

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Plains Rifle Range

Proposed Implementation Date: August, 1998

Proponent: Eastern Sanders County Sportsmen Club, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to mine, stockpile and haul a total of 20,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a two acre site which is located 5 miles west of the town of Plains. The estimated start-up date is August, 1998, and will result in a site reclaimed to a rifle range with 2:1 slopes in an amphitheater shape to act as a backstop for bullets downrange from the shooting bench rests. Much of the area has been mined for gravel in the past, and part of the area is disturbed from past landfill reclamation.

Location N¹/₂ SW¹/₄ Sec. 9, T20N, R26W

County: Sanders

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>[Y] The site is located in a scenic but otherwise un-unique area. The mine is located in the foothills of the Cabinet Mountains above the Clark Fork River. The deposit consists of stratified layers of alluvium and glacial outwash sand, gravel and cobbles that cover the deeper bedrock.</p> <p>The Clark Fork River occupies the broad, flat river valley below, between the rocks of the Cabinet Mountains to the north and Coeur D'alene Mountains to the south. The 600 million to 1500 million year old Precambrian Belt Series sandstone and limestone rocks were sculpted into their present profiles by alpine and continental glaciers.</p> <p>The topsoil is approximately eight inches of clayey silt loam. All soil material will be salvaged and stockpiled away from the affected land. Following mining, grading and ripping, the soils will be replaced on the pit slopes and seeded. Microbes will re-colonize 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 Clark Fork River is located 1/4 mile to the southwest which will not be impacted by mining. The site will be mined to a depth of 20 feet which is well above groundwater.</p> <p>Special precautions will be taken to minimize possible contamination of the groundwater. Any accidental spills or leaks from equipment will be excavated and disposed. No crusher or batch plants are planned for the site. With these precautions, the quality and quantity of the groundwater should not be adversely impacted.</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] Loaders, dozers and trucking equipment typically cause dusty conditions in disturbed soil sites. The operator must take whatever action necessary to reduce dust during hot, dry periods.</p>
<p>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[Y] Vegetation in the area consists of timberland. However, the site has been extensively altered by logging and landfill restoration. All vegetation will be removed and the area will be replanted with grass species suitable to prevent soil erosion. There is a moderate infestation of spotted knapweed, a legally defined noxious weed. No rare or endangered plants have been identified in the area.</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] Although the area is used primarily for timber and rural residential occupation, it also supports populations of deer, bears, elk, rodents, song birds, coyotes, foxes, insects and various other animal species.</p> <p>The proposed mine will displace these species during mining activity, but most use will resume upon reclamation. Mining activities are not expected to significantly degrade wildlife populations. Seed head gall flies have been introduced to the tract to provide biological control of noxious weeds.</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>[Y] Bald eagles are known to range all along the Clark Fork River Valley, but no nesting sites are known on or near the proposed permit area. No adverse effects are anticipated on the eagles as a result of this proposed action.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] Although there are important cultural values in the general area, a surface reconnaissance did not discover any cultural, historical or archeological resources. The operator will give appropriate protection to any values or artifacts discovered in the affected area. If significant resources are found, the operation will be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be conducted. The State Historical Preservation Office will 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] The site is visible by the caretaker who lives across the road and to local traffic. However, reclamation will return the area to a visually acceptable landscape.</p> <p>There is noise from equipment such as dozers, loaders and truck traffic hauling to various areas. These impacts are intermittent and of relatively short duration. There is a temporary deterioration of aesthetics while the operation is under way.</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	[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] This activity should not significantly affect human health. The operator will employ proper precautions to avoid accidents.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] The site is currently used as a rifle range and will continue to be used that way during the mining phase except when workers or equipment are present.</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>

