

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Altman 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 6.6-acre borrow site where they propose to properly prepare the area, remove about 5,000 cubic yards of borrow, and reclaim the site to grassland. The estimated date of final reclamation is fall 1997.

Location and County: About 3.5 miles SE of Laurel, in 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 edge of the first bench above the confluence of the Yellowstone and Clarks Fork Rivers in the sedimentary plains portion of the state. The soil is thin because the area has experienced extensive mining and reclamation disturbance over time. Older photos indicate that soil may not have been salvaged during previous operations. The operator has committed to salvaging all available topsoil. 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 - It does not appear that there are surface water resources or wells in the immediate area that could be affected by this mining operation. 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 present land use is pasture consisting of cheatgrass and sweetclover. The postmining land use will be native grassland.</p> <p>When the Montana Natural Heritage Program report is received, the Department will perform necessary follow-up to protect any species of concern.</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>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>When the Montana Natural Heritage program report is received, the Department will perform necessary follow-up to protect any species or habitat of concern.</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 at or around the site.</p> <p>When the Montana Natural Heritage program report is received, the Department will perform necessary follow-up to protect any species or habitat of concern.</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 - Since the area has been extensively disturbed over time, any cultural resources have been obliterated. 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 in a rural area, tucked up a little draw. It is not visible from populated areas nor should noise and light 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
11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	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. The operator is required to comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	N - The project will not significantly affect industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities in the area.
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move, or eliminate jobs?	N - The project will not significantly affect the quantity or distribution of employment in the project area.
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	N - Similar operations in the state have not significantly affected local and state tax revenues.
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?	N - Trucks will use county roads to haul borrow to the project area. No other government services should be affected or needed.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there federal, state, county, city, tribal, and/or private zoning or management plans in effect?	N - The author is not aware of any other environmental plans or goals. The local zoning authority has been contacted and clearance obtained.
17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are recreational or wilderness areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	N - The project does not affect access to or the quality of recreational lands or opportunities in the area. There is minimal recreation potential within the tract.
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the area's population and require additional housing?	N - The project will not significantly affect the density and distribution of population or housing in the area.
19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	N - The project will not significantly affect the local social structure or mores.
20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	N - The project will not significantly affect the local cultural uniqueness or diversity.
21. OTHER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	N - None.

