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DEC approves final environmental study for Frontier to operate quarry in Shelby

By Tom Rivers, Editor Posted 11 October 2017 at 6:08 pm

Shelby, however, created overlay district near refuge that bans mining

SHELBY – The State Department of Environmental Conservation has approved a final environmental impact statement for a proposed quarry on Fletcher Chapel Road near the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.

Frontier Stone has now resolved all DEC concerns with the dolomite/limestone project, and is expected to receive a mining permit soon from the state, the company said.

Frontier, however, still needs to satisfy the Shelby Town Board, which on June 19 created the Wildlife Protection Overlay District. That establishes a 2,000-foot buffer from the refuge that doesn't allow mining and other uses "consistent with other wildlife refuges around the country."

Frontier filed an Article 78 against Shelby on Tuesday and the town was served today. Frontier is challenging the overlay district. If the district is stricken, Frontier would go before the Shelby Planning Board which would make a recommendation to the Town Board on the project, said Andina Barone, spokeswoman for the company.

The DEC has been the lead agency on the environmental review of the proposed project. Scott Sheeley, regional permit administrator for the DEC, notified Frontier on Oct. 3 that the company had satisfied the DEC on a range of issues, including blasting and vibration, mining setbacks, cultural resources and Indian nation consultation, mine dewatering and off-site discharges, transportation and other potential impacts.

The DEC accepted the draft environmental impact statement on March 28, 2014. Frontier then did additional work to address some environmental concerns with the project, a 215-acre quarry on the south side of Fletcher Chapel Road, on land owned by Zelazny Family Enterprises, LLC – Chester, Jim and Ed Zelazny.

Frontier applied for a mining permit with the DEC on March 10, 2006, and has worked almost 12 years to get to this point, having the FEIS accepted by the DEC.

Frontier wants to excavate 172 acres over 75 years, with the mining divided into four phases. Quarrying would be done by standard drill and blast technology with front-end loaders and excavators feeding a primary crusher with shot rock, according to the Frontier application.

Mining will go below the water table and includes a maximum water withdrawal of 554,264 gallons a day (and approximately 280,000 gallons daily during drier months). That water would be discharged to the southwest corner of the site to a drainage ditch. Frontier's reclamation plan includes open space with two lakes for recreation and wildlife habitat. The lakes would be 35 acres and 156 acres.

Regarding the blasting, Frontier completed studies about the potential impact of the vibrations on the STAMP project, an industrial manufacturing site 4.5 miles away in the Town of Alabama. Frontier's studies were acceptable to the low-ground vibration standards for STAMP, as well as to wildlife and neighbors, the DEC said.

Frontier has proposed accessing the site from Sour Springs Road, about a 1/3 mile from Fletcher Chapel. Trucks would reach the quarry by using Route 63, which already carries heavy truck traffic, the DEC said. From Route 63, trucks would use Fletcher Chapel Road as the primary access.

(Editor's Note: This article was updated from an earlier version which stated truck traffic would be on Sour

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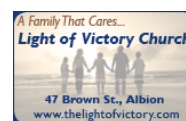
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Springs and Oak Orchard Ridge Road. Fletcher Chapel Road is the primary access to the quarry. The land for the quarry is also owned by Zelazny Family Enterprises, LLC. The earlier version of the article said Frontier today filed an Article 78 proceeding against Shelby. That was filed on Tuesday.)

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