

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Sitz **Proposed Implementation Date:** August 97

Proponent: A.M. Welles, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 90,000 tons of gravel and sand from a 11.0 acre site for the reconstruction of Highway 287. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses. The reclaimed use will be pasture. There may be an asphalt plant involved with the operation.

Location: NW¼, Sec.10, T3S, R1W **County:** Madison

N = Not present or No Impact will occur.

Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts).

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed operation is located in sands and gravels of Tertiary valley fill. The site of the proposed operation is located on a bench on the east side of the valley containing Bradley Creek. The soils vary in texture from clay loam to sandy loam and are from 6 inches to 12 inches deep. The overburden varies in thickness from 0 inches to 20 inches deep and varies in texture from clay to sandy. The soil and overburden would be stripped and stockpiled separately and after regrading first the overburden and then the topsoil would be evenly replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the site.</p>
<p>2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>[N] There is an unnamed intermittent drainage approximately 500 feet west of the site and 40 feet lower in elevation. The site will be mined to a maximum depth of 15 feet. The depth to the ground water is estimated to be at 40 feet. Fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The design of the proposed operation is such that any runoff would drain inward on the site thus avoiding any off site sedimentation or erosion. There should be no effect to any ground or surface water.</p>
<p>3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>[Y] Air quality would be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards, and an Air Quality Permit obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality.</p>

<p>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[N] The site has been altered by previous agricultural activities. The vegetation on the site is 90% plus crested wheatgrass. The landowner has requested that the site be reseeded with crested wheatgrass, alfalfa, and sweet clover upon recontouring and retopsoiling. A literature search was done by the Montana National Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified and none were identified during a ground search.</p>
<p>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?</p>	<p>[N] A ground and literature search were conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site. No wetlands were present.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] A cultural resource survey was conducted by Gar Wood and Associates and no cultural resources were found. If the operator of the proposed operation discovers any additional cultural resources the operation must be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable amount of time until salvage can be made. The State Historical Preservation Office must be promptly notified.</p>
<p>8. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?</p>	<p>[Y] The site is located along Highway 287, a main throughway to Yellowstone National Park, but the area surrounding the proposed operation will be impacted by the reconstruction of the highway and the mining of the site will have little additional impact.</p>
<p>9. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[Y] There will be increased hazards because of equipment activity and hauling of the sand and gravel. The applicant must comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations however, proper precautions will be taken to avoid accidents.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	[N] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] County Zoning clearance has been obtained.
17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	[N]
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]

20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]
21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N]

22. Alternatives Considered:

Alternative # 1: Denial. The owner of the gravel resource would be denied full utilization of his property at this time.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program; Madison County Weed Control District and Commissioners.

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Mine Safety & Health - Administration for safety permit; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit; Permitting & Compliance Division for crusher permit.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the short duration of the project.

26. Regulatory Impact on Private Property: The analysis conducted in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke Title: Program Coordinator, Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau

Approved By: Steve Welch Title: Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau Chief

Signature

Date