

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Vaskey

Proposed Implementation Date: Spring 1999

Proponent: Judith Basin County

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 10,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 2.0-acre site to repair county roads. The proponent would salvage soils, mine sand and gravel, recontour, reseed and reseed the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grassland. Final reclamation on the site would be completed by September of 1999.

Location: NW¼, Sec. 23, T18N, R7E

County: Cascade

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 proposed site is located approximately 6 miles north of Raynesford and approximately ½ mile southwest of the Vaskey farm headquarters. The site is located on a gently rolling hill, which slopes gently to the north to Marion Coulee.</p> <p>The soil profile consists of approximately 9 inches of a clay loam. There is no overburden. The soil would be stripped and salvaged and after regrading it would be replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the site.</p> <p>There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, no 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 no water wells within 1,000 feet. Marion Coulee, an intermittent stream, is approximately 1,000 feet to the north. The water table is estimated to be greater than 100 feet. The site would be mined to a depth of 8 feet.</p> <p>Any accidental spills of petroleum-based products would be immediately picked up and properly disposed of. If necessary, the applicant would install straw bales and/or silt fence to control any off site erosion or sedimentation. There should be no impact to ground or surface water sources.</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>[N] There would be an increase in airborne particulates while the soil is being salvaged, the gravel being crushed and hauled and soil replaced. The applicant would need to secure an Air Quality Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality prior to crushing activities and must abide with all applicable air quality guidelines. Spray bars will be placed on the crusher to suppress dust. The hard stand areas, soil stockpiles, and haul roads would be watered as necessary.</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] Existing vegetation would be removed with the soil. Some roots may remain viable in the soil stockpile and regenerate upon replacement. The applicant would seed all affected land to species compatible with the post mine land use. The site currently contains crested wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass and alfalfa. The site would be seeded with native and nonnative species of grasses. There are no threatened or endangered plants present.</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 location of the proposed operation precludes the significant use of wildlife, although it would be expected to receive transient use by various avian species, deer and rodents.</p>
<p>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR</p>	<p>[N] The Montana Natural Heritage Program has not identified any</p>

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	threatened or endangered plant or animal species present on this site. A ground search did not reveal the presence of any federal listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat or species of special concern. There are no wetlands present on the site of the proposed operation.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A cultural resource survey was done and no resources were found. 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] Zoning clearance has been obtained.

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] The use of heavy mining and hauling equipment will increase the risk of accidents. However, the applicant must comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations and it is expected that safety considerations will be given the utmost attention.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] 2.0 acres would be temporarily removed from grassland until such time as the site is fully reclaimed.
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 would require periodic site evaluations by DEQ staff, however they would generally be conducted in conjunction with other regional sites.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] Zoning clearance has been secured from Cascade County.
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]
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]

