

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Bressie

**Proposed Implementation Date:** Spring 98

**Proponent:** Jim Gilman Excavating

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile, and transport 30,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 7-acre site, for use in asphalt overlays of Highway 12 and Montana 141. The site has been previously mined and reclaimed as a wetland with water supplied mainly by irrigation. The site will be mined to a depth of 4 feet into the permanent water table. The reclaimed use would remain a wetland. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, retopsoiling the facility and stockpile area and reseeding the site with grasses. An asphalt plant will be set up at the site. Final reclamation would be completed by June 2000.

**Location:** NW¼, Sec. 27, T10N, R8W **County:** Powell

**N = Not present or No Impact will occur.**

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

<b>IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
<p><b>1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:</b> Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are their unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed operation is located in the Little Blackfoot River alluvial valley in sands and gravels of the Quaternary to Recent geologic age. The site was mined and reclaimed to a wetland in the 1980's. The proponent would mine the existing pit floor to a depth of 4 plus feet below the low water table. There is no soil on the existing floor of the pit. The facility and stockpile areas would have 6 inches of soil material stripped and salvaged. The soil is a sandy silt loam. There is no overburden to be salvaged. Soil microbes will recolonize the soils. There are no special reclamation considerations.</p>

<p><b>2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:</b> 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 irrigation ditch, located north of the proposed operation, with an outlet to release water into the pond. The Little Blackfoot River is approximately 500 feet north of the operation. The existing pit is approximately 8 feet deep and there is permanent water in it where the landowner has deepened it into the permanent water table and when irrigation water is discharged into it. The site would be mined with a hydraulic excavator and/or dozer and possibly two cells may be constructed within the existing pond and the proponent would pump from one cell to the other for localized dewatering in order for equipment to deepen the pond to the minimum depth of 4 feet into the low water table. The period of low water table is February and March. There would be no discharge from the pond area. There are several wells located east of the site, but only one is recorded with the Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology. This recorded well is 30 feet deep and is not used for potable water. All of the wells are up gradient and there should be no impact to any of the wells. Any bulk fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The proponent will not need to obtain a Stormwater Discharge Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality, but will implement best management practices to prevent any off site erosion or sedimentation.</p>
<p><b>3. AIR QUALITY:</b> Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>[Y] Air quality will be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and an Air Quality Permit obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher and asphalt plant.</p>
<p><b>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</b> Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[N] There is no vegetation on the existing floor of the pond. There are various species of grasses and willows at different places on the slopes of the pond. There would be little impact to the willows as the proponent would avoid those areas as much as possible. The surrounding area including the facility and stockpile area has various wheatgrasses. A literature search was done by the Montana Natural Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified and none were identified during a ground search.</p>
<p><b>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</b> Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>[N] The site may be utilized to some extent by deer, rodents, and various species of birds.</p>

<p><b>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?</p>	<p>[N] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site and none were identified as present by a literature search conducted by the Montana Natural Heritage Program. The existing wetland would be improved by deepening it to have water in it year round which would better various wetland species of plants and animals.</p>
<p><b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] A cultural ground survey was previously completed. Steve Platt of the Montana Dept. of Transportation has given cultural resource clearance on the site. Any cultural resources which would have been present would have been destroyed by previous mining activities.</p>
<p><b>8. AESTHETICS:</b> 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 proposed operation is located within ½ mile of Avon and Highway 12, but the project is of a short term nature with reclamation being completed no later than June of 2000.</p>
<p><b>9. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:</b> 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><b>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOURCE</b></p>	<p><b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b></p>
<p><b>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</b> Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[Y] There will be increased hazards because of the 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.</p>
<p><b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

<p><b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:</b> Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>[N] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area</p>
<p><b>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</b> Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>[N] County zoning clearance has been obtained.</p>
<p><b>17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:</b> Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b> Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</b> Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:</b> Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</b></p>	<p>[N]</p>

**22. 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:** State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Heritage Program, Fergus County Commissioners and Weed Management Board. Resident notification forms were completed and signed by three residences who are within 1,000 feet of the operation and none of the parties were opposed to the proposal.

**24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed:** Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for Air Quality Permit; Mine Safety and Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Labor and Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit.

**25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts:** Impacts are unlikely to be significant because of the operation being located in an existing pit surrounded by commercial businesses.

**Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:**

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke      Title: Opencut Mining Program Supervisor, IEMB

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

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Signature

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Date