ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: DNRC/Craig **Proposed Implementation Date:** July 99
Proponent: Jim Gilman Excavating, Inc.
Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport up to 80,000 cubic yards of gravel from a 12 acre site for a Montana Dept. of Transportation projects on Highway 287 and Interstate 15. There would be an asphalt plant setup at the site. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grazing. Reclamation would be completed by June 30, 2001.

Location: NE, Sec. 16, T15N, R3W **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**
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?	**[N]** The proposed operation is located on the lower slope of a butte in sands and gravels deposited during the Quaternary era. The area has an average of 6 inches of silty textured topsoil which would be salvaged and respread after recontouring. The facility and stockpile area would be located in an area previously mined and reclaimed. This area has approximately 6 inches of soil and this soil would be stripped and salvaged and would be placed back on the area upon cleanup and ripping of any compacted areas. There is no overburden. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, unusual geologic features, or special reclamation considerations.
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?	**[N]** There are no water wells or surface water within 1,000 feet of the site. The water table is estimated to be greater then 50 feet below the elevation of the pit floor. The site would be mined to a depth of 15 feet. Any leaks or spills of petroleum-based products would be immediately cleaned up and properly disposed of. The design of the proposed operation is such that any runoff would drain inward on the site thus avoiding any off site sedimentation or erosion.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	**[Y]** Air quality would be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards, and Air Quality Permits obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher and asphalt plant. A water truck would be onsite to control any dust on the access road and facility area.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	**[N]** The vegetation in the area of the proposed operation contains big sage, various wheatgrasses, prairie junegrass, Yucca and prickly pear cactus, green needle grass and fescue. Native and non-native grass species would be seeded upon recontouring and retopsoiling but will be different than what is currently growing on the site. 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.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	**[N]**
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?	**[N]** Ground and literature searches were conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitat were found on the site. There are no wetlands present.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	**[N]** The area has been impacted by previous mining and crushing activities and no cultural resource survey was required by Steve Platt, archaeologist for the Montana Dept. of Transportation. 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.
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 equipment activity and hauling of the sand and gravel. The applicant must comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations however, and 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]** County Zoning clearance has been obtained. The area of the proposed operation is not zoned.
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]**
20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	**[N]**
21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	**[N]**

22. Alternatives Considered:

Alternative # 1: Denial. The owner of the gravel resource would be denied full utilization of his property at this time.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program & Lewis & Clark County Weed Control District and Planning Dept., Steve Platt, Archaeologist, Montana Dept. of Transportation, & Bob Vlahovich, Montana Dept. of Natural Resources

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Mine Safety & Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit: Air Quality Division for crusher and asphalt plant permits & Montana Dept. of Natural Resources for lease on state owned land.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the small amount of disturbance and short duration of the project.

26. Regulatory Impact on Private Property: The analysis conducted in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

[ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [X] No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke Title: Supervisor, Opencut Mining Program, IEMB

Approved By: Steve Welch Title: Bureau Chief, Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau

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Signature Date