

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Baltrusch Lohman Gravel Pit Expansion
Proposed Implementation Date:	Immediate
Proponent:	Bill Baltrusch Construction Inc.
Location:	NE ¼ Sec 31, T32N, R18E
County:	Blaine County
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proponent is requesting permission to expand their existing gravel pit on state land 700 feet to the west to take in another 11.2 acres.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The Montana Department of Resources and Conservation/ Trust Lands Management Division (DNRC/TLMD) – Helena, MT and the Northeastern Land Office (NELO), and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Open cut Mining Program, have jurisdiction over this project.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

DEQ Open cut Mining Program is responsible for permitting the expanded area, and enforcing the reclamation plan.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the DNRC **does not** allow the proponent to expand the existing Lohman Gravel Pit.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the DNRC **does** allow the proponent to expand the existing Lohman Gravel Pit.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

This tract and the surrounding area consist of flat to gently rolling plains with gravelly alluvium as parent material. The Attewan-Wabek soil complex is well to excessively drained and more than eighty inches to any restrictive feature. There are typically eight inches of topsoil with minimal surface cobble and no erosion problems on any part of the tract. The soils in the proposed renovation are a gravelly loam to eight inches and very gravelly sand past 60 inches.

The permit application states that a total of 100,000 cubic yards of mine material will be excavated from the original and expanded pit area. This will change the surface topography of the area to be permitted. The expanded pit area does not contain any unusual geologic features.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

No important groundwater resources are expected to be impacted.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Excavation equipment, truck operations, and crushing have the potential to generate airborne dust. These factors are taken into account by the DEQ permitting process and are held within acceptable standards.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The project area has been used for many years for open cut gravel mining. The area in question has minimal vegetation due to the soil types. Reclaimed vegetative communities surrounding the pit area are in excellent condition and show the potential for restoration.

No rare plants or cover types are present.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The proposed pit expansion will have no effect on habitat values in the area. Being directly adjacent to the existing pit the extended area will not encroach on use that has not already been affected. Active mining operations on deeded land roughly ¼ mile to the west further minimizes any effects a pit expansion would have.

There will be no cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

There are no known federally listed threatened or endangered species in the proposed break area. No wetlands are present.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists 12 Species of Concern in Blaine County that may occur near the project area.

The cumulative effects of the proposed pit expansion would be minimal due to the operations already being done in the area.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A cultural resource inventory was conducted by DNRC field personal 6/29/2010. There were no findings of any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed expansion is not located on a prominent topographic feature.

The state land does not provide any unique scenic qualities.

The proposed activity will be conducted in a remote area, so there would be no change to the aesthetics in either alternative.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed on this EA.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i> • <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i> • <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i>

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

There is some human safety risks associated with operating heavy machinery. The proponent and their employees accept these risks.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

There will be no impact to industrial or commercial or agricultural activities.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

There will be no increases in traffic, no changes in traffic patterns, and no need for additional fire protection, or police services.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting these lands.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

There are no wilderness areas or access routes through this tract.

The proposed expansion has public access from the county road and has very little recreational value due to activity in the area.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

There are no unique qualities of the area that will be affected.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The proposed expansion will maintain a stream of income to the trust from this gravel pit. The trust usually receives between \$3000 and \$6000 per month in the summer and fall from this gravel pit.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Monte McNally
	Title: Land Use Specialist
Signature: /s/ Monte N. McNally	
Date: 7/14/2010	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the **Alternative B (Proposed Action)**, and recommend that the DNRC **does** allow the proponent to expand the existing Lohman Gravel Pit.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environmental affects and have determined that allowing the expansion of the pit will maintain the revenue coming to the trust. There are no potential impacts that would warrant denying expansion.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS
 More Detailed EA
 No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Barny D. Smith
	Title: Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature: Barny D. Smith	
Date: 7/24/2010	

