

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Robert Garden

Proposed Implementation Date: Ongoing

Proponent: Wolf Creek Sand & Gravel, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine and, crush, stockpile, and transport 10,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 3-acre expansion of a 6.5-acre site for supplying the local area with sand and gravel products. The site will result in the expansion of an area previously mined and reclaimed as a pond. The site will be mined to a depth of 8 feet into the permanent water table. The reclaimed use would remain a pond for livestock and possible recreation. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, retopsoiling down to the high water mark and reseeding the topsoiled areas with grasses. Final reclamation would be completed by April 2005.

Location: NW¼ & SW¼, Sec. 28 & SE¼ & NW¼, Sec. 29, T27N, R44E **County:** Valley

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 their unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed operation is located in the Missouri River alluvial valley in sands and gravels of the Quaternary to Recent geologic age. The site was mined originally by the Great Northern Railroad prior to the advent of any reclamation laws. The proponent would continue to mine the site by increasing the size of an existing pond from which sand and gravel was mined in the past. The site would be mined to a depth of 10 feet. There is very little, if any, soil on the site due to past mining activities. Any soil found would be salvaged and stockpiled and after regrading would be replaced down to the high water mark. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, unusual geologic features or special reclamation considerations.</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] There are several ponds at the location created by past mining at the site. The proposed operation would expand an existing pond to a depth of 8 feet into the permanent water table. Prior to mining, the pond would be dewatered with pumps and the water pumped from into one of the other ponds. The proposed expansion would be to the north.</p> <p>Water from the existing wash plant is discharged into one of the ponds. There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the proposed operation. Any bulk fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The proponent would 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.</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 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 for the crusher.</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 vegetation consists mainly of scattered grasses, cottonwood trees and willows. No rare plants or cover types 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] The site may be utilized to some extent by deer, rodents, and various species of birds.</p>

6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present?	[N] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] Any cultural resources which would have been present would have been destroyed by previous mining activities. Should a significant archaeological or historical value be found, the operation would be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be made. The State Historic Preservation Office would be promptly notified.
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?	[N]
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?	[N]
10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[N]

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: 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.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: 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
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N]
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?	[N]

