

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FINAL

Project Name: Old Somers pit Proposed Implementation Date: 4/15/96
 Proponent: Preferred Paving
 Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 15,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel and operate an asphalt plant from a 1 acre site located 2 miles northwest of the town of Somers. The estimated start-up date is July 1, 1996 and will result in a level, graded site for residential development. The pit will be reclaimed to residential building sites after grading the slopes to at least a 3:1, replacing all topsoil on the slopes and re-seeding.
 Location: NE¼ SW¼ Sec. 15, T27N, R21W County: Flathead

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 MEASURES
<p>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?</p>	<p>[Y] The mine is located in glacial outwash material in the foothills of the Salish Mountains south of Kalispell. It is rolling timber and grazing land scattered with residences above the Flathead River Valley. It is a stratified sand and gravel deposit lying on top of outcrops located approximately 2 miles northwest of Somers, overlain by a layer of silty loam topsoil. The deposit is a remnant of sediments laid down by Glacial Lake Missoula around 10,000 years ago.</p> <p>The billion year old Precambrian rock of the Belt Series sandstone, mudstone and limestone rocks surround the deposit in towering walls sculpted by alpine glaciers that form an intermountain, fault block basin known as the Rocky Mountain Trench. The Whitefish Range to the north, the Flathead and Swan Ranges to the east and the less dramatic Salish Range to the west surround this flat-lying valley.</p> <p>Up to eight inches of fairly well drained, silty, sandy topsoil overlies the glacial sand and gravel, and local terrace slopes demonstrate reasonably good stability. All soil material will be salvaged and stockpiled away from the affected land. Following mining, grading and ripping, the soils will be replaced, disced and seeded to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. Microbes will re-colonize the soil.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N] There is no surface water in the area. The site will be mined from the level of the existing facility up to a height of 85 feet which is considerably above the depth of the water table, estimated to be 100 feet below the surface.</p> <p>All fuel, lubricants and chemicals will be stored in an earthen bermed, lined fuel containment area, and any accidental spills or major leaks from equipment operating in the pit will immediately be excavated and removed from the site. Therefore, the quality and quantity of the groundwater should not be impacted.</p>

<p>3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>[Y] Air quality will be degraded and there will be an increase in particulate matter. Crushers, screens, asphalt plants and trucking equipment typically cause air pollutant emissions. Water bars, road watering and other dust controls, as well as a wet scrubber to control particulate emissions from the asphalt plant will be used as necessary. The operator must obtain air quality permits from the state Air Quality Division to verify compliance with local, state, and federal air quality requirements.</p> <p>Applicable federal regulations which are implemented by the state are the Standards of Performance for New Stationary Sources, 40 CFR Part 60, Subpart I (Asphalt & Concrete Plants) and Subpart OOO (Nonmetallic Mineral Processing Plants). Subpart I sets particulate and opacity limitations on emissions from the asphalt plant. The particulate limitation must be verified by performance (stack) testing. Subpart OOO sets an opacity limitation on fugitive dust emissions from the gravel crushing and handling operations.</p> <p>The effects of dust and noise on nearby homes are not anticipated to be significant. Because the amount of airborne particulates allowed in an Air Quality Permit are based upon human health conditions, it is not expected that people would exhibit greater sensitivity. Without those controls however, it is likely that both humans and livestock could be adversely affected and it is important therefore that strict compliance is enforced.</p>
<p>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[Y] Vegetation consists of logged-over forest with Douglas fir, Western larch, pinegrass, oregon grape and roses. Vegetation covers 80% of the ground and will be removed and planted with grasses following mining. There is no record of threatened or endangered plants or animals inhabiting the area. While all plant species will be destroyed during mining, new ones will be re-established following mining, and many native species will re-invade the site voluntarily by transportation to the site by wind, water and animals.</p>
<p>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>[N] The area is used for grazing, but it also supports populations of deer, elk, game and non-game birds, coyotes, foxes, rodents, raptors, insects and various other animal species. The mine site is frequented by those animals and they will be temporarily displaced as the mine expands. Human use of the area has intensified in the past two decades with the increase in residential and commercial activity. The proposed mine is not expected to significantly degrade wildlife populations.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N] The Natural Heritage Program literature search and site evaluations have not revealed any endangered or threatened plant or animal species.</p>

<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] There are important cultural values in the general area. This site has been previously disturbed by modern man, thereby destroying the integrity of resources that may have existed. The operator will give appropriate protection to any values or artifacts discovered in the affected area. If significant resources are found, the operation will be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be conducted. The State Historical Preservation Office will be promptly notified.</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>[Y] There has been an alteration of the viewshed as a result of this and other current and historical sand and gravel mines. The site is visible by homes in the local area and to traffic along Highway 93. Floodlights from dark period operations would increase visibility and awareness of the operation. However, reclamation will return the area to a visually acceptable landscape.</p> <p>Noise will increase from present levels when equipment is active. Noise levels are generally within the range of 60 to 90 decibels measured on-site, decreasing with distance. As a comparison, sound levels for ordinary activities such as close conversation at 60 decibels and music from a radio at 70 decibels are considered to be moderate. Levels above 90 decibels are severe, and prolonged exposure can lead to hearing loss.</p> <p>Hours of operations will be between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday with occasional operations on some Saturdays.</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 the project?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>	
<p>RESOURCE</p>	<p>[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</p>
<p>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[Y] Heavy equipment including crushers, asphalt plants, trucks and loaders create additional traffic hazards, but the operator must comply with all MSHA and OSHA regulations. The operator will employ proper precautions to avoid accidents, especially during typical operating hours for school busses.</p> <p>Noise will increase from present levels when equipment is active. Noise levels are generally within the range of 60 to 90 decibels measured on-site, decreasing with distance. Excessive and prolonged noise and light could increase stress for nearby residents and induce difficulty sleeping. Both of these effects may be considered harmful to human health if the activities are continuous. This proposed operation is expected to create these impacts sporadically and for short periods. It therefore should not significantly affect human health.</p>

12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] The acreage listed in the Type and purpose of Action will be taken out of agricultural/wildlife habitat and put into industrial/commercial use.
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?	<p>[N] The presence of an industrial site in the midst of an agricultural/rural residential area has the potential to reduce the desirability as a location to live a rural lifestyle, and therefore the marketability of improved and unimproved real estate may be diminished during the mining process as some prospective buyers would not purchase these properties. The area proposed to be expanded for mining has been used as a gravel source for many years however, so it could be assumed that because residential building has encroached around this site, those purchasers did not find the use objectionable. It may be however, that crushers and/or asphalt plants were not in operation when they were investigating the property purchase.</p> <p>To successfully argue that taxable value has been affected, (decreased), the appeal process must be followed through the local and state level. To this date, there has not been a reduction in taxable value of property affected by opencut mineral mining.</p>
15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	[Y] The operation will require periodic site evaluations by DSL staff until such time as the site is successfully reclaimed to the required post-mining use. However, these evaluations are usually performed in conjunction with other area operations.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[Y] City/County zoning clearance has been obtained. Mining at this site will be concentrated in short, infrequent episodes responding to major projects. Overall or long term impacts on tourists along Hwy 93 are not considered to be significant. Short term impacts on local residents may be significant.
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]

