

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SITE NAME: Sullivan #2
 LOCATION: Sec 22 T4S R50E
 SIZE: 8.4 Acres

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

PROPOSED ACTION: Wickens Construction proposes to mine 26,000 cu. yds of borrow. The 8.4-acre site is on a small knob ridge. The site is located adjacent to and would be accessed from the right-of-way to HWY 212. Material would be used for road reconstruction. Final reclamation to rangeland would be accomplished by September 2009. Bond is calculated at \$11,006.

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
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>			X	X		The site is in an open, large flat valley with little relief overall. The site is on a knob that rises 60 feet above the highway R/W. Mining would remove about 10 feet from the top.
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 80 vertical feet above the surrounding valleys, in the valley of the East Fork of Wolf Creek. There are no surface water creeks or springs within a half mile of the site. 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 a mile and a half away to the southeast in Sand Creek drainage. Although little is documented about their Montana range,

				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
						<p>their assumed range covers almost all of the Missouri and Yellowstone basins and many other states. They seem to like 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.</p> <p>The Plains Spadefoot frog is listed as a sensitive species by the BLM and the Forest Service. It is found all over eastern Montana in areas where there is permanent water nearby. No habitat for this species exists nearby.</p>
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT						
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.
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT						
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 & SAFETY</u>			X		X	
6. <u>COMMUNITY & 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

	POTENTIAL IMPACTS					
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						impassable roads.
11. <u>HISTORICAL and 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 was contacted and the importance of the site was determined.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X		X	
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS and GOALS</u> ; local and regional			X		X	
14. <u>DEMANDS on 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 mile 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