

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Wilken

**Proposed Implementation Date:** Winter 1999

**Proponent:** Perfect Concrete, Inc.

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 13,500 tons of sand and gravel from a 1.5 acre site for use by Montana Dept. of Transportation for highway maintenance. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grazing. The proposed operation is 3 miles west of Three Forks. The site would be reclaimed by June of 1999.

**Location:** NW¼, Sec. 23, T2N, R1E

**County:** Broadwater

**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><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><b>[N]</b> The proposed operation is located on the edge of a terrace. The proposed operation would be an expansion of a gravel pit mined in the past numerous times with the eastern end having been reclaimed. The facility and stockpiles will be located in the eastern area of the existing pit. The proponent will mine the western edge of the existing pit to a depth the same as the reclaimed area to the east. The topsoil is a sandy loam up to 12 inches deep. The proposed mine area has up to 6 inches of overburden, which is of a silty clay nature. The topsoil and the overburden would be stripped and stockpiled separately and after regrading the overburden and then the topsoil would be evenly replaced. The facility and stockpile area is devoid of soil due to past mining, but contains some plant growth. Therefore, the upper 6 inches of the area would be stripped and salvaged. Microorganisms should reinvade the soil. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, unusual geologic features, or special reclamation considerations.</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><b>[N]</b> The depth to the water table is estimated to be greater than 50 feet below the current pit floor. The seasonal high and low water tables are unknown. The proposed operation would be mined starting at the foot of the existing west slope and mine to the west. The depth of mining would be a maximum of 14 feet. The landowner's domestic water well is approximately 200 feet south of the proposed. There would be no impact to the groundwater. Any accidental spills of petroleum-based products would be immediately cleaned up and the contaminated material properly disposed. The site upon reclamation would be daylighted to the east into the existing pit and to the south and north. The slope to the west would be regraded to 3:1 or flatter. There would be no impact to any 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><b>[Y]</b> Air quality would be degraded. The proponent will need to obtain Air Quality Permits from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality as processing facilities are involved with the proposed operation.</p>

<p><b>4. VEGETATION COVERS, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</b> Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[N] The vegetation on the previously mined area is crested wheatgrass. Blue grama, fescue, and bluebunch wheatgrass are present on the area not previously mined. Both native and non native grasses would be seeded on the site upon recontouring and retopsoiling. A literature search was done by the Montana National Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified as present at this site and none were identified during a ground search. The program did note the presence of Ute Ladies' tresses as present in a seep zone above a backwater sough of the Madison River. This plant would not be present on this site as it is a wetland plant.</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] Various mammals, birds, and reptiles occasionally traverse the site.</p>
<p><b>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are any federally listed threatened or an endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?</p>	<p>[N] The Montana Natural Heritage Program identified as the milk snake being present approximately 2 miles south, near Three Forks and a bird rookery of great blue herons as being present in cottonwood trees in the floodplain of the Jefferson River. A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered a species or identified habitats were found on the site. No wetlands are present.</p>
<p><b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] Due to the amount of previous disturbance the Montana Department of Transportation did not require a cultural survey on the site. 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] The site is visible from Interstate 90, but it is a short term operation and will be reclaimed by June of 1999.</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>

<p align="center"><b>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b></p>	
<p align="center"><b>RESOURCE</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b></p>
<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, 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>[N] 1.5 acres will be taken out of limited grazing until such time as the site is successfully reclaimed.</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. DEMAND 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>

