

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Robert Smith

Proposed Implementation Date: Summer 98

Proponent: Montgomery Construction, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 7,500 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 1-acre site for use on a highway bridge project. The proponent would salvage soils, mine sand and gravel, recontour, reseed and reseed the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be livestock grazing. Final reclamation on the site would be November of 1998.

Location: NW¼, Sec.7, T31N, R30E **County:** Phillips

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 site is approximately 9 miles north of Malta on a terrace of Quaternary alluvial sand and gravel 300 feet north of Assiniboine Creek. The soil is a very cobbly sand varying in depth from 0 to 4 inches. The cobbles, which would be separated out and used as riprap are up to 1 foot plus 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 and placement of the fines. The site would be mined to the depth 5 feet. Microorganisms should reinvade the site. 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 no water wells within 1,000 feet. The estimated depth to the water table is 10 feet. The applicant would mine the site to a depth of 5 feet. Assiniboine Creek is 300 feet south of the proposed operation. The applicant would berm and line any fuel and fuel storage areas to contain any petroleum-based products spills. 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 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 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, which is less than 10% cover consisting of prickly pear cactus, sage, green needle grass and western wheatgrass, 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 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 lack of vegetation at 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, antelope, reptiles 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 or species of special concern 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] A cultural resource ground survey was conducted and no resources were found. Clearance has been given on the project by the Montana Dept. Of Transportation Archaeologist, Steve Platt. If during mining a significant archaeological or historical value is 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 is not on a prominent topographic feature or visible from populated or scenic areas. Approximately 2,000 feet east of the proposed operation. The operation would operate for a short time and only during the hours of 8am through 5pm Monday through Friday.</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] The area is not zoned and Phillips County has signed off on the Zoning Compliance form. There are no other studies, plans or projects on this tract.</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] 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.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] 1.0 acres would be temporarily removed from rangeland until such time as the site is fully reclaimed. Reclamation would be concurrent with mining.
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 would require periodic site evaluations by DEQ staff, however they would generally be conducted in conjunction with other regional sites.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] Zoning clearance has been secured from Phillips County.
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]

