



June 18, 2020

Governor Tom Wolf
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Re: PERMANENT CLOSURE of Rockhill Quarry, East Rockhill, Bucks County, PA

Dear Governor Wolf,

On behalf of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) and our approximately 25,000 members throughout the Delaware River Watershed, please accept this letter urging you to permanently close the Rockhill Quarry. The Rockhill Quarry is located between Bog Run and Threemile Run, which are tributaries of the Tohickon Creek. The coordinates in the NPDES permit suggest the outfall for the quarry actually is to the north of the quarry, and drains to an unnamed tributary to the Tohickon Creek. The permit itself likewise states this is the receiving waterbody. It states: Coordinates: 40.40528 -75.30445 or 40 24' 19" -75 18' 16". No matter the exact outfall(s) or subsurface groundwater flows, the saddle of land that the quarry sits on drains to these small tributaries, which in turn flow to the Tohickon Creek.

The Tohickon Creek is recognized as an integral tributary of the Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic River system since it was proposed in the mid-90s and subsequently designated by the United States Congress in 2000. Over 3,000 acres of lands have been protected, through both public and private investment, by communities that take pride in preserving this well-loved and significant Bucks County stream with exceptional recreational significance. Tohickon Creek has been recognized by Congress as possessing "outstandingly remarkable" natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resource values.

In addition, the Rockhill Quarry is very close to the 265-acre State Game Land (SGL) 139 and the 518-acre Quakertown Swamp. Quakertown Swamp is the largest intact freshwater wetland remaining in Bucks County and is home to unique, diverse, and sensitive wetland communities. Quakertown Swamp is one of 70 Important Bird Areas in Pennsylvania as designated by the Audubon Society for its rich bird habitats and the species that thrive there.

This freshwater wetland is home to the largest great blue heron rookery in eastern Pennsylvania and provides habitat for 91 bird species, including the rare marsh wren and Virginia rail. This area contains various wetland habitats, ranging from open water wetlands to tussock sedge marsh, scrub shrub wetland,

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and forested swamp. Quakertown Swamp is recognized as significant by the Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory because it is a haven for a variety of wildlife species, including beaver, waterfowl, reptiles and amphibians. The area has been listed as a first priority site in the Bucks County Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) and is categorized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an all-important wetland area. The swamp is an important natural resource because it stores floodwaters and its dense plant growth absorbs and filters pollutants.

As you are aware, rocks from the quarry have tested positive for asbestos. If mining operations are permitted to continue, asbestos fibers and particles could wash into Bog Run, Threemile Run, or the Quakertown Swamp during rain events, degrading the water quality and posing a serious threat to people and wildlife. The health effects of asbestos are dangerous and well documented. Continued operations at the quarry would present a dangerous and unnecessary risk that goes against the recommendations of the PA Department of Health. The Rockhill Quarry needs to be permanently closed in order to protect the health of the residents in the community and the sensitive natural areas nearby. We hope that the issues raised from public health experts, environmental advocates, and residents in the community inspire you to use your position to take action and ensure that operations permanently cease at the quarry. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maya K. van Rossum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Maya K. van Rossum
the Delaware Riverkeeper