

PERMIT NO.: 398552-25  
ISSUANCE DATE: Sep 18, 2025



# GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION

### SURFACE MINING PERMIT

Permittee: **Walker County Stone, LLC**  
**500 Duke Drive**  
**Franklin, GA 37607**

Operation: **Walker County Quarry**  
**265 Ridgeway Road**  
**Lafayette, GA**  
**Walker County**  
**Lat. 34.6234, Long. -85.3087**

Permitted Acres **701**

In accordance with the provisions of the Georgia Surface Mining Act of 1968, O.C.G.A. §12-4-70, et seq., and the Rules of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Chapter 391-3-3, Surface Mining, both as amended, this Permit is issued for the surface mining operation as recorded hereon and presented in the Application received on **October 24, 2023**, and the Mining Land Use Plan approved on **August 8, 2025**.

This Permit is conditioned upon the Permittees continued compliance with the provisions of the Georgia Surface Mining Act of 1968, O.C.G.A. §12-4-70, et seq., and the Rules of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Chapter 391-3-3, Surface Mining, both as amended; the provisions of the Approved Surface Mining Land Use Plan and Approved Amendments, if any; and any special conditions which may be attached to this Permit.

This Permit shall be rendered null and void should the mining activity not commence within twelve (12) months from the date this Permit becomes final or should cessation of mining occur for a period of eighteen (18) months without the Permittee obtaining an inactive status classification through an Approved Amendment of the Surface Mining Land Use Plan.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jeffrey W. Cown'.

Jeffrey W. Cown, Director  
Environmental Protection Division

## **SPECIAL CONDITIONS**

**Issued To: Walker County Stone, LLC**  
**500 Duke Drive**  
**Franklin, GA 37607**

**Permit No: 398552-25**

### **Conditions for Surface Mine Facility**

#### **A. Mining Activities:**

1. The Permittee shall implement site survey controls to ensure that all acres affected by the mining operation will be on permitted lands.
2. Prior to commencing mining operations at the facility, the permittee shall install monitoring wells (MW-11, MW-12, MW-13, and MW-14) as indicated on the Phase I Monitoring Plan (Sheet 12) of the approved Mining Land Use Plan. The permittee shall submit all well installation documentation to EPD for review and approval.
3. The permittee shall submit a Surface Mining Application for an Amendment requesting to update the Monitoring Plans for each phase and must receive Division approval prior to commencing mining operations for each of the subsequent Phases (II, III, and IV).
4. The Permittee shall maintain adequate erosion and sediment controls in accordance with The Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control in Georgia, latest edition.
5. The Permittee shall obtain any necessary water permits and maintain compliance with the Water Quality Control Rules, Chapter 391-3-6-.16.
6. The Permittee shall post an identification sign which shall display the Permittee's Name, Mine Name, Permit Number at all entrances of the property.

#### **B. Reclamation**

1. The Permittee shall submit a Reclamation Report and Release Request Form upon completion of reclamation responsibilities on affected acreage

#### **C. Additional Permittee Requirements**

1. The Permittee shall fully satisfy all applicable financial assurance responsibility requirements in accordance with Surface Mining Rule 391-3-3-.03
2. The Permittee shall submit an Annual Status Report on forms provided by the Division. The report will be due on or before April 1 of each year, covering the prior calendar (Jan.- Dec.) year.
3. The Permittee shall submit any proposed changes to the approved Mine Land Use Plan to the Division for approval as an Amendment prior to changing or varying from the Plan.
4. This permit supersedes all other previous permits, special permitting conditions, and requirements of previously approved surface mining plans associated with this mining operation.

## **SPECIAL CONDITIONS – Cont.:**

5. Erosion and sedimentation control devices shall be installed before or immediately after ground disturbance occurs. The location of some of these devices may have to be altered on the approved mining use plans if drainage patterns during the development are different from the proposed drainage pattern. The mine operator will maintain all drainage patterns created at various stages during development. Any failure to control erosion and sedimentation during any phase of construction and/or operation shall be reported to the manager immediately and resolved as soon as practicable.
  - a) Silt fencing must meet the requirements of Section 171-Temporary Silt Fence of the Department of transportation State of Georgia, Standard Specification, latest edition.
  - b) The erosion and sedimentation control measures identified on the approved Mining Land Use Plan are considered the minimum measures that will be used. Should additional erosion and sedimentation control measures be required they will be installed in accordance with the latest edition of the “Manual for Erosion and sedimentation Control in Georgia”.
  - c) Prior to any other construction, a stabilized construction exit will be installed at the egress points at Ridgeway Road and Oakton Road.
  - d) Prior to commencing land disturbance activities, the limits of land disturbance will be clearly and accurately demarcated with stakes, flagging or other appropriate means. The location and extent of all authorized land disturbance will occur within the approved limits indicated on the approved Mining Land Use Plan.
  - e) A 25-foot undisturbed vegetive buffer shall be maintained adjacent to all state waters.
  - f) Sediment Barriers (Sd1) shall be placed downstream of all cut and fill slopes outside of the active mining area and will be installed in accordance with the latest edition of the “Manual for Erosion and sedimentation Control in Georgia”.
  - g) Any disturbed area left exposed for a period greater than 14 days will be stabilized with Temporary Seeding unless other measures are employed to control erosion and sedimentation. Temporary Stabilization shall be employed when seeding will not have an adequate growing season.
  - h) All best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented in accordance with latest edition of the “Manual for Erosion and sedimentation Control in Georgia”.
  - i) All water discharges shall meet the requirements of Applicable NPDES permits.
  - j) Dust will be controlled on site through the use of water trucks and misting equipment, as necessary.
6. Groundwater monitoring, including reporting, notification, and mitigation, shall be conducted in accordance with the Monitoring Plan in the approved Mining Land Use Plan.
7. Dewatering groundwater from the mine is prohibited.

Response to Comments  
Walker County Stone, LLC-Walker County Quarry  
Permit Number 398552-25

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (“EPD”) received comments in response to the Application for Surface Mining Permit for Walker Stone, LLC, to be located in Walker County. A summary of the comments is provided below along with EPD’s responses.

1. Explain why the longstanding precedent of not permitting a mine within a “Most Significant Groundwater Recharge Area” and “Groundwater Pollution Susceptibility Zone” in Georgia should be ignored.

**EPD Response: There is no such precedent. The criteria mentioned in this comment are not required by the Georgia Surface Mining Act. Additionally, the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, Chapter 391-3-16, do not prohibit mining in groundwater recharge areas. EPD has required Walker County Stone to submit a Hydrogeological Assessment Report. The Hydrogeological Assessment Report includes monitoring of water quality and groundwater levels. Please see the Mining Land Use Plan (MLUP) for monitoring well locations and schedule.**

2. Provide a thorough review by the EPD Drinking Water Division of the proposed quarry’s potential impact on LaFayette’s Well No. 3 and upon potential municipal water sources in southern Walker County.

**EPD Response: The EPD Drinking Water Program does not perform these types of reviews. However, as outlined in Wellhead Protection Plans and the regulations and rules, EPD does require a hydrogeological investigation to be completed before a permit for any new quarry or underground mine may be issued. Walker County Stone has submitted a hydrogeological investigation (Hydrogeologic Assessment Report), and it has been reviewed by EPD. EPD’s review found no anticipated impacts to LaFayette’s Well No.3. Additionally, monitoring wells between the quarry and LaFayette’s Well No. 3 will be analyzed for several parameters indicative of groundwater quality (pH, Conductivity, Turbidity, TSS, TDS, TOC, and COD). Notification triggers require reporting to EPD within thirty (30) days in order to assess any mitigation activities that may be required.**

3. Address the questions raised about the Hydrogeologic Assessment Report submitted by Black Rock Consulting, LLC, and provide clarification on the inconsistencies and omissions noted.

3.a. For example, the basis for the final pit elevation is a potentiometric map generated by Black Rock and presented as Figure 7 in their Hydrogeologic Assessment Report. Water level data shown on this potentiometric map does not appear to show a consistent groundwater elevation dataset, and the date of groundwater levels used to construct the potentiometric surface map is not indicated. We presume water level reports on Table 4 were used; however, the text does not reference Table 4 as the basis for Figure 7. Most of the water levels appear

to have been taken on August 9, 2023, except for MW-11. The water level for MW-11 (708.07 ft. MSL) is not from August 9, 2023, as reported on Table 4.

**EPD Response: At the time of the development of the potentiometric map no elevation data was available for MW-11. Walker County Stone drew the map with some estimation as indicated on Figure 7 where there is an EST by MW-11. The consultant, Black Rock, used the cross section as shown on Figure 7 to set the approximate pit floor. The cross section does not use data from MW-11. Instead, the consultant used data from the north end of the pit where more data was available.**

**The MLUP limits the mine final depth to 625 Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL) and a maximum of 75 feet below the groundwater table. The estimated time to encounter groundwater is approximately 10 years and to reach the projected final depth is 20 years. This will allow several years of groundwater data and annual reports to be assessed by EPD before mining at that depth occurs.**

3.b. MW-4 and MW-7 are not shown on Figure 7 despite the fact that these water levels are shown on Table 4. Monitoring well M-6 is shown on Figure 7, but water levels are not included on their Table 4. Finally, the cross section on Black Rock's Figure 7 shows two observation wells (OBS-1 and OBS-3) which are not shown on the plan map.

**EPD Response: Multiple drilling operations have been conducted on the site by several drilling companies. These efforts resulted in multiple location codes. To provide consistent nomenclature of monitoring wells, codes, as presented in the MLUP, were modified: OBS 1 is MW-01, OBS 3 is MW-07 and OBS 4 is MW-08.**

3.c. Water levels are presented in Black Rock's report for pressure transducer data in Table 3. Information regarding these water levels is not provided. Missing information includes the actual water levels and associated dates when the water levels were measured with the pressure transducers, as well as the length of time during which water levels were monitored. The Black Rock report makes reference in Section 6.2 to the wells used to construct Figure 7 (although MW-4 and MW-7 are not on the figure). Reference is then made to Table 3 and water level data collected from the pressure transducers, but none of the levels in Table 3 are shown on Figure 7. It appears that Black Rock did not use any of the water level data presented on Table 3 to delineate seasonal high-or low-water levels or use this data for their potentiometric map. Consequently, the final design (floor elevation) should be revisited using an internally consistent groundwater dataset using all available data.

**EPD Response: The purpose of the groundwater level monitoring in Walker County Stone's case is not to specifically define the high and low levels. The purpose is to develop seasonal trends. The estimated time to encounter groundwater is approximately 10 years and to reach the projected final depth is 20 years. This time will allow a new data set for determining the seasonal high and low prior to mining in the water table taking place. Walker County Stone has trigger levels in the MLUP that requires notification to EPD if groundwater levels drop. Water level reporting triggers will be determined upon the trends developed prior to encountering groundwater (ca. 10 years). Water level**

**decreases greater than three (3) standard deviations following blasting events trigger immediate notification to EPD.**

3.d. Exploration borings that are included in Appendix B of Black Rock's report do not have any location information (easting and/or northing) on the logs and there is not a plan map that shows the location of these borings. Additionally, there are monitoring wells referenced in the text that do not appear to have exploration boring logs, including MW-8, MW-9, and MW-10. We presume that some of the exploration borings were converted into monitoring wells, but there is no indication which exploration boring corresponds to what specific monitoring well. There are no monitoring well construction logs available to verify that the monitoring wells are measuring similar water levels within the aquifer system, i.e., the water table aquifer, perched water in the residuum, or the main aquifer system. It is imperative that all monitoring well construction logs and related boring logs are provided for evaluation if they are being considered for use as an early warning for contaminants impacting the groundwater northeast of the proposed mine.

**EPD Response: Drill logs and locations were submitted to EPD. These documents are part of the application and are available through GEOS.**

4. Conduct a more comprehensive hydrologic evaluation to determine the groundwater connectivity between the proposed quarry and LaFayette's Well No. 3. This study should include dye-tracing and be detailed enough to map groundwater flow paths between the proposed quarry site and the City's well.

**EPD Response: Conducting a study to map groundwater flow between the proposed quarry and the City's well is not required by the Georgia Surface Mining Act or Rules.**

5. Confirm that archaeological site studies have been conducted on all caves located on the proposed quarry site. Please provide copies of these studies if completed. If these studies have not yet been conducted, we request that they be completed to preserve the rich history of our region.

**EPD Response: Surface Mines are required to ensure that a National Registered Historic Place, within one mile of the proposed mine boundary, will not be affected. No further studies are required by the Georgia Surface Mining Act.**

6. GA EPD should require the applicant to install at least four defensive monitoring wells along the northwestern, northern, and northeastern property limits to provide an early warning system for contaminants and turbidity leaving the site. These wells should be located and installed under the direct supervision of a Georgia licensed professional geologist with experience in karstic terranes, as required by EPD for municipal landfills and coal combustion residue (CCR) sites. These defensive monitoring wells must intersect the regional carbonate aquifer system beneath the property. After installation and development, these defensive monitoring wells should be monitored in real time for multiple water quality parameters, specific conductance, total dissolved solids, and turbidity (at a minimum). Baseline data

should be collected prior to any mining activity. Additional monitoring should be conducted during and after each blasting event in the quarry and surrounding areas.

**EPD Response: Four additional monitoring wells will be installed along the northwestern, northern, and northeastern property limits in accordance with the Georgia Water Well Standards Act. Data loggers will be installed to record water levels daily, which will be downloaded quarterly. Water levels will also be measured in the nearest monitoring well two hours before, and two hours after any blasting event.**

7. All sedimentation ponds and/or storm water infiltration basins should be lined with a geotextile based on their location in a groundwater recharge and pollution susceptibility region as defined by Hydrogeologic Atlas 20. The applicant proposed to compact soil in the ponds at 95% of standard proctor. There are no standard proctor curves presented for the soils and no permeameter data. These data should be provided to assess the infiltration from the pond and/or storm water infiltration basins into the underlying carbonate aquifer system.

**EPD Response: There is no requirement in the Surface Mining Act or the Rules for installation of liners in sedimentation ponds and/or storm water infiltration basins for surface mines. Rule 391-3-16-.02(3)(o) specifically excludes mining from this requirement.**

8. Under the Surface Mining Rules (391-3-3-.01), the permit applicant must protect contiguous natural and other resources, including properties on the National Register of Historic Places (391-3-3-.05(2)). Although none are listed on the National Register, the cave system on the northeast part of the property is a “contiguous natural or other resource” that must be protected and evaluated for cultural history.

**EPD Response: The referenced cave is located within the 100 ft. buffer of the proposed mine and over 500 ft. from any proposed mining operation. No mining activities are allowed in the buffer.**