DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Permitting and Compliance Division
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DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Issued For: Rock Solid Enterprises, Inc.
P.O. Box 1262
Havre, Montana 59501

RECEIVED
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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE

Permit Number: #4199-00

Preliminary Determination Issued: March 6, 2008
Department Decision Issued:
Permit Final:

1. *Legal Description of Site*: Rock submitted an application to operate a portable crushing/screening plant in the S ½ Section 26, Township 33 North, Range 16 East, in Hill County, Montana. Permit #4199-00 would apply while operating at any location in Montana, except within those areas having a Department of Environmental Quality (Department)-approved permitting program, areas considered tribal lands, or areas in or within 10 kilometers (km) of certain particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 10 microns or less (PM_{10}) nonattainment areas. *A Missoula County air quality permit would be required for locations within Missoula County, Montana.* An addendum to this air quality permit will be required if Rock intends to locate in or within 10 kilometers (km) of certain PM_{10} nonattainment areas.

2. *Description of Project*: The permit application proposes the construction and operation of a portable crushing/screening plant that would consist of a portable jaw crusher (up to 500 tons per hour (TPH)), cone crusher (up to 600 TPH), 3-deck screen (up to 600 TPH), diesel generator engine (up to 604 horsepower (hp)), and associated equipment. For a typical operational setup, unprocessed materials are loaded into the crushing/screening plant by a hopper and transferred by conveyor and passed through the crusher, where the material is crushed. Materials are crushed and sent to the screen, where materials are separated and conveyed to stockpile.

3. *Objectives of Project*: The object of the project would be to produce business and revenue for the company by the sale and use of aggregate. The issuance of Permit #4199-00 would allow Rock to operate the permitted equipment at various locations throughout Montana, including the proposed initial site location.

4. *Additional Project Site Information*: In many cases, this crushing/screening operation may move to a general site location or open cut pit, which has been previously permitted through Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau (IEMB). If this were the case, a more extensive EA for the site would have been conducted and would be found in the Mined Land Reclamation Permit for that specific site.

5. *Alternatives Considered*: In addition to the proposed action, the Department considered the "no-action" alternative. The "no-action" alternative would deny issuance of the air quality preconstruction permit to the proposed facility. However, the Department does not consider the "no-action" alternative to be appropriate because Rock demonstrated compliance with all applicable rules and regulations as required for permit issuance. Therefore, the "no-action" alternative was eliminated from further consideration.

6. *A Listing of Mitigation, Stipulations, and Other Controls*: A listing of the enforceable permit conditions and a permit analysis, including a BACT analysis, would be contained in Permit #4199-00.

7. *Regulatory Effects on Private Property Rights*: The Department considered alternatives to the conditions imposed in this permit as part of the permit development. The Department determined the permit conditions would be reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with applicable requirements and demonstrate compliance with those requirements and would not unduly restrict private property rights.

8. *The following table summarizes the potential physical and biological effects of the proposed project on the human environment. The "no action alternative" was discussed previously.*

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments Included
A.	Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats			X			yes
B.	Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution			X			yes
C.	Geology and Soil Quality, Stability, and Moisture			X			yes
D.	Vegetation Cover, Quantity, and Quality			X			yes
E.	Aesthetics			X			yes
F.	Air Quality			X			yes
G.	Unique Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resource			X			yes
H.	Demands on Environmental Resource of Water, Air, and Energy			X			yes
I	Historical and Archaeological Sites				X		yes
J.	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			yes

Summary of Comments on Potential Physical and Biological Effects: The following comments have been prepared by the Department.

A. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats

Terrestrials would use the same area as the crushing/screening operations. Impacts on terrestrial and aquatic life could result from storm water runoff and pollutant deposition, but such impacts would be minor, as the crushing/screening operations would be considered a minor source of emissions and would have intermittent and seasonal operations. Storm water runoff from the crushing/screening operation may end up in an on-site pond which is used for the wash plant. This pond functions as a settling pond, although overflow may leave the property during high rain events and potentially impact downstream aquatic life.

Furthermore, air emissions from the crushing/screening plant would have only minor effects on terrestrial and aquatic life because facility emissions would have good pollutant dispersion in the area of operations (See Section 8.F). Therefore, only minor and temporary effects to terrestrial and aquatic life and habitat would be expected from the proposed crushing/screening operation.

B. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution

Water would be required for dust suppression on the surrounding roadways and areas of operation and for pollution control for equipment operations. However, pollutant deposition and water use would only cause minor, if any, impacts to water resources in these areas because the facility is small and only a small amount of water would be required to be used (See Section 8.F of this EA). Further the site is relatively flat and minimal water runoff would be expected to occur as discussed in 8.A. Therefore, only minor surface and groundwater quality impacts would be expected.

C. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability, and Moisture

The crushing/screening operations would have only minor impacts on geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture of soils. Only minor impacts from deposition of air pollutants on soils would result (as described in Section 8.F of this EA) and only minor amounts of water would be used for pollution control. Thus, only minimal water runoff would occur (as described in Section 8.B of this EA). Since only minor amounts of pollution would be generated and corresponding emissions would be widely dispersed before settling upon vegetation and surrounding soils (as described in Section 8.D of this EA), impacts would be minor. Therefore, any effects upon geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture at this proposed operational site would be minor.

D. Vegetation Cover, Quantity, and Quality

Minor impacts would occur on vegetative cover, quality, and quantity because the facility would operate in an area where vegetation has been previously disturbed and the facility would be a small industrial operation. The facility would be a relatively minor source of emissions and the pollutants would be greatly dispersed (as described in Section 8.F); therefore, deposition on vegetation from the proposed project would be minor. Also, because the water usage would be minimal (as described in Section 8.B) and the associated soil disturbance from the application of water and water runoff would be minimal (as described in Section 8.C), corresponding vegetative impacts would be minor.

E. Aesthetics

The crushing/screening operation would be visible and would create additional noise while operating at this proposed site. However, Permit #4199-00 would include conditions to control emissions, including visible emissions, from the plant. Further, the crushing/screening operation would be portable, would operate on an intermittent and seasonal basis, and would be a small industrial source. Therefore, any visual aesthetic impacts would be minor.

F. Air Quality

Air quality impacts from the proposed project would be minor because the facility would be relatively small, would operate on an intermittent and temporary basis, and would locate in a previously disturbed site. Permit #4199-00 would include conditions limiting the facility's opacity and crushing/screening production and requiring water and water spray bars be available on site and used to ensure compliance with opacity standards. Permit #4199-00 would also limit total emissions from the crushing/screening facility and any additional Rock equipment operated at the site to 250 tons/year or less, excluding fugitive emissions.

Further, the Department determined that the crushing/screening facility would be a minor source of emissions as defined under the Title V Operating Permit Program because the source's PTE is below the major source threshold level of 100 tons per year for any regulated pollutant. Pollutant deposition from the facility would be minimal because the pollutants emitted would be well

controlled, widely dispersed (from factors such as wind speed and wind direction), and would have minimal deposition (due to site topography and minimal vegetative cover) on the surrounding area. Therefore, air quality impacts from operating the screening equipment in this area would be minor.

G. Unique Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources

The Department contacted the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) to identify any species of concern associated with the initial proposed site location (S ½ Section 26, Township 33 North, Range 16 East, in Hill County, Montana). The search results concluded there is one species of special concern within ¾ mile of the site: *Sander canadensis*, which is a fish known as a "Sauger". The Milk River is habitat for the Sauger, which is listed as "sensitive" by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). However, based on the small size and temporary nature of equipment operations and the minimal disturbance to the environment (water, air, and soils) that would occur in the area of operation, the Department determined that only minor impacts to any unique endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources would be expected to occur.

H. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air, and Energy

Due to the relatively small size of the facility, the crushing/screening operation would only require small quantities of water, air, and energy for proper operation. Only small quantities of water would be required for dust suppression of emissions being generated at the site. In addition, impacts to air resources would be minor because the source is a small industrial source of emissions, with intermittent and seasonal operations, and because air pollutants generated by the facility would be widely dispersed as described in Section 8.F of this EA. Energy requirements would also be small, because the facility would be powered by one small industrial diesel engine that would use minor amounts of fuel. Overall, any impacts to water, air, and energy resources would be minor.

I. Historical and Archaeological Sites

The Department previously contacted the Montana Historical Society - State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) in an effort to identify any historical and/or archaeological sites that may be present in the proposed area of construction/operation. Search results concluded that there are no previously recorded historical or archaeological resources of concern within the area proposed for initial operations. Therefore, no impacts upon historical or archaeological sites would be expected as a result of operating the proposed crushing/screening plant.

J. Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

The crushing/screening operation would cause minor cumulative and secondary impacts to the physical and biological aspects of the human environment because the facility would generate relatively small amounts of emissions of PM, PM_{10}, NO_x, VOC, CO and SO_x. Emissions and noise generated from the equipment would, at most, only result in minor impacts to the area of operations because the crushing/screening plant would be relatively small, seasonal, and temporary. The site is moderately remote, since it is 3 ½ miles northeast of Havre, although there are two houses located approximately ¼ mile from the proposed operational site.

Further, no other sources are expected to operate as a result of permitting this equipment. Additionally, this facility, in combination with other emissions from Rock equipment operations would not be permitted to exceed 250 tons per year of non-fugitive emissions. Overall, cumulative and secondary impacts to the physical and biological aspects of the human environment would be minor.

9. *The following table summarizes the potential economic and social effects of the proposed project on the human environment. The "no action alternative" was discussed previously.*

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments Included
A.	Social Structures and Mores				X		yes
B.	Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				X		yes
C.	Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue			X			yes
D	Agricultural or Industrial Production			X			yes
E.	Human Health			X			yes
F.	Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities			X			yes
G	Quantity and Distribution of Employment			X			yes
H.	Distribution of Population				X		yes
I.	Demands for Government Services			X			yes
J.	Industrial and Commercial Activity			X			yes
K.	Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals			X			yes
L.	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			yes

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS ON POTENTIAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EFFECTS: The following comments have been prepared by the Department.

A. Social Structures and Mores

The crushing/screening operation would cause no disruption to the social structures and mores in the area because the source would be a minor industrial source of emissions, would be separated from the general population, and would only have temporary and intermittent operations. Further, the facility would be required to operate according to the conditions that would be placed in Permit #4199-00, which would limit the effects to social structures and mores.

B. Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity

The cultural uniqueness and diversity of this area would not be impacted by the proposed crushing/screening operation because the proposed site is separated from the general population, and the facility is a portable source with seasonal and intermittent operations. The predominant use of the surrounding area is farmland and would not change as a result of this screening operation. Therefore, the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area would not be affected.

C. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue

The crushing/screening operations would have little, if any, impact on the local and state tax base and tax revenue because the facility would be a relatively small industrial source and would have seasonal and intermittent operations. The facility would require the use of only a few employees. Thus, only minor impacts to the local and state tax base and revenue could be expected from the employees and facility production. Furthermore, the impacts to local tax base and revenue would be minor because the source would be portable and the money generated for taxes would be widespread.

D. Agricultural or Industrial Production

The crushing/screening operations would have only a minor impact on local industrial production since the facility would be a minor source of aggregate production and air emissions. Also, the facility would locate in an area adjacent to farmland and at a site that can be used for animal grazing and agricultural production. Therefore, because minimal deposition of air pollutants would occur on the surrounding land (as described in Section 8.F of this EA), only minor and temporary effects on the surrounding vegetation (i.e. agricultural production) would occur. In addition, the facility operations would be small and temporary in nature and would be permitted with operational conditions and limitations that would minimize impacts upon surrounding vegetation, as described in Section 8.D of this EA.

E. Human Health

Permit #4199-00 would incorporate conditions to ensure that the crushing/screening facility would be operated in compliance with all applicable air quality rules and standards. These rules and standards are designed to be protective of human health. As described in Section 8.F. of this EA, the air emissions from this facility would be minimized by the use of water spray and other process limits that would be required by Permit #4199-00. Also, the facility would be operating on a temporary basis and pollutants would disperse from the ventilation of emissions at this site (see Section 8.F of this EA). Therefore, only minor impacts would be expected on human health from the proposed crushing/screening facility.

F. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities

Noise from the facility would be minor because the facility is a crushing/screening operation that would be small and operate in an area removed from the general population. As a result, the amount of noise generated from the crushing/screening operation would be minimal. Also, the facility would operate on a seasonal and intermittent basis on private land and would be a relatively minor industrial source of emissions. Therefore, any changes in the quality of recreational and wilderness activities created by operating the equipment at this site would be expected to be minor and intermittent.

G. Quantity and Distribution of Employment

The portable crushing/screening operation would be relatively small, would have seasonal and intermittent operations, and would only require a few employees to operate. No individuals would be expected to permanently relocate to this area of operation as a result of operating the screening facility. Therefore, only very minor effects upon the quantity and distribution of employment in this area would be expected.

H. Distribution of Population

The portable crushing/screening operation would be small and would only require a few existing employees to operate. No individuals would be expected to permanently relocate to this area of operation as a result of operating the screening facility. Therefore, the screening facility would not disrupt the normal population distribution.

I. Demands of Government Services

Minor increases would be seen in traffic on existing roadways in the area while the crushing/ screening operation is in progress. In addition, government services would be required for acquiring the appropriate permits for the proposed project and to verify compliance with the permits that would be issued. However, demands for government services would be minor, due to the relatively small size and seasonal nature of the crushing/screening facility.

J. Industrial and Commercial Activity

The crushing/screening operation would represent only a minor increase in the industrial activity in the proposed area of operation because the source would be a relatively small industrial source that would be portable and temporary in nature. No additional industrial or commercial activity would be expected as a result of the proposed operation.

K. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals

Rock would be allowed, by Permit #4199-00 to operate in areas designated by EPA as attainment or unclassified for ambient air quality. An Addendum would be required to operate in or within 10 km of a PM_{10} nonattainment area. Permit #4199-00 would contain limits for protecting air quality and to keep facility emissions in compliance with any applicable ambient air quality standards, as a locally adopted environmental plan or goal for operating at this proposed site. Because the facility would be a small and portable source and would have intermittent and seasonal operations, any impacts from the facility would be minor and short-lived.

L. Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

The crushing/screening operations would cause minor cumulative and secondary impacts to the social and economic aspects of the human environment in the immediate area of operation because the source would be a portable and temporary source. Further, no other industrial operations are expected to result from the permitting of this facility. Minor increases in traffic would have minor effects on local traffic in the immediate area. Because the source is relatively small and temporary, only minor economic impacts to the local economy would be expected from operating the facility. Further, this facility may be operated in conjunction with other equipment owned and operated by Rock, but any cumulative impacts upon the social and economic aspects of the human environment would be minor and short-lived. Thus, only minor and temporary cumulative effects would result to the local economy.

Recommendation: An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: All potential effects resulting from construction and operation of the proposed facility are minor; therefore, an EIS is not required.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: Montana Natural Heritage Program; and the State Historic Preservation Office (Montana Historical Society).

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Department of Environmental Quality (Air Resources Management Bureau), Montana State Historic Preservation Office (Montana Historical Society).

EA prepared by: Christine Weaver
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