



February 27, 2019

Chaffee County Board of Commissioners
c/o Patti Baldwin
104 Crestone Avenue
Salida, CO 81202

Dear Commissioners;

The current permit held by Nestle Waters North America (Nwana) to extract spring water at the old Hagen Fish Hatchery site (Ruby Mountain) is up for renewal. The Collegiate Peaks Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CPC-TU) was involved in the original permit design process and supports renewal of the permit with the recommendations listed below. We were pleased to hear that monitoring data from multiple wells indicated there has been no negative impact to the water supply from the springs to the river and that the annual consumption of spring water is 60% less than the amount allowed under the permit.

As part of the renewal process Nestle has proposed a Lot Line Adjustment between the Nestle property and the adjacent landowner, Laurie Jacobson. This adjustment yields no net acreage change to either parcel. Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is in support of this lot line adjustment. The lot line adjustment better protects Nestle's water supply and springs and facilitates potential expansion of the reclamation project. CPC-TU sees only positive outcomes with the lot line adjustment including providing more river access and opportunities for enhanced wildlife habitat.

Nwana is in process for creating a large conservation easement for the entire Nwana site. Such a conservation easement would preserve open space, maintain wildlife habitat and movement corridors and provide wildlife (Rocky Mountain Big Horn sheep) viewing opportunities at the north entrance to Browns Canyon National Monument. The lot line adjustment improves and does not diminish the conservation easement. CPC-TU is in strong support of creating the conservation easement.

Recommendations:

- The education component, part of the original development plan, was not completed. There are interpretive graphic sign stands but no educational/interpretive signs installed. Signs should be installed describing the habitat improvements Nwana has made for wildlife, fish along with other educational information on local flora and fauna.
- Additional rehabilitation/reconstruction of the area to the south of the pumphouses would be a positive and preferred action. There should be input from riparian area restoration experts and an aquatic biologist regarding possible reconfiguration of the ponds and reconstruction of the old ditches into meandering streams with features to hold fish and to potentially provide spawning habitat.

Collegiate Peaks Chapter - Trout Unlimited

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- Use by anglers and birders should be enhanced by reconfiguring the steep slope from the river edge up to the level bench at the top to include an intermediate terraced path to direct and control visitor movement and river access.
- NWNA should collaborate with Chaffee County Road Department to achieve the best re-build of the CR 300 along the one-lane section adjacent to the southernmost pond that will be significantly impacted.
- Although the reclaimed area will remain closed to the general public, provision should be made for special use access by groups such as Colorado Mountain College, CPC-TU, Greater Arkansas River Nature Association (GARNA) and other approved groups for educational purposes on watershed restoration, fish habitat and behavior, wetlands (Big Horn Springs) purpose and so on

Sincerely,



Keith Krebs, Board of Directors, Youth Education Chair
Collegiate Peaks Chapter – Trout Unlimited

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