

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SITE NAME: McDonald APPLICANT: Richland County
 LOCATION: SE of Sec 6, T27N R48E COUNTY: Roosevelt

PROPOSED ACTION: Richland County proposes to mine 20,000 yards of well graded gravel from the 22-acre first phase of a 148-acre permit area. The site is about 400 yards north of Highway 2, and 1½ miles north of the Wolf Point Airport. Access is from an existing gravel road to the east. The product would be used to maintain roads in the north part of Richland County.

Reclamation would be completed to rangeland by October 2016. No bond is required.

A: Significant Unavoidable Impacts B: Insignificant as a result of conditioned mitigation C: Insignificant as proposed
 L: Long term Impacts S: Short Term Impacts

						POTENTIAL IMPACTS					
						A	B	C	L	S	EXPLANATION
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT											
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>								X	X		The site would be on the Missouri valley flats and the gravel outwash plains just to the north. Some of the site has been previously mined by Roosevelt County under a short form. There is a small gravel stockpile. Some soil was salvaged and stockpiled. There is a small pit about 10 feet deep. Mining would generally proceed from that pit on the valley floor northward into the outwash hill. In chasing the gravel the pit may be deepened to a maximum of 25 feet.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability								X	X		This is well graded water-born outwash material with good plasticity. The highwall stands vertically in the previously mined area. This site is 1½ miles north of the Wolf Point Airport and about 400 yards north of Highway 2.
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution								X		X	The site seems to have good topsoil approximately one foot thick. Overburden in some places is quite deep. The soil is a sandy loam texture developed in the outwash material. Soil salvage and replacement would result in minimal adverse impacts to the soil resource. Average annual precipitation is about 14 inches.
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality; Quantity; Distribution								X		X	The closest well in the area was drilled in April of 2001 at the landowner's home. It is 45 feet deep well with a static water level at 36 feet. Mining would stay 10 feet above the water elevation. No groundwater would be impacted. The closest surface water is the Missouri River and associated oxbows: Both are 2 miles to the south of the proposed site. The site would drain internally so there would be no runoff to impact any surface water. There would be no impact to water quality or quantity from mining.

						POTENTIAL IMPACTS					
						A	B	C	L	S	EXPLANATION
5. <u>AIR</u> ; Quality								X		X	No crusher would be used. Fugitive dust would be controlled with the use of water trucks. Air quality impact would be minimal.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources											The Missouri Breaks Megasite is within a few miles of the proposed site. That ecological region stretches from Wolf Point and Circle to Malta, and south to Melstone and Rock Springs. There would be no impact to this region.
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT											
1. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; quantity, quality, species								X		X	The premine condition of the site is typical for the area: mixed grassland with some sagebrush. Mining would have minimal impact because of the short duration of the project (estimated date of final reclamation is October, 2016. Reclamation would be to a dryland mix. Reclamation would increase productivity because the previous disturbances would also be reclaimed. Although the proposed permit area of 148 acres is large, only 22 acres of the area is proposed for disturbance at this time.
2. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats								X		X	The site is scattered with deer and antelope sign. There is some sagebrush, but it does not provide any special sage grouse habitat. Mining would have minimal impact because of the relatively small area that would be disturbed at one time and the short timeframe for disturbance.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops Production								X		X	Mining would result in a minimal short term reduction of vegetation for grazing.
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT											
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> ; structures and mores								X		X	
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> uniqueness/diversity								X		X	
3. <u>POPULATION</u> ; quantity/diversity								X		X	Only the landowner's home is within a quarter mile of the site.
4. <u>HOUSING</u> ; quantity/distribution								X		X	
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY</u>								X		X	
6. <u>COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME</u>								X		X	
7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> ; quantity, distribution								X		X	Material from the site would help keep the county roads passable year round so that oil field development could continue without major interruption because of weather. Most of the oil field workers live in motels in Wolf Point, Culbertson, or Sidney.
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; state/local tax revenue								X		X	The oil fields are producing major income for employees through wages, and landowners, the county and state governments through royalties and taxation.
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ;								X		X	
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL</u> and <u>AGRICULTURAL</u> activities								X		X	

	POTENTIAL IMPACTS					EXPLANATION
	A	B	C	L	S	
11. <u>HISTORICAL and ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>			X		X	A walkover of the area did not reveal any artifacts or signs of occupation. No signs were evident at depth in the previously disturbed area. If during operations resources were to be discovered, activities would be halted, or possibly temporarily moved to another area until SHPO was contacted and the importance of the site was determined.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X		X	There are no residences or businesses nearby that would be disturbed by this project.
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS and GOALS</u> ; local and regional			X		X	
14. <u>DEMANDS on ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> of land, water, air and energy			X		X	
15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> ; networks and traffic flows			X		X	This material is for construction and maintenance of county roads.

REGULATORY IMPACT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY: The analysis done in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact. The Department does not plan to deny the application or impose conditions that would restrict the use of private property so as to constitute a taking.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Landowner, Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: Air Resources Management Bureau, Mining Safety and Health, Richland County Commissioners, Roosevelt County Weed Board, Roosevelt County Commissioners

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: Denial

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PREPARATION OF AN EIS: Unnecessary, No Significant Impacts

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Prepared by Jo Stephen