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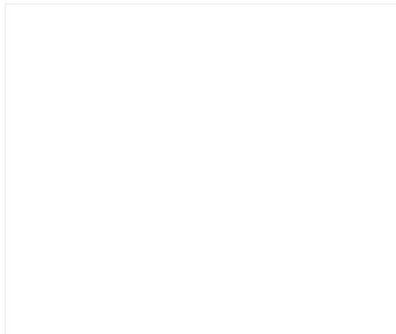
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# Digging in: Bastrop County residents voice concerns about the encroaching mining industry



By [Jane Turchi](#) | 1:40 PM May 6, 2024 CDT  
Updated 9:04 AM May 7, 2024 CDT



Sand and gravel is processed and sorted at the current Travis Materials plant. (Jane Turchi/Community Impact)

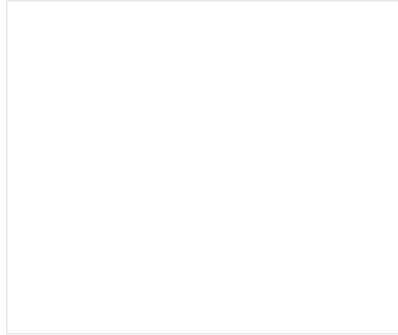
Editor's note: Find the story as it appeared in Community Impact's April edition [here](#). This story has been updated with Mike Weynand's full name and title.

At least five sand and gravel mining companies located along FM 969 in Bastrop County—several of which began operation in the past year—harvest silt deposited by the Colorado River.

Texas sand and gravel mining is a \$2.1 billion industry according to the global research database IBISWorld. Open acreage near the Colorado River makes FM 969 area valuable for mining.

Bastrop residents' first opportunity for input was at a Texas Commission on Environmental Quality hearing on March 7. The hearing was for a rock crusher permit request by Travis Materials for the company's new mining location on a 900-acre property encompassing the site of the former Barton Hill Farms. Some residents voiced concerns about hazardous traffic conditions, noise and sand debris.

### **Two-minute impact**

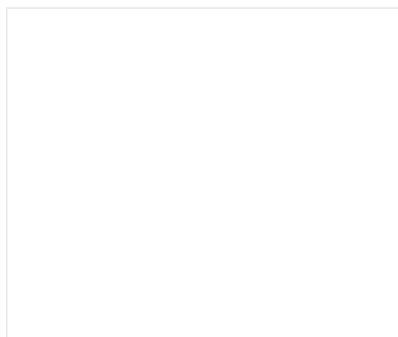


Texas has seen a drastic growth in the gravel mine industry since it deregulated the industry in 2005, said State Rep. Terry Wilson, R-Williamson County while addressing Georgetown residents about similar concerns.

As mines continue to open, residents are looking at the impact of the rapidly developing sector on the area. Erin Flynn and her husband, Skip Connett, own a flower farm overlooking the Rambo Materials mine.

"It's not unusual to hear noise at 3 and 4 a.m." Flynn said.

Travis Materials will limit running the rock crusher to one hour before sunrise and after sunset officials at the company said. The owner of Travis Materials, Mike Weynand said the company welcomes residents to schedule a tour of the facility if they have concerns.



### **A closer look**

According to the Bureau of Economic Geology in Austin, mining has increased in response to the demand for sand and gravel also known as aggregate used to accommodate rapid urbanization in the region. Another mine along FM 969 run by Travis Materials produces 8,000-10,000 tons of aggregate each day, Weynand told *Community Impact*. The company employs 40-50 individuals, including wheel

loaders and mechanics, living in Bastrop, Elgin, Cedar Creek and East Austin.



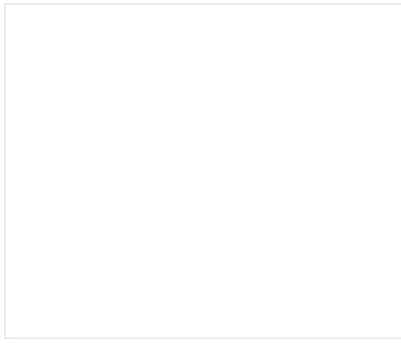
*Raw material is then screened, washed and dried. Rock crushing and sorting machines used in this step are often the source of noise concerns.  
(Jane Turchi/Community Impact)*

At the Travis Materials mine, land is excavated in 30-acre increments each year in a process of mining the land then refilling the hole with the overburden, or topsoil, from following dig sites throughout the 660-acre mine.

Once the materials are extracted, the land is reclaimed and used for grazing cattle.



*Raw material is then screened, washed and dried. Rock crushing and sorting machines used in this step are often the source of noise concerns.  
(Jane Turchi/Community Impact)*

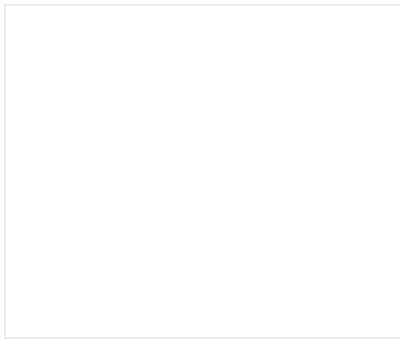


**Also of note**

Barton Hill Cemetery, the resting place of African Americans, some of whom once worked the land, is located on the Barton property near the future plant site.

Louise Barnes—whose family lived on the property—has parents, grandparents and great-grandparents buried at the Barton Hill Cemetery.

“It was disturbing when I saw that they had moved the dirt and cleared out all around the cemetery. It just seems like the cemetery is right in the middle of all of that,” Barnes said.

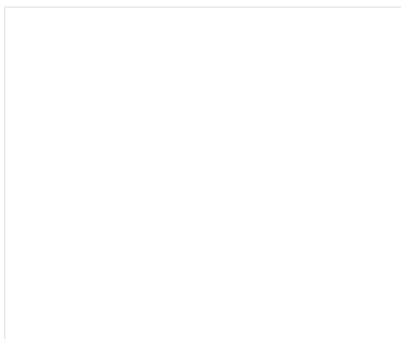


Irma Bookman who lives near Rambo mine and has family in the Barton Hill Cemetery, said she would like to see mining companies work with neighbors to address concerns.

“I think there are solutions that can be easily implemented,” Bookman said.

Despite the nearby work, arrangements to visit the cemetery can be made like always, Weynand said.

**Looking ahead**





The Texas Department of Transportation recently lowered traffic speeds along FM 969 from 65 mph to 60 mph due to public concern. Any further speed reductions await a follow-up traffic study on the roadway.

Listed as one of the county's most congested roadways in the 2023 Bastrop County Transportation Plan, FM 969 will be increased from a two-lane to a six-lane divided highway to ease traffic flow.



*Trucks are loaded with processed sand and gravel known as aggregate to be transported to wholesale buyers. (Jane Turchi/Community Impact)*

Weynand said he plans to add turn lanes and widen the section of FM 969 to aid traffic flow in front of the future mine.

Neighborhood residents plan to create a community advisory council to initiate conversation between mining companies and the surrounding community.

"We've gone and turned this pastoral setting into a commercial setting—industrial—and yet there's never been a conversation," Flynn said.

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**By [Jane Turchi](#)**

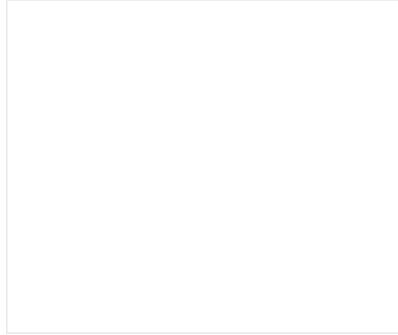
Jane is the digital editor for Bastrop. She received a master's degree in international affairs from The Bush School of Government and Public Service in 2023. She attended Texas A&M for her undergraduate degree where she was the special sections editor for the Maroon Life Magazine. Email Jane with news tips, story ideas or feedback at [jturchi@communityimpact.com](mailto:jturchi@communityimpact.com).



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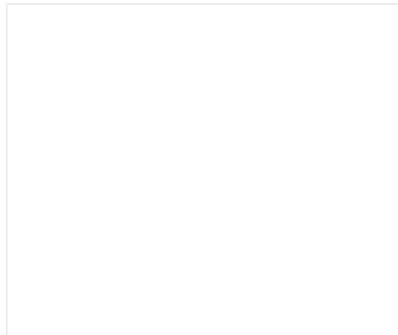
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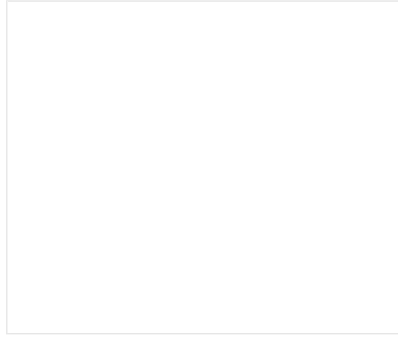
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