

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
JOSEPH SCHRAGE GRAVEL SITE
RAVALLI 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: Joseph C. and Violet W. Schrage

PROJECT NAME: Opencut Gravel Mining – Schrage Site

LOCATION: SW¼SE¼, Section 11, T10N, R20W **COUNTY:** Ravalli

PERSON PREPARING EA: Rod Samdahl

E.A. COMPLETED: 06/20/07
(Date)

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:

The applicant proposes to mine and haul 30,000 cubic yards of pit run gravel from a pit located on the northeast corner of Florence just north of Highway 203. The site is a gravel outwash deposit in the foothills of the Bitterroot Mountain Range above the Bitterroot River Valley at approximately 3240 feet, MSL. The site daylights out to the east toward One Horse Creek in an area where the topsoil averages 12” of clayey silt loam. 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 has been mostly mined out and would be reclaimed by November 2009.

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 level and smooth the site and plant 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 One Horse Creek and pond located 100 feet SW.
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 habitats 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 pasture would be replanted into grasses of a compatible type.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops, production			X		X	The site has not been used for some time as pasture. No other effects are anticipated.
				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 gravel pit.
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.
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			X		X	No additional employees would be hired to assist in daily operations.
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; local and state tax revenue			X		X	Additional taxes may be generated for the state and county as aggregates are hauled and used to improve adjacent land.

9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ; demand			X		X	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 back several hundred feet from Highway 203 and Highway 93, and is not very visible to the general public.
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS</u> and <u>GOALS</u> ; local and regional						This site is planned to be part of a local subdivision.
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 as this gravel pit accesses the county roads.

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 and the county weed control board.**

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: **DEQ's Water Protection Bureau regarding water discharge, 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**

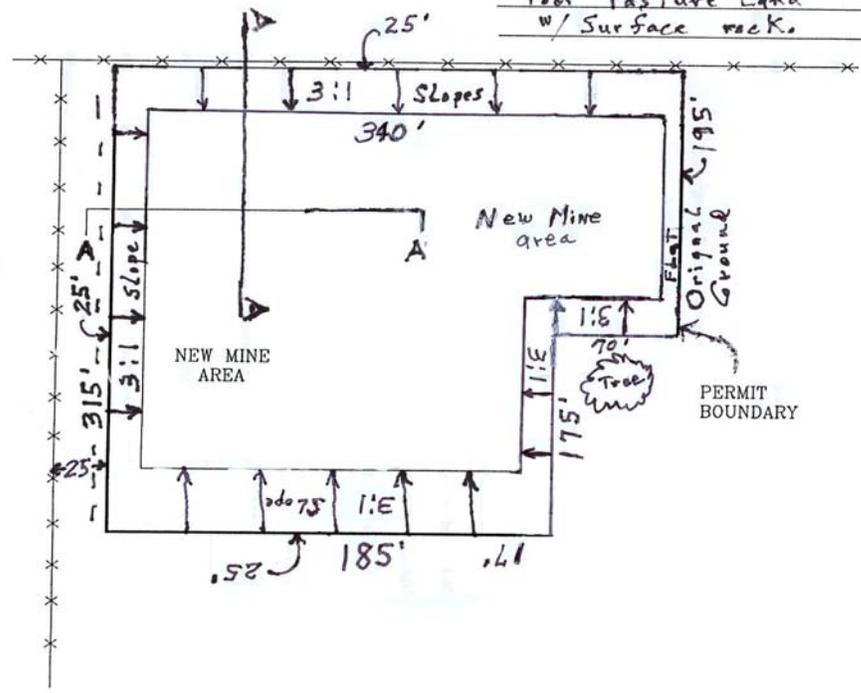
RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: **No further analysis is required.**

Approved By _____
(Signature)

(Date)

Neighbor Land
 Fees Pasture Land
 w/ Surface rock.

Schrage Pit
 SW 1/4 SE 1/4 Sec 11
 Township 10N
 Range 20W
 Florence, MT
 Ravalli Co.



RECEIVED

DEC 17 2004

Department of
 Environmental Quality
 Kalispell Regional Office

