ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Central Land Office **Proposed Implementation Date:** May 96
Proponent: Jim Gilman Excavating, Inc.
Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine and transport approximately 15,000 cubic yards of borrow material from a 2.0 acre site for reconstruction of Interstate 15. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses.
Location: SW¼ NW¼, Sec. 8, T11N, R3W **County:** Lewis & Clark

N = Not present or No Impact will occur.
Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts).

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	**[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION**
1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	**[N]** The proposed operation is located on a pediment on the north end of the Helena Valley and will expand an old reclaimed borrow to the north. The soil is approximately 12 inches deep and is of a silty clay loam texture with cobbles up to 2 inches in diameter. The overburden will be mined as a product. The topsoil would be stripped and stockpiled after regrading the topsoil would be evenly replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the soil.
2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	**[N]** There is no surface water within 1000 feet of the site. The site will be mined to a depth of 15 feet which is above the depth to the water table which is estimated to be at 100 feet. There are no water wells within 1000 feet of the site. There are two water lines coming from a water well, approximately 0.25 miles north of the proposed borrow. The lines supply the DNRC Central Land Office (which is south of the borrow site) with water along with supplying water for a stockwater tank. The water lines would not be impacted by the proposed operation. Fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The proponent has obtained a Stormwater Permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the provisions of the permit must be followed.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	**[Y]** Air quality would be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards. There is no crusher involved with this proposed operation.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	**[N]** The site, which is a used to pasture livestock contains both native and non native grasses and would be reclaimed to grazing. A literature search was done by the Montana National Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified and none were identified during a ground search.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	**[N]**

6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	**[N]** Ground and literature searches were conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitat were found on the site. No wetlands are present.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	**[N]** A cultural survey was conducted on the site and no cultural resources were found. If the operator of the proposed operation discovers any cultural resources the operation must be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable amount of time until salvage can be made. The state Historical Preservation Office must be promptly notified.
8. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	**[N]**
9. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	**[N]**
10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	**[N]**
IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	**POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**
11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	**[Y]** There will be increased hazards because of equipment activity and hauling of the borrow. The applicant must comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations however, proper precautions will be taken to avoid accidents.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	**[Y]** There will be a temporary loss of grazing on 2.0 acres of land until the site is successfully reclaimed.
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	**[N]**

14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	**[N]**
15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	**[N]** The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	**[N]** County Zoning clearance has been obtained.
17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	**[N]**
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	**[N]**
19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	**[N]**
20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	**[N]**
21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	**[N]**

22. Alternatives Considered:

Alternative # 1: Denial. The owner of the gravel resource would be denied full utilization of his property at this time.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program & Lewis & Clark Commissioners & Weed Control District

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Mine Safety & Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit: Water Quality Division for a Stormwater Permit.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the short duration of the project.

26. Regulatory Impact on Private Property: The analysis conducted in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

[ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [X] No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke Title: Mine Reclamation Specialist

Approved By: Steve Welch Title: Chief, Opencut Bureau

Signature Date