DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Permitting and Compliance Division
Air and Waste Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620
(406) 444-3490

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Issued For: Missouri River Gravel Plant
P.O. Box 1690
Great Falls, MT 59403-1690

RECEIVED
JUN 11 1998
ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY COUNCIL

Air Quality Permit Number: 3007-00

Preliminary Determination on Permit Issued: 06/10/98

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Compliance: An environmental assessment required by the MEPA, was completed for this project as follows.

Legal Description of Site: West ½, Northwest ¼ of Section 1 and East ½, Northeast ¼ of Section 2 Township 19 North, Range 2 East in Cascade County, Montana.

Description of Project: This permit is for a 1972 El Jay 3-deck Screen, Model FS 6163-26, Serial #1085; 1972 El Jay Cone Crusher, Model RC 54 STD, Serial #226; 1996 Nordberg Cone Crusher, Model HP-400SX, Serial #HP400158; 1996 Deister Screen, Model BHM-3820, Serial #719745 (maximum production 700 TPH) and associated equipment. Permit #3007-00 replaces the air quality permit issued by Cascade County.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal: This plant crushes sand and gravel for use in industry.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider: No reasonable alternatives available.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency: A list of enforceable conditions, including a BACT analysis, are contained in permit #3007-00.

Description and analysis of regulatory impacts on private property rights: The department has considered alternatives to the conditions imposed in this permit as part of the permit development. The department has determined that the permit conditions are reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with applicable requirements and demonstrate compliance with those requirements and do not unduly restrict private property rights.

Potential Impact on Physical Environment

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments Attached
1	Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats			X			1, 2
2	Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution			X			1, 6
3	Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture			X			1, 5
4	Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality			X			1, 5
5	Aesthetics			X			1, 7
6	Air Quality			X			1, 3, 4
7	Unique Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resource			X			1, 2
8	Demands on Environmental Resource of Water, Air and Energy			X			1, 6
9	Historical and Archaeological Sites			X			1, 8
10	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			9

1. This facility will cause minor impacts.

2. The Missouri River is located 0.68 miles from this site, this distance is adequate to provide no affects on aquatic life by this facility. This facility has been operating for approximately 20 years and is located next to a Zone II - Primary Use Area, as defined by the Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan. The river provides additional buffer for the Bald Eagle nesting site. There will be only minor impacts to wildlife habitat from this facility.

3. The department must be notified if there is a change in size of operation or equipment that results in an increase in emissions.

4. Air quality impacts from the operation are minor. This permit includes conditions limiting the opacity from the plant as well as requiring water spray bars to control air pollution. Also, all sites are limited to total particulate emissions of 250 tons/year or less from the plant including any additional equipment at any individual site.

5. Soils at this site are Benz Clay loam and Evanston loam. Surface runoff is slow to medium. Wind and water erosion hazard is light to moderate. These soils are suitable for range land. Slope of the pre-mined ground surface ranges from 0% to 4%. Typical vegetation for this type of soil is wheatgrasses, bluegrasses, needlegrasses, forbs and shrubs. The Evanston loam is also suited to wheat, barley, hay and pasture under dryland management and under irrigation. Noxious weed control will be according to the Cascade County weed plan. Revegetation is addressed in the open cut mining contract issued for this site.

6. Water will be used as pollution control but will only cause minor disturbance to the area. The operation will only demand small quantities of water, air and energy for proper operation. The distance to the Missouri river is approximately 0.68 miles. The water table is 100+ feet from the pre-mined ground surface and well below the contracted pit floor depth.

7. The operation will be visible and will create additional noise in the area. The property surrounding the plant is used primarily for agriculture. The property just north of the plant is owned by the State of Montana and is being leased by United Materials for the purpose of mining aggregate. Existing topography is the southern edge of the Sun River bench overlooking the Missouri River.

8. If greater then 10,000 cubic yards are mined, the site must hold an Open Cut Mining Contract and historical and archaeological investigations are performed before contract issuance. The open cut contract for this property states no known historical or archaeological findings. If artifacts are found during the course of mining, operations will be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be made. The State Historic Preservation Office will be promptly notified.

9. There is potential for portable operations to locate at this site. However, any such operation would have to apply for and hold the appropriate permits/contracts from the DEQ prior to operation. These permits/contracts will address the environmental impacts associated with such operations at this or any other site. Overall, the operations will have only minor impacts on the area. All sites are limited to total particulate emissions of 250 tons/year or less from the plant and any associated equipment. There may be minor impacts created by traffic on haul roads, however, the authorizing agent of the road is required to take reasonable precautions to reduce fugitive emissions.

Potential Impact on Human Environment

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments Attached
1	Social Structures and Mores				X		1
2	Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				X		1
3	Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue			X			2
4	Agricultural or Industrial Production				X		3
5	Human Health			X			4
6	Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities			X			5
7	Quantity and Distribution of Employment			X			2
8	Distribution of Population				X		1
9	Demands for Government Services			X			6
10	Industrial and Commercial Activity			X			3
11	Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals			X			7
12	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			8

1. There will be no disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities from this operation. The cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area will not be impacted by this operation. No additional or less housing will be required due to this operation.

2. The operations will have little, if any, affects to the local and state tax base and tax revenue. Missouri River Gravel Plant employs 10 local individuals.

3. This operation will not create any agricultural production. This operation will not have impacts on local industrial production because it is an existing source. Permitting of this facility will not increase the number of employees need to operate this facility. Only minor additional industrial or commercial activity is expected as a result of permitting this facility.

4. The proposed emissions from the operations will have minor impacts on human health. This permit incorporates conditions to ensure that the operations will be operated in compliance with all applicable rules and standards.

5. The operations will not affect any access to recreational and wilderness activities. Land use in the surrounding area of the this site is farmland or rangeland. Recreational activities may occur on the Missouri River which is located approximately 0.68 miles from the site. This distance provides adequate distance to retain quality of recreational and wilderness activities.

6. Since this facility already exists, there should not be any increases in traffic on existing roads in the area while the operations are in progress. The only other government services demanded for this project will be acquiring the appropriate permits from government agencies and occasional agency personnel visits.

7. There will be no affect to the locally adopted environmental plans and goals because this plant will operate at sites where current zoning does not exclude this type of mining activity.

8. There is potential for portable operations to locate at this site. However, any such operation would have to apply for and hold the appropriate permits/contracts from the DEQ, prior to operation. These permits/contracts will address the environmental impacts associated with such operations at this or any other site. Overall, the operations will have only minor impacts on the area because they affect only a small amount of property for a short amount of time. All sites are limited to total particulate emissions of 250 tons/year or less from the plant and any associated equipment. There may be minor impacts created by traffic on haul roads, however, the authorizing agent of the road is required to take reasonable precautions to reduce fugitive emissions.

Recommendation: No EIS is required.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: This plant is small by industry standards and there will be no significant impacts. In addition, the controls contained in permit #3007-00 will further limit the emissions.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: Department of Environmental Quality, Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau. Montana Natural Heritage Program.

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Department of Environmental Quality, Permitting and Compliance Division.

EA prepared by: Lana Hedlund
Date: June 8, 1998