes that 0.3 acre-foot/year is required for domestic indoor use, 0.25 acre-feet/year is required for irrigation of up to 4,000 square feet of lawn, garden and trees, and 0.05 acre-feet/year is required for watering of four large domestic animals.

Source of Water Supply

According to the Water Resources Report, the proposed source of water supply is individual on-lot wells producing from the Dawson Aquifer that would be permitted pursuant to Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD.

Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD was issued by the Ground Water Commission (“Commission”) on June 25, 2008 for an allowed average annual amount of withdrawal of ground water of 819 acre-feet from the Dawson Aquifer, based on an aquifer life of 100 years, to be used on 900.52 acres (which include the 766.66 acres of the subject subdivision). On March 13, 2018, the Commission approved Amendment No. 1 of Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD which cancelled an allowed average annual withdrawal of 12 acre-feet from the Determination, leaving an allowed average annual amount of withdrawal of 807 acre-feet (based on an aquifer life of 100 years) in the Determination.



The Dawson Aquifer ground water that is the subject of Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD is not-nontributary requiring a Commission approved replacement plan prior to its diversion. A replacement plan was approved by the Commission on June 29, 2018 allowing for the withdrawal of water through 70 wells on 70 residential lots for a period of 100 years.

In the *El Paso County Land Development Code*, effective November, 1986, Chapter 5, Section 49.5, (D), (2) states:

“- Finding of Sufficient Quantity - The water supply shall be of sufficient quantity to meet the average annual demand of the proposed subdivision for a period of three hundred (300) years.”

As the Applicant’s existing replacement plan allows withdrawal of Dawson aquifer water for only 100 years, withdrawals under that plan would not meet the county’s requirement of providing the average annual demand of the subdivision for a period of 300 years. An application to amend the replacement plan was filed with the Ground Water Commission on December 6, 2018 under the name of ProTerra Properties, LLC. That application is currently pending.

The recently submitted referral information included a response to Colorado Division of Water Resources letters of November 9, 2018, February 21, 2019 and March 20, 2019. The comments regarding wells 162283 and 309240 below have not been revised based on the submitted information.

The Water Resources Report previously submitted makes reference to other water rights, including those in the Denver Aquifer under Determination of Water Right no. 1691-BD, but those rights are not identified as a sources of water to the subdivision.

State Engineer’s Office Opinion

Based upon the above and pursuant to Section 30-28-136(1)(h)(I), C.R.S., it is our opinion that the proposed water supply is not adequate and cannot be provided without causing injury to decreed water rights.

It appears that in order to obtain a favorable opinion from this office on the proposed water supply to the subdivision, the applicant must do the following:

1. Obtain a new replacement plan allowing withdrawals pursuant to Determination of Water Right no. 1692-BD that is sufficient to meet the proposed development’s water demands and is consistent with El Paso County’s 300 year water supply requirement.
2. Provide a water supply plan that clearly defines the proposed development’s water demands, and the water sources that will be used to meet those demands. Such plan must also be consistent with the approved replacement plan.

Additional Comments

In our prior comments we noted that there is an existing small-capacity Dawson Aquifer well, permit no. 162283, that is located on the subject 766.66 acres. Well permit no. 162283 was issued on a tract of 40 acres described as the NW ¼ of the SW ¼ of Sec. 19, Twp. 11 S, Range 64 W, 6th P.M., without consideration of material injury to other water rights. According to

the Water Resources Report a search for the well structure was conducted on January 7, 2019, resulting in no evidence that the structure exists at or near the location depicted in the permit. In addition, the current owner of the property, Mary Sue Liss with McCune Ranch, has indicated that she has never seen a well casing or structure since she has owned or lived on the property. Therefore it is believe that the well is not located on property. However, the developer has agreed to abandon the well per Colorado Well Construction Rules and Regulations should the well structure be found during construction of the development. In the event that the well is located and plugged and abandoned the well owner must submit a Well Abandonment Report (Form GWS-09) available for download at: <http://water.state.co.us/DWRIPub/Documents/gws-09.pdf>.

In our prior comments we noted that there is another existing small capacity Dawson Aquifer well, permit no. 309240, that claims a portion of the 766.66 acres. Well permit no. 309240 was issued on 40 acres described as the NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 24, Twp. 11 S, Range 65 W, 6th P.M., without consideration of material injury to other water rights. While the well itself is not located on the subject 766.66 acres, the 40 acres on which it is permitted overlaps the 766.66 acres. Upon approval of the proposed subdivision the 40 acres on which permit no. 309240 was issued will no longer exist as a single tract, and the acreage on which the well will be located will be smaller than the 40 acres on which the permit was issued, rendering the permit invalid, meaning the well could not continue to operate under permit no. 309240. The ability to issue a new small capacity permit to the well is not clear, as such ability may depend on the number of acres available for assignment to a new well permit. Based on the map included in Appendix F of the Water Resources Report it appears that the well may be located on a parcel of 40 acres described as Parcel 3 on the map. According to the submitted information the “current well owner, Matt Gowler, will submit a revised well permit depicting a correct description of his property that will accurately convey the 40-acres of land to be served by the well.” Based on this statement it appears that the current well owner plans to submit a well permit application to re-permit the well. Such an application has not yet been received by our office. Prior to this subdivision being approved by the county, the county should require the current well owner to submit to our office applications to re-permit the well.

If you, or the applicant, have any questions, please contact Joanna Williams at 303-866-3581 ext. 8265.

Sincerely,



Keith Vander Horst
Chief of Water Supply, Basins

Cc: Division 1
Well Permit nos.162283 and 309240
Project no. 25245

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