

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Nevin **Proposed Implementation Date:** Fall 1997

**Proponent:** A.M. Welles, Inc.

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, crush, and transport 8,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 1.6 acre site for a Dept. of Transportation maintenance stockpile. The gravel will be conveyed directly to the Dept. of Transportation stockpile site located immediately to the west of the proposed mine site. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respread the topsoil on the slopes, and reseeding the slopes with grasses. The pit floor would remain unsoiled as the landowner will build a mechanical shop and store equipment at the site.

**Location:** SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Sec. 8, T6S, R1W **County:** Madison

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

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

<b>IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
<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 the foothills of the Tobacco Root Mountains 2.0 mile southwest of Ennis. The gravels are located in Tertiary valley fill. The site is currently used for equipment storage and has several buildings constructed on it. The equipment and buildings are in areas previously excavated for gravel. The soil is a sandy silty loam with pebbles, approximately 6" deep. All available soil materials will be salvaged, stockpiled, and respread on the slopes upon completion of regrading. Soil microbes will recolonize the soils. There is no overburden.</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 located within 1,000 feet of the site. The existing pit is approximately 16' deep and the proposed operation will continue to mine at that existing pit floor elevation. The well on the property is east of the proposed operation and is 150 feet deep. There is water right information (Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation) for two properties to the northeast of this pit. These wells are considerably lower in elevation than the proposed operation and their static water levels are 30 feet and 55 feet. Any bulk fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The proponent will not need to obtain a Stormwater Discharge Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality, but will implement best management practices to prevent any off site erosion or sedimentation. There should be no impact to any ground or surface water.</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] Air quality will be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and an Air Quality Permit obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality.</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 vegetation has already been removed by prior activities at the site. The regraded slopes will be seeded with native grasses. A literature search was done by the Montana Natural Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified and none were identified during a ground search.</p>
<p><b>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</b> Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>[N] Activities by man at the site preclude the use by wildlife.</p>
<p><b>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> 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. No wetlands were present.</p>
<p><b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] The site has been totally disturbed by previous mining and construction activities. Any cultural resources which would have been present have been destroyed by previous mining activities.</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> 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>
<b>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</b> Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[Y] There will be increased hazards because of the 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.
<b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
<b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
<b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
<b>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:</b> Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	[N] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area
<b>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</b> Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] County zoning clearance has been obtained.
<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?	[N]
<b>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b> 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:** No action: Site would remain as is. Sand and gravel would be hauled from a greater distance increasing fuel use, gaseous emissions and project costs.

**23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted:** State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Heritage Program, Madison County Commissioners and Weed Management Board.

**24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed:** Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for Air Quality Permit; Mine Safety and Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Labor and Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit.

**25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts:** Impacts are unlikely to be significant because of the small amount of disturbance, short duration of the project, and mitigated measures proposed.

**Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:**

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke      Title: Program Coordinator, Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau

Approved By: Steve Welch      Title: Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau Chief

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Signature

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Date