

This is the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Diamond Rock Sand and Gravel mine proposed on the Cuyama River in Santa Barbara County, California. The Final EIR consists of the following:

- The Draft EIR, which was circulated for public review from November 29, 2006 through the end of January, 2007
- Agency and public comments regarding the Draft EIR
- Responses to the agency and public comments

Revisions in the text of the EIR have been made, and are shown in strikeout and underline type for deletions and additions, respectively. Some of these revisions are the result of comments made by agencies or other commenters, some originated from County of Santa Barbara staff as review of the project has progressed, and others are to correct typographic or editorial errors.

Troesh Materials Inc. (Troesh) is proposing a new sand and gravel mining operation and aggregate processing facility that will be known as Diamond Rock Sand and Gravel Mine and Processing Facilities (Diamond Rock). The property and mineral rights owner is Triangle E Farms of Maricopa, California. Troesh is seeking approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and approval of a Reclamation Plan from the County of Santa Barbara Department of Planning and Development (P&D) to mine aggregate from the Cuyama River and process the mined materials at an adjacent upland location to produce marketable Portland cement concrete-grade (PCC-grade) aggregate.

The Diamond Rock site is located in the Cuyama Valley, an unincorporated portion of Santa Barbara County (Figure 1-1). The site is within the Maricopa/Ventucopa area, Fifth Supervisorial District. The mine site is located along State Route 33 approximately 5.9 miles southeast of its intersection with State Route 166 (Figure 1-2). The proposed mining area occurs in the riverbed of the Cuyama River. The site encompasses about 133 acres, including portions of three parcels that total 280 acres.

The site is zoned primarily for agriculture. Aggregate mining is allowable in pursuant to Ordinance 661 and Article III (Inland Zoning Ordinance), subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Reclamation Plan (RP). The CUP and RP applications have been filed and accepted as complete, pursuant to the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) and the Inland Zoning Ordinance (Case numbers 03CUP-00000-00037 and 03RP-00000-00002).

The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) evaluates the environmental effects of the proposed project. The EIR identifies potentially significant impacts of the project, as well as feasible mitigation measures and alternatives to avoid or reduce such impacts. Pursuant to the

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County will use the information in the EIR during their consideration of the application, which will involve a public hearing. The EIR is also used to inform the public about the project, to facilitate public input and to enable an informed decision.

1.1 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

1.1.1 Background

Current sources of aggregate material used by Troesh include the following:

- Troesh ~~MaterialsReady Mix~~ – Nipomo. Troesh Recycling Inc., (TRI) extracts 75,000 tons per year from the Santa Maria River in San Luis Obispo County. This production is primarily fill material grade—suitable for residential and commercial foundations, but not for use in PCC. A small amount of rock is recovered in the screening process, and is sold for decorative rock and septic tank leech line applications.
- Hanson Aggregates West – Sisquoc. Troesh currently purchases nearly 100% of its PCC-grade aggregate from the Hanson operation in Sisquoc. Hanson is one of Troesh's two ready-mix concrete competitors in the region. Hanson will deplete its reserves within the next five years. This fact, combined with the competitive relationship prevents this site from providing a long-term source of aggregate material.
- Hanson Aggregates West – Santa Margarita. This operation is a hard rock blasting quarry, which produces high cost aggregate, and little or no sand. Production limits placed on the Santa Margarita operation limit its ability to increase the rate of supply by any substantial amount in the future.
- Union Asphalt – Garey and Rocky Canyon. Similar to Hanson Aggregates, Union Asphalt operates a surface mine in Garey in the Santa Maria basin, and a hard rock quarry in Rocky Canyon east of Arroyo Grande. Aggregate supply from both of these sources is limited, and high priced,

Due to the limited future supply of a cost effective and high quality PCC-grade aggregate from these existing sources, Troesh is proposing to develop a new supply from the project location along the Cuyama River. Several alternate locations within the Cuyama River valley region were evaluated by Troesh before selecting the project site. These are discussed briefly in Section 4.7 of this EIR.

In proposing the Diamond Rock Quarry project, Troesh has formulated the following objectives:

- Develop an economically viable and competitive source of construction grade aggregate located near an existing major roadway

- Develop a source of high quality sand and gravel products, including construction aggregate to meet regional needs
- Operate in a manner that will maximize compatibility with surrounding land uses and minimize adverse environmental effects

The County of Santa Barbara recognizes the resource value and need to provide construction aggregate and related products in response to the needs for these materials in the County and nearby areas. The County's objective is to allow the mining of aggregate material from appropriate areas in a manner that is consistent with all applicable policies and regulations. Section 2.7 provides more information regarding the value of aggregate resources.

Aggregate would be extracted from a pit located in the Cuyama River. Mined materials would be mechanically crushed, sorted by size and type; sand would be washed to remove fine material. All finished products would be stockpiled, and products would be transported offsite via haul trucks.

The average annual production is estimated to be 500,000 tons of product per year. The maximum annual production from the mine would be 750,000 tons. The actual production levels would vary over time and would be a direct function of the general regional economic conditions, the number and type of contracts obtained, and equipment usage rate and maintenance requirements. The applicant is seeking a 30-year permit.

Material will be excavated from an 84-acre mining area located in the Cuyama River channel. Material will be excavated from the riverbed using heavy mobile equipment and transported by trucks, scraper or conveyor. Excavation will begin in the southwest corner of the mining area, and then progress eastward towards the western river bank and the processing area. The maximum anticipated depth of the mine pit is 90 feet below ground surface. The mine pit will be replenished periodically by flood flows in the river.

The mined materials would be processed at a 14.2-acre Processing Area adjacent to State Route 33. The proposed mining and processing operations would occur up to 303 days per year; truck loading operations (using stockpiled product) may occur on additional days. Mining would occur Monday through Saturday during daylight hours. Processing would also occur on Monday through Saturday, but may extend to 10 PM. No processing would occur after 10 PM. Truck loading would occur at the Processing Area based on demand, which may include 24-hour operations during both weekdays and weekends for certain orders. Occasional special orders for large public works projects that are being constructed on an expedited basis may require mining and processing on Sundays.

Truck traffic would vary with production. During peak operation days, there could be up to 69 product delivery truck loads. On an average operational day, there could be up to 46 product delivery truck loads.

1.2 REQUIRED APPROVALS

The key required discretionary approvals, permits, and actions by the County and other agencies are listed below (others are listed in Section 2.6):

- County of Santa Barbara, Planning Commission: Conditional Use Permit and Reclamation Plan
- Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District: Permit to Construct and Permit to Operate
- California Department of Fish and Game: Streambed Alteration Agreement
- Corps of Engineers: Section 404 Permit
- Regional Water Quality Control Board: NPDES Stormwater Permit (Industrial Permit) and Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification

1.3 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Issuance of County permits and approval for the proposed project represents a discretionary action subject to the environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In October 2003, P&D completed an Initial Study and determined that there was a potential for the project to cause significant environmental impacts. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared to further evaluate the impacts of the project.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was issued in November 12, 2003 for a 30-day public review period. The County received written comments on the NOP from the following parties:

- State Clearinghouse, Governor's Office of Planning and Research
- State Department of Conservation, Office of Mine Reclamation
- State Department of Transportation
- Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District
- Steve Bennett, Ventura County Supervisor
- Ventura County Air Pollution Control District
- Ventura County Public Works Agency, Nazir Lalani
- Ventura County Public Works Agency, Lowell Preston
- Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Christopher Stephens
- Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Patrick Richards

- Santa Ynez Band of Mission Indians
- Native American Heritage Commission

A previous Draft EIR was issued for review and comment on February 4, 2005. A public meeting was conducted to receive comments on the Draft EIR on March 3, 2005 in Cuyama. Over 30 letters and emails of comments were received on the Draft EIR from public agencies and the public. Copies of these letters of comment on the previous Draft EIR are provided in Appendix E. The letters and emails raised several important issues that required additional analysis and public comment. Hence, the County determined that a revised Draft EIR should be issued for review and comment. To assist commenters on the first Draft EIR, responses to the comments are provided in Appendix F. The revised Draft EIR addresses the issues and concerns raised in these letters of comment.

The Revised Draft EIR was issued for public review and comment on November 29, 2006. A public meeting was conducted to receive comments on the Revised Draft EIR on January 9, 2007 in Cuyama. Approximately 200 letters and e-mails were received from agencies, organizations, and individuals commenting on the Revised Draft EIR or on the project. These comments are summarized, and responses are presented to them in Appendix H.

This A-Final EIR will be issued and presented to the Planning Commission as part of a public hearing to consider certification of the Final EIR and project approval by the Planning Commission, subject to appeal to the Board of Supervisors.

As noted earlier, an EIR is an informational document to advise the public agency decision-makers and the public of the potential environmental effects of a proposed project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15151 provides direction on the standard of adequacy for an EIR, stating the following:

“An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.”