

DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS

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MAY 7 1992



STAN STEPHENS, GOVERNOR

CAPITOL STATION

STATE OF MONTANA

ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY COUNCIL

(406) 444-2074

May 6, 1992

1625 ELEVENTH AVENUE
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the Department of State Lands (DSL) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This EA evaluates a proposal by Conda Mining Inc. for a rock quarry near Pipestone, Montana.

Public comment on this EA will be received by the agencies until 5:00 p.m. May 20, 1992. Comments should be about the adequacy of the EA in assessing issues, new information not considered that may influence the analysis, and clarification. Comments should be specific. The DSL will use these comments, the EA, and the application to make a final decision on the permit. The decision may be to approve the proposal, or to deny the proposal.

A public meeting has not been scheduled for this project. Written comments should be sent to:

Bob Winegar
Hard Rock Bureau
Montana Department of State Lands
Capitol Station
Helena, MT 59620

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please call Department of State Lands (444-2074) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Winegar

Robert C. Winegar
Environmental Program Supervisor
Hard Rock Bureau
Reclamation Division

JG/cf

Enclosure

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

APPLICANT: Conda Mining Inc.

TYPE OF OPERATION: Quarry

LOCATION: NE¼ Sec. 20, T2N, R5W COUNTY: Jefferson

PERSON PREPARING E.A.: Joe Gurrieri

APPLICATION COMPLETE: 4/16/92 E.A. COMPLETE: 5/5/92
Date Date

	POTENTIAL IMPACTS					
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	AMPLIFICATION
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>			X			X
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability			X			
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution			X			
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality; Quantity; Distribution			X		X	X
5. <u>AIR</u> ; Quality			X			
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources			X			
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats			X			
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; quantity, quality, species			X			
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops production			X			
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> ; structures and mores			X			
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> uniqueness, diversity			X			
3. <u>POPULATION</u> ; quantity and diversity			X			
4. <u>HOUSING</u> ; quantity and distribution			X			
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY</u>			X			

	A	B	C	POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
				LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	AMPLIFICATION
6. <u>COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME</u>			X			
7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> ; quantity and distribution			X			
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; local and state tax revenue			X			
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ; demand			X			
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL and AGRICULTURAL</u> activities			X			
11. <u>HISTORICAL and ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>		X			X	X
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X			
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS and GOALS</u> ; local and regional			X			
14. <u>DEMANDS on ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> of land, water, air and energy			X			
15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> ; networks and traffic flows			X			

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Public notice published for 3 weeks beginning January 31, 1992 in the Whitehall Ledger and Montana Standard. Comments are solicited for EA until May 20, 1992.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: Approve, disapprove.

COMPLIANCE STATUS: New application, no noncompliance history.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PREPARATION OF AN EIS: An EIS is not necessary at this level of disturbance

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION:

Bureau of Land Management
INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS EA: Bill Weatherly (BLM), Bob Winegar, Pat Plantenberg and Joe Gurrieri (all DSL)

- A: Significant Unavoidable Impacts
- B: Insignificant as a result of conditioned mitigation
- C: Insignificant as proposed

Robert C. Winegar

Signature

CONDA MINING INC.
Amplification of Potential Impacts

BACKGROUND

An application for an operating permit was received by the Department of State Lands on January 21, 1991 from Conda Mining Inc. (CMI) of Missoula Montana. The proposed mining is on BLM land approximately 1½ miles northeast of Pipestone, Montana. Rock has been previously mined at the site by the U.S. Forest Service.

PROPOSAL

CMI would develop and mine the rock quarry with work commencing by mid-1992. CMI proposes to remove approximately 1,000,000 cubic yards of in-place rock during a 10-year period. Extraction of rock would progress along a northeast trending ridge located just north of an existing railroad spur. The railroad spur would be used for distribution of the final rock products.

The proposed pit area is 14.5 acres and includes a 10-acre quarry area and 4.5 acres of staging area. An existing access road constructed by the U.S. Forest Service would be reopened and utilized.

Seven people would be employed.

RECLAMATION

The objective of the reclamation plan is to reclaim those areas disturbed during the quarrying activities back to rangeland. The final quarry backslope would be 1:1 and the slope blended into the hillside slopes flanking the excavation. Stockpiled topsoil and crusher fines would be used to cover the quarry and staging area floors and then seeded. The 1:1 slopes will not be treated. The access road would also be reclaimed.

All surface support facilities would be dismantled and removed from the permit area upon completion of the quarry operations.

AMPLIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Topography

The quarry backslope would be left at a maximum 1:1 slope. A slope of less than 1:1 was considered but dismissed because a lower backslope would drastically reduce the height of the northeast trending ridge which provides effective visual screening of the quarry.

Water

The application did not include specific best management practices that would be used to preclude sediment runoff from the site during mine life. Such practices may include sediment catchment ponds, silt fences, and strawbale barriers. The use of appropriate best management practices to control sediment runoff would be stipulated in the permit.

Historical

The Northern Pacific-Burlington Northern Railroad adjacent to the proposed quarry has been found to be eligible for listing in the National Register. Therefore, a protective, temporary crossing on the railroad tracks and bed would be utilized during mine life.