

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Brewer Gravel Site Proposed Implementation Date: Ongoing
 Proponent: Prince, Inc., Box 440, Forsyth MT 59327

Type and Purpose of Action: The operator has applied for 20.52-acre amendment to their existing 45-acre contract. Almost all of the total 65.52-acre area has been disturbed. This amendment straightens out longstanding questions about the total area that should be under contract, and gives Prince and the Department a restarting place for tracking this operation. The site is located on the edge of a high bench that overlooks the broad Yellowstone River valley low. The site is bordered by an interstate on the south and a highway and railroad run between the site and the river which is at least 1,000 feet to the north. The site is well-suited for gravel mining due to its rural location and non-impactive characteristics. The life of the site is unknown, but with amendments it could be extended many years.

Location and County: About 5.0 miles west of Forsyth in the E24, T6N, R39E, and SW19, T6N, R40E, Rosebud County.

N = Not present or insignificant impact.
 Y = Significant 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 exceptional mining and reclamation considerations?	N - The site is on the edge of a high bench above the Yellowstone River valley floor. The site is in the sedimentary plains portion of the state. No unusual geologic features were observed during site visits. A good quantity of soil material exists in several stockpiles on site. Soil cover won't be needed on a significant area that will be reclaimed to livestock feedlot. Prince continues to salvage soil and overburden as the site expands. There are no exceptional 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 exceptional 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. The site is basically a high, dry bench. There are no exceptional mining and reclamation considerations.

<p>3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Do air quality regulations apply?</p>	<p>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>
<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 exceptional mining and reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>N - The area being expanded into is an abandoned trailer court that has reverted to grassland. The postmining land use will be feedlot and grassland.</p> <p>No rare plants or rare vegetative communities were observed during the site visit. If the Montana Natural Heritage Program report indicates such resources in the area, the Department will take necessary steps to ensure protection.</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>There are no exceptional mining and reclamation considerations.</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 - No common species or evidence of their occupation were observed during the site visit. Neither were rare species or evidence of their occupation observed. If the Montana Natural Heritage program report indicates such resources in the area, the Department will take necessary steps to ensure protection.</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. If the Montana Natural Heritage program report indicates such resources in the area, the Department will take necessary steps to ensure protection.</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 - No cultural resources were observed during the site visits. Almost the entire area has been disturbed by previous mining operations. If cultural resources are found during the operation, the operator has committed to routing any disturbance 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? What facilities will be on site? Will there be excessive noise or light?</p>	<p>N - The site is in a rural area, next to, but only briefly visible from, the interstate. The site is not visible from the highway on the north side. It's not visible from populated areas, and noise and light should not 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 a \$61,370 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 increase health and safety risks in the area if the operator/landowner manage the site in a responsible manner. 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 - Industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities in the area will not be significantly affected by the operation.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move, or eliminate jobs?</p>	<p>N - The quantity or distribution of employment in the project area will not be significantly affected by the operation.</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>N - Local and state tax revenues have not been significantly affected by similar operations in the state.</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 highway to carry mineral to 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>

