

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Pinnow #2

Proposed Implementation Date: July 1, 00

Proponent: Fallon County

Type and Purpose of Action: The county proposes to mine 80,000 cu. yds. of gravel off a 40-acre site. This project would last approximately 8 years. The gravel would be used for normal road maintenance. The site would be reclaimed to pasture grasses, thus maintaining its present use.

Location: NE¹/₄NE 34 Sec 34 T6N R60E

County: Fallon

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>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>[N] The alluvial soils are of the "Gerdrum" series, ranging from clay loam to loam overlying a gravelly substratum. They are built from Cretaceous sandstone and shale terrace material. Soil depths in test pits average 9 inches of loam over 16 inches of clay overburden. The soils have no peculiarities that would impede reclamation of the site.</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] No perennial streams are in the vicinity. A small intermittent stream bed that lies adjacent to the site would not be affected by this project.</p> <p>Groundwater measurement of the Pinnow well show that static water level is at 80 feet. Two trailer houses to the south have wells slightly shallower. Test pits did not intercept groundwater. Mining will proceed to a depth of 20 feet, leaving the pit floor considerably above the water table. No impacts to ground water are anticipated.</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] The crusher is permitted by the Air Quality section of DEQ. Sprayers on the crusher reduce dust emission to approved levels. A water truck would be used to control dust from vehicular traffic. No special airsheds exist in this part of Montana. No impacts are anticipated.</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] The site is presently farmed, growing a hay crop of alfalfa/grass mix. No native vegetation or cover types exist on-site.</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 occasional antelope and deer graze the field. Other small mammals and birds are also present.</p> |
| <p>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?</p> | <p>[N] The Natural Heritage Program has no listing of any endangered, threatened, or species of special concern in the area.</p> |
| <p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p> | <p>[N] The site has been plowed many times. No artifacts were found on the surface or in the test pits. No subterranean sites were identified in the test pits or road ditches adjacent to the site. However, if a resource were uncovered during operations, activities would be shifted to another location for a reasonable length of time so that an assessment and recommendation could be made concerning the find.</p> |
| <p>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?</p> | <p>[N] The site lies on flat plains several miles off the Baker-Ekalaka highway. Two trailer houses are located several hundred yards from the southeast corner of the site. Soil berms along the southern boundary of the site would screen the operation from the residences.</p> |

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| 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? | [N] |
| 12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities? | [N] A temporary interruption of farming activities on the site would occur if the project were approved. After reclamation farming would be resumed. |
| 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] |
| 16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect? | [N] |
| 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. This alternative would result in denying the use of a resource to the landowner, and in an increased safety risk to the driving public where the road maintenance would not occur.

Alternative 2: Alternate location of the site. Since another pit location would be farther from the proposed use sites of the product, transportation costs and risks would increase unnecessarily from this alternative.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office, Weed Control District, Fallon County Commissioners

