

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

COMPANY NAME: Ash Grove Cement
 PERMIT OR LICENSE: 00684
 LOCATION: 9N/3W/Sections 9 and 16
 PROPERTY OWNERSHIP: Federal State

Project: Exploration for Low Alkali Clay/Silica
 County: Jefferson
 Private

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: The intent is to dig two 800 foot trenches to expose the bedrock in this area and determine the economic viability of the site. If required, a 10-hole drilling program will follow.

Reclamation Plan: The following procedures will be used in the reclamation of this exploration project.

- 1) All available soils and soil materials will be salvaged and stockpiled.
- 2) If applicable, all drill fluids and cuttings will be retained on site.
- 3) After drilling is complete, drill fluids and cuttings will be removed, disposed of down the hole or buried.
- 4) All drill holes will be plugged at the surface (-5 to -10) feet with cement.
- 5) If an artesian aquifer is intercepted, the Montana DEQ will be notified within 24 hours and the hole will be plugged at depth.
- 6) Drill sites will be graded to original contour.
- 7) Any compacted surfaces will be ripped or otherwise loosened to allow for the successful re-establishment of native vegetation.
- 8) All refuse associated with exploration activities will be collected, removed and disposed of in proper disposal sites.
- 9) Salvaged topsoil will be applied over disturbed areas.
- 10) Disturbed areas will be re-vegetated with the Montana DEQ-approved seed mixture in the existing Mine Permit #00003 Reclamation Plan.
- 11) The notification requirements for Montana DEQ will be fulfilled if a discharge occurs.
- 12) The Montana DEQ will be contacted 30 days prior to the initiation of the exploration project to arrange a mutually-agreeable time for an onsite visit and the establishment of a reclamation bond amount.

All exploration activities will be performed in compliance with the permit conditions of all of Ash Grove Cement Company’s existing environmental permits and Ash Grove’s published Environmental Policy. These permits include: Air Operating Permit #2005-04; Storm Water Permit #MTR 300113 and Mine Permit #00003. A bond for \$10,560 is in place with Montana DEQ.

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
1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are soils present which are fragile, erosive, susceptible to compaction, or unstable? Are there unusual or unstable geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	[N] Soils are thin to non-existent in areas. Regionally, the geology is Quaternary and Cretaceous sediments that may be overlain by a thin layer of volcanics.
2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or	[N]

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N] Air Operating Permit #2005-04.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N]
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Some antelope and deer seasonally inhabit the area.
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?	[N]
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] SHPO was approached about the any cultural sites in the area and said there are none recorded. There is a site that the company identified south of Jackson Creek road, but this project is several miles away.
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?	[Y] The project is on an open ridgeline that runs down to Jackson Creek Road and will be visible from the growing Antelope Hills subdivision to the south. The usual noise from mechanical excavating equipment will be expected.
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?	[N]
10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[Y] Daily activity in operating their quarry ½ mile to the north.

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N]
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?	[N]
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N]
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?	[N]
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]
20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]
21. PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Are we regulating the use of private property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state? (Property management, grants of financial assistance, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain are not within this category.) If not, no further analysis is required.	[Y]
22. PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Does the proposed regulatory action restrict the use of the regulated person's private property? If not, no further analysis is required.	[N]
23. PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Does the agency have legal discretion to impose or not impose the proposed restriction or discretion as to how the restriction will be imposed? If not, no further analysis is required. If so, the agency must determine if there are alternatives that would reduce, minimize or eliminate the restriction on the use of private property, and analyze such alternatives.	[N/A]
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N]

25. Alternatives Considered:
No Action:
Approval:
Approval with modification: No unresolved issues were identified which would require modification of the proposal.
26. Public Involvement: None
27. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction: None
28. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: There would be no significant impacts associated with this proposal.
29. Cumulative Effects: Continued quarrying in the area.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Robert Cronholm
Program Supervisor

Signature

July 11, 2008
Date