More Answers to Your Questions about Martin Marietta Aggregates' Proposed Quarry

Martin Marietta Aggregates is proposing to develop a limestone quarry on about 1,000 acres of land in the vicinity of the intersection of N.C. 133, N.C. 87 and Sunny Point Road. The facility would include limestone mining operations and facilities for processing raw materials for shipment. In this second in a series of informational advertisements, we answer some common questions recently posed by Brunswick County residents.

I'm on well water. Will the quarry affect my well?

Our site will be excavated 80 to 90 feet. It is possible that older, shallow-water wells less than 40 feet deep near the site may be affected by our operations. In this unlikely event, Martin Marietta will offer those well owners a choice in replacing their water source, if county water is available on the road. At our cost, we will substitute the affected well with a deeper one and cover required water sampling charges. Or if the resident prefers, we also will pay to connect the home to the county water system, which ensures continuous access to clean, high-quality water.

What about sinkholes? Will any be created by the mining operations?

This area of the state is susceptible to sinkholes. Sinkholes are natural depressions that result from the collapse of underground cavities. Our consulting hydrologist reports that no sinkholes are expected to occur beyond the quarry site. As an extra precaution, however, we will have a contingency plan in place for prompt filling of sinkholes - on-site or off-site - that may occur from our operations.

Will quarry operations cause salt water to enter my well?

A layer of clay separates the area's water table from intruding salt water. Our consulting hydrologist reports that this layer will not be disturbed off-site. On-site, only the quarry's pit will be affected.

Is water necessary for mining operations? If so, what will happen to this water? What will happen to the groundwater siphoned off during operations?

It is important to distinguish between process water and groundwater.

Process water is water used during the mining process. At our quarry, this water will be in an entirely closed-circuit system, where it is recycled for use again and again. Process water is clarified through an on-site system that includes several settling ponds. At no time will process water be discharged off-site.

Groundwater includes water removed from the ground during mining, seepage and rainwater that collect in the mining pit. Approximately 10 million gallons per day of this clean groundwater will be discharged to the Cape Fear River. The Cape Fear has a daily flow rate, that is, the amount of water that flows past our site, of 5.9 billion gallons per day. Our groundwater discharge, then, would be like adding less than a quarter of one ounce of water to a gallon.

This water - which will be tested for solids, chemicals or impurities before it is discharged - will be carried by an aboveground pipe on private property to the discharge area. It will be released under a National Pollution Discharge Standards permit issued by the State. In addition, since the water will exit into a fresh-water body, it will not affect salt water estuaries inhabited by shellfish and oysters.

Will you have on-site septic systems? Where will they be located?

Brunswick County has issued us septic system tank permits for our shop and office area. The drainfield will be placed upland, away from any on-site wetlands.

Will your operations affect the Boiling Springs' lakes?

The Boiling Springs lakes, which are partially fed by artesian wells, are outside the area that may be influenced by the quarry's operations. The water tables that feed those wells will not be affected.

What effect will the facility have on traffic near the quarry?

The limestone processed at the Brunswick facility will be transported on trucks. For the first two to three years the quarry is in operation, there will be about 35 to 40 trucks a day through the facility. As operations expand, that number of trucks will also increase.

We are working with North Carolina Department of Transportation officials to improve the intersection near our proposed facility, where N.C. 133, N.C. 87 and Sunny Point Road meet. One part of the solution includes adding an entrance/exit road directly from our site to N.C. 133. This would eliminate truck traffic from our site on Bethel Church Road.

How will you control dust from your facility?

While some dust may be raised during limestone crushing, it is kept to a minimum by a dust control system required by the State to protect the environment and our employees who work in the area. In addition, once trucks are loaded, they may drive through a water spraying system that dampens the limestone product even more and prevents dust from flying off the trucks en route. The road from our site to N.C. 133 will also be paved, which will help eliminate dust raised by vehicles entering and exiting the site. Internal roads will be sprayed by the plant's water truck equipped with pumps and spray bars.