

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
SCHELLINGER CONSTRUCTION
BEEHIVE BORROW SITE
LINCOLN COUNTY, MONTANA**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is required under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). An EA functions to identify, disclose, and analyze the impacts of a proposed action. This document may disclose impacts that have no legislatively required mitigation measures, or over which there is no regulatory authority.

The state law that regulates gravel mining operations in Montana is the Opencut Mining Act. This law and the rules adopted thereunder place operational guidance and limitations on a project during its lifetime, and provide for the reclamation of land affected by opencut mining operations.

Approval or denial of the application will be based on a determination of whether or not the proposed operation complies with the Opencut Mining Act, the Rules adopted thereunder, and local laws and regulations--not on the popularity of the project.

PROPONENT: Schellinger Construction

PROJECT NAME: Opencut Gravel Mining – Beehive Site

LOCATION: N½N½, Section 5, T26N, R29W **COUNTY:** Lincoln

PERSON PREPARING EA: Rod Samdahl

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:

The applicant proposes to mine and haul 85,000 cubic yards of borrow material from a site located 26 miles east of Libby along Highway 2. The site is a gravel outwash deposit across Highway 2 from the Fisher River in the foothills of the Salish Mountain Range at approximately 2980 feet, MSL, where groundwater lies substantially below the pit site. The site would be mined into rising forested topography, in an area where the topsoil averages 5” to 7” thick, mainly forest duff. The slopes of the reclaimed area would be reduced to 3:1 or flatter and the floor would be graded fairly flat, and planted into grasses. The site would be reclaimed by June 2009. The site is in an unzoned area of Lincoln County.

A: Significant Unavoidable Impacts. B: Insignificant as a result of conditioned mitigation. C: Insignificant as proposed.

				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	AMPLIFICATION
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>			X	X		Mining would permanently alter the topography, but reclamation would result in leveling and smoothing the site and planting of grasses to stabilize the soils.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability						No effect on geology.
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution			X		X	Soils would be stripped, saved and replaced after mining is finished.
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality, Quantity; Distribution			X		X	The operation would not affect ground or surface waters including the nearby Fisher River.
5. <u>AIR</u> ; Quality			X		X	Some deterioration of air quality would occur, but episodes would be infrequent. Dust would be controlled around the site with a water truck.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources						No unique, endangered, fragile or limited species or habitat are known at this site.
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats			X		X	Wildlife displaced during active mining would return following reclamation.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; Quantity, quality, species			X		X	Existing forest would be replanted into grasses of a compatible type.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops, production			X		X	The site has been logged of most merchantable timber, but some trees are regenerating. Forest land would be temporarily taken out of production, and would be replanted with grasses.
				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	AMPLIFICATION
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> , structures and mores						No social impacts are anticipated.
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> ; Uniqueness, diversity						No unique or diversified cultural values exist.
3. <u>POPULATION</u> ; quantity and diversity						No effect on the population is anticipated.
4. <u>HOUSING</u> ; quantity and distribution						No effects are anticipated on the quantity or distribution of housing due to this borrow site.
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY</u>			X		X	Some dust and additional traffic may be generated at the site but the operator must comply with existing traffic and air quality laws. This borrow source would be excavated during highway construction and would not likely be recognizable as a separate project.
6. <u>COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME</u>			X		X	The landowner may benefit from additional revenue or value added by this operation.
7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> ; quantity and distribution						No additional employees would be hired to assist in daily operations.

8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; local and state tax revenue						Additional taxes may be generated for the state and county as aggregates are hauled and used on this highway improvement project.
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ; demand						The site would be monitored through its permit life along with other sites in the area.
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL</u> and <u>AGRICULTURAL</u> activities			X		X	The site would be removed from forest use, and used commercially until reclamation when it would be reclaimed to grassland.
11. <u>HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>						No historical, cultural or archaeological values are present.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X		X	The site sits adjacent to the State Highway 2 and is visible to the general public.
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS</u> and <u>GOALS</u> ; local and regional						This site was considered as part of the highway project.
14. <u>DEMANDS</u> on <u>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> of land, water, air and energy						There are no unusual demands on environmental resources.
15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> ; networks and traffic flows			X		X	There would be some additional traffic added to this part of the highway project as material is extracted and hauled along the jobsite.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: **The Department would deny an incomplete application or one that does not comply with the Act or Rules. The proponent could then submit a modified application or submit an application for another site.**

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: **Agencies and individuals involved in the process included the Montana Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office, local zoning authorities, county weed control board, and the landowner.**

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: **DEQ's Air Resources Management Bureau regarding air quality, MDOT for the Highway Project specifications, MSHA and OSHA regarding mine safety.**

REGULATORY IMPACT ON THE APPLICANT'S 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.**

INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS EA: **None.**

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: **No further analysis is required.**

Approved By _____
(Signature)

(Date)

LOCATION MAP

