

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SITE NAME: Sullivan #1  
 LOCATION: Sec 24 T4S R50E  
 SIZE: 9.8 Acres

APPLICANT: Wickens Construction  
 COUNTY: Powder River  
 TYPE OF OPERATION: Borrow

**PROPOSED ACTION: Wickens Construction proposes to mine 39,000 cu. yds of borrow from this 9.8-acre sit located on a long ridge. The site is located 600 feet south of the Highway 212 R/W and would be accessed by a looped haul road. Material would be used for road reconstruction. Final reclamation to range grasses would be accomplished by September 2009. Bond is calculated at \$11,171.**

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	EXPLANATION
<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>			X	X		The site is on a long ridge next to a hay field. Mining would remove no more than 10 feet of material, and final grading would blend it into the hay field.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability			X	X		This area is in the Montana Plains Province of the Missouri Plateau, in the Fort Union Formation.
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution			X		X	The soils are of the Elso-Midway-Thurlow Association. They are nearly level to steeply sloped, shallow silt loams and clay loams built over stratified sandy, silty, and clayey shale.  Because these soils are on ridge tops or are fairly steeply sloped, a maximum of 6 inches of good soil materials exists. This would be salvaged and replaced on residual borrow.  Annual precipitation averages about 16 inches. Although these soils are not very productive, they should allow for good reclamation to rangeland.
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality; Quantity; Distribution			X		X	Site is about 20 vertical feet above the surrounding area. There are no surface water creeks or springs nearby. No wells are in the area. No impacts to water would occur.
5. <u>AIR</u> ; Quality			X		X	Good. No impacts.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources			X		X	Milk snakes, very colorful red, white and black banded animals up to 4 feet long, are ranked as sensitive by the BLM and Forest Service. In 1970 a milk snake was found to the southeast in Sand Creek drainage. Although little is documented about their Montana range, their assumed range covers almost all of the Missouri and Yellowstone basins and many other states. They seem to like

				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
						rocky cliffs in grasslands or savannah habitats. Considering the size of its presumed habitat and the small disturbance area proposed for this site, a negligible impact to this species would be expected.
<b>BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN</u> , and <u>AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats			X		X	Deer, antelope, upland game birds, coyotes, and small mammals are in the vicinity of this site. Sage grouse may traverse the area but with limited sagebrush on site, it is not good habitat for this species.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; quantity, quality, species			X		X	Range grasses – mainly western wheatgrass, needle grasses - and some sagebrush. No riparian or wetland habitat exists.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops production			X		X	Rangeland.
<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> ; structures and mores			X		X	
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> uniqueness, diverse			X		X	
3. <u>POPULATION</u> ; quantity, diverse			X		X	Sparsely populated ranches.
4. <u>HOUSING</u> ; quantity, distribution			X		X	
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</u>			X		X	
6. <u>COMMUNITY &amp; PERSONAL INCOME</u>			X		X	
7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> ; quantity and distribution			X	X	X	Short term construction jobs. Long-term indirect income would be generated by the improved transportation system that links this very remote area.
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; local and state tax revenue			X		X	
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ; demand			X		X	
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL</u> and <u>AGRICULTURAL</u> activities			X	X		Increased agricultural/industrial hauling because no longer curtailed by bad weather and impassable roads.
11. <u>HISTORICAL</u> and <u>ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>			X		X	The site is associated with an MTDOT highway project. A walkover of the area did not reveal any artifacts or signs of occupation. No signs were evident at depth in nearby previously disturbed areas. If during operations resources were to be discovered, activities would be halted, or possibly temporarily moved to another area until SHPO

	POTENTIAL IMPACTS					
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
						was contacted and the importance of the site was determined.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X		X	
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS</u> and <u>GOALS</u> ; local and regional			X		X	
14. <u>DEMANDS</u> on <u>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> of land, water, air and energy			X		X	
15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> ; networks and traffic flows			X		X	This is a major trucking route. It is connector route from Billings to I-90 in South Dakota. Often winter storms make travel on I-90 very difficult in Wyoming, but Highway 212 is north of them and in clear weather. The route is about 100 miles shorter to Rapid City than taking I-90.

REGULATORY IMPACT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY: None

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Landowner, Powder River County Commissioners, Powder River County Weed Board, Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: Denial

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: Air Resources Management Bureau, Mining Safety and Health, Mt Dept. Transportation

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

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by Jo Stephen, July, 2008