

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Mitchell **Proposed Implementation Date:** Fall 96

**Proponent:** Wertz Sand & Gravel

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 100,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 5.0 acre site for supplying the local market with concrete and other sand and gravel products. This will be an expansion of an existing site. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses.

**Location:** NE¼, Sec. 33, T7N, R2E **County:** Broadwater

**N = Not present or No Impact will occur.**

**Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts).**

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| RESOURCE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | [Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:</b> 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 Tertiary Valley fill. The topsoil is a Chinook sandy loam and is approximately 12 inches deep. The overburden is used as a product. The topsoil would be stripped, stockpiled and replaced after regrading. Microorganisms should invade the site.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:</b> 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 within 1,000 feet. There is a water well on the site and the depth to low water is 65 feet and to highwater is 60 feet. The site will be mined to a depth of approximately 15 feet. Any 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. If needed straw bales, earthen berms and/or silt fences would be installed to control any off site erosion or sedimentation.</p> |
| <p><b>3. AIR QUALITY:</b> Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>                                                                                                          | <p>[Y] At times a crusher is brought into the site for crushing. An Air Quality Permit is needed from the Montana Dept. Of Environmental Quality when the crusher is on site and active and the requirements of the permit must be adhered to.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</b> Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>                                                                                                            | <p>[N] The site contains native vegetation consisting of bluebunch wheatgrass, needle and thread, crested wheatgrass, and prairie sand reed. The site will be reseeded with a combination of native and nonnative species upon recontouring and retopsoiling.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| <p><b>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</b><br/>Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>                                                                       | <p>[N]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p><b>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b><br/>Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?</p> | <p>[N] A ground and literature search were conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p><b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> 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><b>8. AESTHETICS:</b> 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><b>9. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:</b> 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><b>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b><br/>Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>                                                                                               | <p>[N]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION**

| <b>RESOURCE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| <p><b>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</b> 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. There is a major power transmission line through the site and Montana Power Company has a 15-foot easement through the site and no mining can be done on an area of a diameter of 15 feet surrounding the power poles. Proper precautions will be taken to avoid accidents.</p> |
| <p><b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>                                                                          | <p>[Y] The proposed operation will result in 10 acres of land not being able to be grazed until such time as the site being successfully reclaimed and permanent grass cover established.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <p><b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>                                                                             | <p>[N]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>                                                                                                   | <p>[N]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>15. DEMANDS FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:</b> 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><b>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</b> 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><b>17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:</b> Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p> | <p>[N]</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| <b>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b><br>Will the project add to the population and require additional housing? | [N] |
| <b>19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</b> Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?                  | [N] |
| <b>20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:</b> Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?                          | [N] |
| <b>21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</b>                                                                          | [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 & Broadwater County Commissioners & Weed Control District

**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.

**25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts:** Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the site is located in an area surrounded by various commercial and industrial businesses.

**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: Steve Welch

Title: Opencut Bureau Chief

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Signature

Date