

Letters to the editor

Zephyr's proposed mine poses noise concerns

Noise is defined as any sound that is offensive to the senses. Zephyr's Minerals' proposed mining activity will fit that definition perfectly. They have filed for a mining permit effective June 30 and are now seeking its approval.

The area south and west of Cañon City has traditionally been a quiet, peaceful and remote environment. There has been no vibration from earthquakes or seismic activity. This quiet environment is one of the principal reasons that the southern section of Cañon City has been popular for home building.

Mining noise will be generated resulting from the following broad category of activities: Construction and general operational noises; crushing and grinding ore incident to processing; blasting; and the trucking/hauling of ore and waste rock.

Zephyr Minerals' mining permit application contains no discussion of noise that will come from their proposed mining activity.

Ambient noise needs to be recognized as an issue that begins with the Dawson Ranch and Wolf Park subdivisions located less than a mile from the proposed mining location and traveling into Cañon City central. The effects of noise on the environment, including humans and wildlife, needs careful consideration, including the mitigating measures that Zephyr might take to resolve this problem. The following items need to be considered as part of the application process: construction noise; operational noise, including all supporting infrastructure; and closure, decommissioning and post-closure noise.

During construction there will be intensive activity at the mine site including power line construction, creation of water supply/ disposal issues and access to road corridors. Typical mine construction activities include site preparation, earthworks construction, erection of building spaces, process equipment installation, access road construction, pipe laying and erection of transmission lines. It is unknown how much of the construction activity will take place at nighttime. This needs to be discussed in the application but will be untenable in any event.

During operations, noise will be generated by heavy vehicles and equipment associated with mining, ore and waste movement, ore processing and storage. Mobile noise sources include trucks, drills, excavators, graders and supporting vehicles. Stationary noise sources comprise crushers, mills, screens, pumps and conveyers. Offsite infrastructure noises comprise the continuous operation of intake and booster pump stations and supply/ service vehicles on access roads.

Although not specifically germane to noise, high intensity lighting will be required to support all services that will be operational during hours of darkness.

The closure phase of the mine will be dominated by reclamation activities which will include dismantling infrastructure, land restoration, re-vegetation and access and haul road decommissioning.

Mine noise at the proposed site will prove to be near intolerable. The sounds of dogs barking in Cañon City can frequently be heard in the area of the mine site. Consider the reverse scenario that includes the operational sounds of heavy machinery, waste rock dumping, the crushing and grinding of ore, along with all the other noises associated with hard rock mining piping its way into Cañon City, 24/7, 364 days of the year.

Call, write or visit your County Commissioners. Tell them that this temporary mining operation with a five year planned mine life is wrong for this county and deserves their veto.

Royal Gorge Preservation Project, Cañon City