

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Skelton

Proposed Implementation Date: Summer 2000

Proponent: Prince, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, stockpile and transport 110,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel material from a 29.67-acre site for the reconstruction of Highway 87. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses. There would be an asphalt plant involved with the operation. The reclaimed use would be livestock grazing. The site would be reclaimed by October of 2001.

Location: NE¼, Sec. 20, T16N, R12E

County: Judith Basin

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>[N] The proposed operation is located on bench north of Skull Creek approximately ½ mile south of Stanford. The site has never been impacted by mining, but immediately to the north there are several gravel pits, which have been either reclaimed or in various stages of reclamation. The Stanford airport is to the north. The soils are a sandy loam and average 6 inches deep. There is approximately 2 feet of a clayey sandy overburden. After regrading the overburden and soil would be replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the soil. 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] Skull Creek is approximately 1,000 feet south of the proposed operation. There are no wells reported in the immediate area by the Montana bureau of Mines and Geology. The proponent estimates the depth to the water table at the proposed pit site at 38 feet. The site would be mined to a depth of 14 feet. Best Management Practices would be used to prevent any off site sedimentation or erosion. The proposed operation would not impact surface or ground water resources.</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>[Y] Air quality would be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards. The proponent would need to secure air quality permits for the crusher and asphalt plant. A water truck would be used to control any dust on the haul road, soil and material stockpiles, and facility area. Spray bars would be utilized on the crusher.</p>
<p>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[Y] The vegetation on the site consists mainly of various wheatgrasses. After regrading and topsoiling the site would be reseeded with native and non-native grasses. 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>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>[N]</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 Montana Natural Heritage Program did a literature search and no federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were identified as being present on the site. A ground search did not reveal any threatened or endangered species or identified habitat or species of special concern on the site. No wetlands are present.</p>

<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] No cultural resource survey was required on the site as modern man had previously disturbed it by cultivation. 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.</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 operation as proposed is readily visible from the highway, but is in close proximity to three residences. The three residences have been contacted and do not object to the operation. This operation would be short term and would be reclaimed by October of 2001. The hours of operation of the crusher would be 20 hours per day Monday - Friday and the asphalt plant would operate daylight to dark Monday - Friday. The proponent would have spray bars on the crusher. A water truck would be onsite to apply water on all material and soil stockpile areas, haul road and the facility area.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>	
<p>RESOURCE</p>	<p>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</p>
<p>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[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, proper precautions will be taken to avoid accidents.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] There will be a loss of 29.67 acres of livestock grazing until the site is successfully reclaimed.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>[N] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.</p>
<p>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

