

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Barron Ranch

**Proposed Implementation Date:** May, 2000

**Proponent:** J & S Construction, Inc.

**Type and Purpose of Action:** Proponent proposes to mine 10,000 cubic yards of borrow material from a 2-acre site for use in construction of a new bridge over the Stillwater River 1 mile north of Absarokee. Reclamation would be achieved by regrading the site, spreading salvaged topsoil and reseeding with pasture grasses. Reclamation would be completed by November of 2000.

**Location:** NW¼ Sec. 31 T3S R19E

**County:** Stillwater

**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>[ N ] Soils are shallow [Work Series.] They formed in alluvium derived from shale, sandstone, and till. This site has a cobbly loam surface layer and silty clay loam subsoil. Cobbles cover about 20% of the surface.</p> <p>The soils are not fragile, compactible or unstable. There are no 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] High water table is 10 feet and mining depth will be 5 feet. During operations a sedimentation pond will be constructed at the southern boundary.</p> <p>Land will be graded to a 5:1 slope at reclamation. A drainage ditch and culvert lie immediately to the south of the site which conveys runoff under the county road to the Stillwater River 500 feet to the southeast. This naturalized ditch would capture any sediment that might reach it during the reclamation phase of the project.</p> <p>No fuel or other contaminants will be stored on-site.</p> <p>The landowner's well 300 feet to the west will not be affected by the shallow mining.</p> <p>The proposed operation should not impact any surface or groundwater resources.</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>[N] Water will be used for dust control during operations.</p>
<p><b>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</b> Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[ N ] Present vegetation is sod-forming, irrigated pasture grasses. Except for surface cobbles, vegetative cover is excellent. No weeds were present. Several mature willow trees along the southern edge of the site will not be disturbed. No rare plants were seen.</p> <p>A literature search was done by the Montana National Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified as being present on the site and none were observed 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 ] The area has been an irrigated pasture for many years. The willow trees adjacent to the site, and the natural vegetation across the county road will not be impacted. Sediment off the 200 feet of haul road will route to the ditches along the county road and then to the naturalized ditch mentioned above in Section 2.</p>
<p><b>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?</p>	<p>[ N ] The Montana Natural Heritage Program did a literature search and no federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat or species of special concern were present and none were observed during a ground search. There are wetlands present in the area. There should be no affect on the vegetation or water quality or the wetland.</p>

<b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[ N ] Steve Platt, archaeologist for the Montana Dept. of Transportation, did not require a cultural resource survey. 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?	[ N ] Site is largely screened by large willows located between the pit and the road. Soil berms to the west will obscure the view from the landowners home, the only nearby residence.
<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?	[ N ]
<b>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[ N ]

### IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<b>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</b> Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[ N ] Both the entrance and exit haul roads intersect the county road at locations with good visibility. Location is within ½ mile of the bridge project.
<b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[ N ] The project will temporarily decrease 2 acres of pasture production, but after reclamation, it will be restored.
<b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[ N ]
<b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[ N ]
<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?	[ N ] Because the new bridge is replacing an old one, traffic should remain about the same. 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?	[ Y ] The project complies with the existing zoning and county master plan.
<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?	[ N ]
<b>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b> Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[ N ]
<b>19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</b> Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[ N ]
<b>20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:</b> Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[ N ]

