



February 21, 2019

Nina Ruiz  
El Paso County Development Services Department  
[DSDcomments@elpasoco.com](mailto:DSDcomments@elpasoco.com)

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

Dear Ms. Ruiz:

We have reviewed your January 23, 2019 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 a letter dated November 9, 2018.

### Water Supply Demand

According to the 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. According to the Water Resources Report the Applicant submitted a proposed amendment to the existing replacement plan to the Groundwater Commission on December 6<sup>th</sup> 2018. Our office does not have evidence that such amendment was received.

The Water Resources Report 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)(l), 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, 6<sup>th</sup> 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 and at this time they are assuming that this well does not exist on the Winsome property. The Applicant should verify that the well does not exist at any location on the 766.66 acre parcel, not just at or near the location depicted on the well permit. In addition,

they should clarify if Ron Conway, the well permit applicant, ever owned the property claimed by the well permit.

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, 6<sup>th</sup> 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. While permit no. 309240 was originally issued to the owner/developer of the proposed subdivision (McCune Ranch LLC), information in our files indicates this well is no longer owned by McCune Ranch LLC, but by Matthew & Tiffany Gowler. This office recommends the following.

1. The County require that the owner/developer of the subdivision be required to arrange with the owner of the well to either plug and abandon this well, or re-permit this well.
2. Should the owner of the well want to re-permit the well, prior to this subdivision being approved by the county, the county 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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