

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Costin **Proposed Implementation Date:** Sept 96

Proponent: Prince, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, sort, stockpile, and transport 200,000 tons of sand and gravel from a 39.51 acre site for a highway overlay project. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses. There will be an asphalt plant on site.

Location: NE¼, Sec. 20, T32N, R33E **County:** Phillips

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>[N] The proposed operation is located in sands and gravels of a glacial/alluvial nature. The soils have been homogenized due to past cultivation. The topsoil is of a silty sandy gravel texture and is approximately 6 inches deep. There is an average of 1 foot of overburden. The topsoil and overburden would be stripped and stockpiled separately and after regrading and replacement of the overburden the soil would be evenly replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade 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] The nearest surface water sources are two irrigation canals. One of the canals is located 100 feet to the southwest of the proposed operation and the other is located approximately 100 feet to the northwest of the proposed permit area. The operation will be mined to a maximum depth of 12 feet and is above the depth to the water table which is estimated to be 14-16 feet below land surface. Fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The design of the proposed operation is such that any runoff would drain inward on the site thus avoiding any off site sedimentation or erosion.</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 would be degraded. The proponent must comply with air quality standards and Air Quality Permits obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher and asphalt plant.</p>

<p>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[N] The majority of the site has been altered by previous farming activities and the plant species consist of very sparse crested wheatgrass and alfalfa. Some native species of grass including bluebunch wheatgrass, fescue, prairie junegrass, and green needle have invaded the site. The landowner has requested that alfalfa be reseeded on the pit floor and crested wheatgrass be seeded on the slopes. 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.</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]</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] Ground and literature searches were conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitat were found on the site. No wetlands were present.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[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.</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]</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>

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	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>[Y] There will be increased hazards because of equipment activity and hauling of the sand and gravel. The applicant must comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations however, proper precautions will be taken to avoid accidents. There are natural gaslines located on the south and east edges of the property. Montana Dakota Utilities has been contacted about the gaslines and they have been marked. No equipment will be permitted to cross the pipelines. Soil and overburden would be allowed to be stockpiled on the lines and no mining activity would be allowed within 30 feet of the gaslines.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] Currently the majority of the site lacks acceptable vegetative cover to make it productive rangeland. Upon the site being successfully reclaimed the site will have a permanent grass cover.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>[N] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.</p>
<p>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>[N] County Zoning clearance has been obtained.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

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, Phillips County Commissioners & Weed Control District & Montana Dakota Utilities

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; Air Quality Division for crusher permit.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the small amount of disturbance and 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 No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke

Title: Mine Reclamation Specialist

Approved By: _____

Title: _____

Signature

Date