

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Kovanda Gravel Site Proposed Implementation Date: Ongoing
 Proponent: Triple K Ranch, c/o Kerry Kovanda, Box 12, Columbus MT 59019

Type and Purpose of Action: The operator has applied for a 13.92-acre gravel site where they propose to properly prepare the area, remove about 200,000 cubic yards of gravel as projects demand, and reclaim the site to grassland. The estimated date of final reclamation is unknown.
 Location and County: About 1.0 mile west of Columbus in the SE20, 2S, 20E, Stillwater 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 a flat area a couple hundred feet back from the edge of the first low bench above the Yellowstone River in the sedimentary plains portion of the state. Soil material is ample, with 6-8" of soil over 30-36" overburden. The operator has committed to salvaging the soil and overburden and replacing a minimum of 18 inches of soil material. 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 - The operator plans to leave the pit floor 18" above the water table and replace 18" of soil material, leaving a reclaimed surface 3' above the water table. 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 - This is an ongoing operation where most of the area has been disturbed. Surrounding land uses include the county road shop and a highway on the south side, and pasture and hayland on the other sides. The postmining land use will be non-irrigated 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. A portion of it borders a state highway that most likely receives light use since the interstate is nearby. There are no residences nearby. The site 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
<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 state highway to haul gravel to the various project areas. 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>

