

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Dewit

**Proposed Implementation Date:** Spring 99

**Proponent:** Valley County

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, screen, stockpile and transport 20,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 7.0 acre site for use on county roads. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grazing.

**Location:** SE¼, Sec. 26, T34N, R39E

**County:** Valley

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

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

| IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT   |  |
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| 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>[N] The proposed operation is located on the edge of a gently sloping hill. This hill is bisected by a small draw. The topsoil is of a cobbly silt loam texture and varies in depth from 6 to 12 inches. There is no overburden. The topsoil would be stripped and stockpiled and after regrading would be evenly replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the soil. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils, 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>[N] There estimated depth to the water table is estimated to be greater than 100 feet below the proposed elevation of the pit floor. The seasonal high and low water table are unknown. The proposed operation would be mined to a depth of 15 feet. There would be no impact to the groundwater. There is no surface water within 1,000 feet. Fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The site upon reclamation would be daylighted to the south, east, and south. The regraded slope to the north would be 3:1 or flatter. Silt fences, earthen berms, or straw bales would be installed if necessary to prevent any off site sedimentation or erosion. There would be no impact to 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 would be degraded. The proponent would need to get an Air Quality Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality.</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>[Y] The vegetation on the site consists of native grasses and forbs. Native and nonnative species of grasses will be seeded onto 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 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] Various mammals, birds, and reptiles occasionally traverse the site. Approximately 2.5 miles west of the proposed operation, the Montana Natural Heritage Program reported that on July 24, 1997 12 adult Common Terns were observed on the banks of Wards Reservoir. The proposed operation would have no impact on the terns.</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] Ground and literature searches were conducted and no threatened or endangered a species or identified habitats were found on the site. No wetlands are present. See 5 above.</p>  |

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| <b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?  | <b>[N]</b> A cultural survey was conducted on the site and no cultural resources were found. 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. |
| <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?                                      | <b>[N]</b> The site is visible from a county road, but reclamation would be concurrent with mining.  |
| <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? | <b>[N]</b>   |
| <b>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?   | <b>[N]</b>   |

| <b>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b>  |   |
|---|---|
| <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?   | <b>[Y]</b> 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. |
| <b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?  | <b>[N]</b> 7.0 acres will be taken out of grazing until such time as the site is successfully reclaimed.  |
| <b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.   | <b>[N]</b>  |
| <b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?   | <b>[N]</b>  |
| <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?                                    | <b>[N]</b> 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?  | <b>[N]</b> 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? | <b>[N]</b>  |
| <b>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b> Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?   | <b>[N]</b>  |
| <b>19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</b> Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?   | <b>[N]</b>  |

