

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Kuhlmann Borrow Site Proposed Implementation Date: 6/96
 Proponent: Empire Sand & Gravel, Box 1215, Billings MT 59103

Type and Purpose of Action: The operator has applied for a 2.5-acre borrow site where they propose to salvage all available soil material, remove 5,000 cubic yards of borrow, and reclaim the site to grassland. The estimated date for final reclamation is fall 1996.
 Location and County: About 1 mile east of Billings in the S1/2 35, T1N, R26E, Yellowstone County

N = Not present or insignificant impact.
 Y = An impact may occur (explain).

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
1. TOPOGRAPHY, AND GEOLOGIC AND EDAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS, SUITABILITY, AND STABILITY: Are there unusual geologic features? Are fragile, compactible, or unstable soils present? Is the proposed soil material handling adequate? Are there special mining and reclamation considerations?	N - The site is on the upper slope, off a flat bench, overlooking a broad valley, in a sedimentary plains area. The entire area was previously disturbed by mining activities. There is up to a half foot of soil on portions of the site. The operator has committed to salvaging all available topsoil which will be replaced upon reclamation. There are no special mining and reclamation considerations.
2. WATER RESOURCE LOCATION, QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND PROTECTION: Are surface or ground water resources present? Is there the potential for degradation of water quality or quantity? Could water wells be affected? Are there special mining and reclamation considerations?	N - There does not appear to be any surface water or groundwater resources or wells in the immediate area that could be affected by this operation. There's a well within 1,000 feet to the east; however, this well is below the level of the proposed mining and almost 200 feet deep. There are no special mining and reclamation considerations.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Do air quality regulations apply?	N - Pollutants and particulates will be produced on a temporary basis by mining and reclamation operations. Operators are required to comply with state air quality regulations.

<p>4. PRESENT LAND USE, VEGETATIVE COMPOSITION AND COVER, AND PROPOSED POSTMINING LAND USE: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or vegetative communities present? Are there special mining and reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>N - The area is previously disturbed rangeland where range grasses have reinvaded. The proposed postmining land use is grazing land.</p> <p>The Montana Natural Heritage Program reports no element occurrences.</p> <p>The Department will notify the county weed control board about the operation. The operator has committed to controlling any on-site noxious weeds.</p> <p>There are no special mining and reclamation considerations.</p>
<p>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by common or rare mammals, birds, fish, or other animal species?</p>	<p>N - There does not appear to be significant use of the area by common or rare species.</p> <p>The Montana Natural Heritage Program reports the occurrence of a peregrine falcon historic eyrie about a mile west, up and over the bench from the site. Also reported is the occurrence of the milk snake a good distance to the west and north, across the Yellowstone River. Since the site was previously disturbed and has experienced extensive mining over time, this operation should not significantly impact any of the subject creatures.</p>
<p>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Species of special concern? Wetlands?</p>	<p>N - The author is not aware of any unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources in or around the site.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Has the site been surveyed by a cultural resource professional or paraprofessional? Are any historical or archaeological resources present?</p>	<p>N - A previous site check in 1991 by Anthro Research revealed no cultural resources. If such resources are found, the operator has committed to routing the operation around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be made, and to promptly notifying the State Historic Preservation Office.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>N - The site is to the east and below a paved county road in a rural area just outside of Billings. It's not readily visible from populated or scenic areas. Noise or light should not be a problem.</p>

<p>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 or be affected by the project?</p>	<p>N - There will not be a significant demand or impact on environmental resources or other projects as a result of this operation.</p>
<p>10. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OR IMPACTS: Are there other studies, plans, or projects on this tract? Will waste disposal be properly handled? Is reclamation guaranteed by a bond?</p>	<p>N - The author is not aware of any other environmental aspects or impacts. The operator has committed to proper waste disposal. The operator has posted sufficient bond to guarantee reclamation.</p>

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>N - The site is in a rural area. The project should not add to the health and safety risks in the area if the operator and landowner manage the site in a responsible manner.</p> <p>The operator is required to comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>N - The project will not significantly affect industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities in the area.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move, or eliminate jobs?</p>	<p>N - The project will not significantly affect the quantity or distribution of employment in the project area.</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>N - Similar operations in the state have not significantly affected local and state tax revenues.</p>
<p>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial changes in road use occur? Will other facilities and services (e.g., fire protection, police, schools) be affected or needed?</p>	<p>N - Trucks will use the county road to haul borrow to the project area. No other government services should be affected or needed.</p>
<p>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there federal, state, county, city, tribal, and/or private zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>N - The author is not aware of any other environmental plans or goals. The local zoning authority has been contacted and clearance obtained.</p>

