

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
August 5, 2009

Project Name: West Pit, Amendment #2
Proponent: Polson Ready Mix Concrete, Inc.
Location: SE1/4, Section 14, T22N, R20W

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant has proposed the expansion of its permit acreage from 19.5 to 67.7 acres (an increase of 48.2 acres; see attached new map), an increase in its active mined area from 6.0 to 66.7 acres (an increase of 60.7 acres), an increase in the volume of material to be removed of 2.72 million cubic yards, and an increase in mine depth from 30 to 50 feet. The bond is increased from \$13,740 to \$525,912 (an increase of \$512,172). All other aspects of the operation will remain the same.

Wildlife: The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) reports that several animal species of special concern have been observed near or within the general vicinity or region of the mine site, but not on the mine site. These include (along with their global and state rankings): Common Loon (G5, S2B), Bald Eagle (G5, S3), Long-billed Curlew (G5, S2B), Grasshopper Sparrow (G5, S3B), Bobolink (G5, S2B), Townsend's Big-eared Bat (G4, S2), and Gray Wolf (G4, S3). Status ranks range from 1 (greatest concern) to 5 (least concern).

A Global Ranking of G5 means the species is common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). It is not vulnerable in most of its range. A G4 ranking means that the species is uncommon but not rare (although they may be rare in parts of their range), and usually widespread. Apparently species in this category are not vulnerable in most of their ranges, but possibly cause for long-term concern.

A State Ranking of S2 means the species in Montana is at risk because of very limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to extirpation in the state. A ranking of S3 means the species is potentially at risk because of limited and/or declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas. The designation "B" is a modifier indicating breeding for a migratory species.

Since MNHP has not reported any observations of these species on the mine site and since the proposed additional disturbance area would be small, possible impacts to these species would be minimal.

Vegetation: MNHP reports the following two plant species of special concern have been observed in the vicinity of but not on the mine site. Yellow-staining Collomia has a G5, S1 Ranking, while Scribner's Panic Grass has a Ranking of G5T5, S1. A G5 Ranking means that the species is demonstrably secure, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range; T5 is a modifier referring to a subtaxon of the species with its global rank. S1 species are at high risk because of extremely limited and/or rapidly declining numbers, range, and/or habitat, making it highly vulnerable to extirpation in the state.

Yellow-staining Collomia is found in dry grasslands and rocky open slopes from valleys to montane zones. There have been observations of this species in only two counties in Montana; only one observation was made near the mine site (in 1953). Impacts of the proposed expanded mining operation on the global status of this species would be minimal. Due to lack of information on this species within Montana, potential impacts within the state are unknown.

Scribner's Panic Grass is found in dry woodlands. Since this kind of habitat does not occur on the mine site, this species would likely not be affected.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation: It is expected that all other impacts associated with this proposal would mimic those identified in the EA dated 4/01/96.

Prepared by: Neil Harrington and Rod Samdahl

Figure 1 – Site Map

