

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

August 2009

SITE NAME: Matador Pit APPLICANT: Beaverhead County

LOCATION: Sec 9, T9S R8W COUNTY: Beaverhead

PROPOSED ACTION: Beaverhead County proposes to mine and crush approximately 2,500 cubic yards of gravel from a 16.32-acre site about 10 miles southeast of Dillon. The product would be used to construct and maintain county roads.

Reclamation would be completed to rangeland by January 2029.

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 located at the base of mountains and has hilly topography where mining is occurring. The terrain to the east is relatively flat with a few drainages to the east of proposed mining operation.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability			X	X		The site is composed of sandy/dirty alluvial material. The gravel is relatively small (2" minus and rounded).
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution		X			X	The site has little to no topsoil because of a combination of erosion and previous mining activity. Because of the thin soils it would be difficult to salvage them without picking up non-soil or parent material. Some adverse impacts to this soil would occur during salvage. There is a thin grassland community with sagebrush. The same quality of grassland community should reestablish. Sagebrush would naturally reinvade. Average annual precipitation is about 10 inches.
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality; Quantity; Distribution			X		X	One well has been identified near the site. The depth is 53 feet with a static water level of 19.7 feet. However this well is located in the flats and groundwater is likely deeper where mining is occurring. There is no sign of springs. There would likely be little to no impact to water quality or quantity from mining.
5. <u>AIR</u> ; Quality			X		X	Fugitive dust would be controlled with the use of water trucks. Air quality impact would be

				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
						minimal with dust control.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources						The Montana Natural Heritage Program identified two potential species of concern. The Gray wolf and the western spotted skunk were identified. Neither animal is likely to frequent the area where mining is occurring due to lack of cover, water and vegetation.
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats			X		X	Deer, elk, and antelope have used the site. Mining would have minimal impact because of the small area that would be disturbed and lack of vegetation or cover.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; quantity, quality, species			X		X	The land is native range. Mining would have minimal impact because of the small area to be disturbed and reclamation to a dryland seed mix.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops Production			X		X	Mining would result in a minimal short term reduction of vegetation for grazing.
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> ; structures and mores			X		X	
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> uniqueness/diversity			X		X	
3. <u>POPULATION</u> ; quantity/diversity			X		X	Landowners home located to south approx ½ mile.
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, distribution			X		X	
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; state/local tax revenue			X		X	
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ; demand			X		X	
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL and AGRICULTURAL</u> activities			X		X	
11. <u>HISTORICAL and ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>			X		X	A walkover of the area did not reveal any artifacts or signs of occupation. If during operations resources were to be discovered, activities would be halted and temporarily moved to another area until SHPO was contacted and the importance of the site was determined.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X		X	

	A	B	C	POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
				LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
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 material is for construction and maintenance of county roads.

REGULATORY IMPACT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY: The analysis done in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact. The Department does not plan to deny the application or impose conditions that would restrict the use of private property so as to constitute a taking.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Landowner, Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: Air Resources Management Bureau, Mining Safety and Health, MT Dept. of Transportation, Madison County Commissioners, Madison County Weed Board

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: Denial

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

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Prepared by J.J. Conner