

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Cross Ranch Pit **Proposed Implementation Date:** July 98

Proponent: Jim Gilman Excavating

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 15,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 3-acre site to overlay with asphalt a state highway. The proponent would salvage soils, mine sand and gravel recontour, resoil and reseed the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grazing. An asphalt plant would be set up at the site. Final reclamation on the site would be completed on May 1999.

Location: NW¼SW¼, Sec.34, T9S, R12W **County:** Beaverhead

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>[Y] The proposed site lays ½ mile northeast of Grant along a bench of Tertiary valley fill in the Prairie Creek Valley. The far west end of the site has been previously mined for gravel prior to the advent of reclamation laws.</p> <p>The soil is a rocky sandy loam, approximately 6 to 12 inches deep. The rock fragments are 6 inches plus or minus in diameter. The soils are not fragile, compactible or unstable. There is no overburden to salvage. The soil would be salvaged prior to mining and replaced on the mine site, crusher site, hardstand areas, road, and mineral stockpile sites following recontouring. The site would be mined to the same depth of the existing pit which is 12 feet. Microorganisms should reinvade the site.</p> <p>There are no unusual geologic features and no special reclamation considerations.</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 are several water wells within 1,000 feet. According to the local landowners the water table is approximately 20 feet. There is an irrigation ditch approximately 400 feet north of the proposed operation. The applicant would mine the site to a depth of approximately 12 feet.</p> <p>The applicant would berm and line any fuel and fuel storage areas to contain any petroleum-based products spills. The Department of Environmental Quality Water Protection Bureau has been contacted concerning the need for a Stormwater Discharge Permit. There should be no impact to ground or surface water sources.</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>[N] There would be an increase in airborne particulates while the soil is being salvaged, the gravel being crushed and hauled, asphalt plant operating and soil replaced. The applicant would need to secure an Air Quality Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality prior to crushing activities and asphalt plant use and must abide with all applicable air quality guidelines. Spray bars will be placed on the crusher to suppress dust. The hard stand areas, soil stockpiles and haul roads would be watered as necessary.</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] Existing vegetation would be removed with the soil. Some roots may remain viable in the soil stockpile and regenerate upon replacement. The applicant would seed all affected land to species compatible with the post mine land use and native plants surrounding the proposed operation should reinvade. The site currently contains native grasses, forbs, and shrubs. The site would be seeded with native species of grasses. A literature search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program and a ground search found no threatened or endangered plants present.</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] The location of the proposed operation precludes the significant use of wildlife, although it would be expected to receive transient use by various avian species, deer and rodents.</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] The Montana Natural Heritage Program and a ground search did not identify any threatened or endangered plant or animal species present on this site. There are no wetlands present on the site.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] Steve Platt, archaeologist for Montana Dept. of Transportation, has been contacted about the need for a cultural survey. Should a significant archaeological or historical value be found, the operation would be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be made. the State Historic Preservation Office would 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>[N] The site would be visible from people traveling the highway and from Grant which is located immediately south of the proposed operation. The operation is of a temporary nature.</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] Zoning clearance has been obtained.</p>

<p align="center">IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>	
<p align="center">RESOURCE</p>	<p align="center">POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</p>
<p>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[Y] The use of heavy mining and hauling equipment will increase the risk of accidents. However, the applicant must comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations and it is expected that safety considerations will be given the utmost attention.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] 3.0 acres would be temporarily removed from agricultural production (grazing) until such time as the site is fully reclaimed.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>[N] The site would require periodic site evaluations by DEQ staff, however they would generally be conducted in conjunction with other regional sites.</p>
<p>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>[N] Zoning clearance has been secured from Beaverhead County.</p>

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 and the mineral would be obtained from a different source.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program; Beaverhead County Weed Board and Commissioners; & Steve Platt, Montana Dept. of Transportation archaeologist. The three families living at Grant were contacted by the proponent and signed Resident Notification forms not opposing the operation.

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Beaverhead County for Zoning Compliance and weeds, DEQ for air quality permits and stormwater permit, & OSHA & MSHA for safety permits.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: No significant impacts associated with the proposed operation are anticipated.

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
Name

Supervisor, Opencut Mining Program, IEMB
Title

Approved By: Steve Welch
Name

Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau Chief
Title

Signature

Date