

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Spangler **Proposed Implementation Date:** ongoing

**Proponent:** Pioneer Concrete & Fuel Inc.

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, crush, wash, stockpile and transport 30,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from an 8.0 acre expansion of an existing gravel pit. The total under the contract would become 18 acres. The material would be sold in the local area. Two acres of the newly proposed acreage would be bonded as mined land and 6 acres bonded as associated disturbance. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses, with a reclaimed use of pasture. Final reclamation is proposed for 2006.

**Location:** NW¼, Sec. 25, T4N, R10W

**County:** Deer Lodge

**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 there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed operation is located in sands and gravels of an alluvial nature. The site is located near the headwaters of the Clark Fork River. The soils are 12 inches deep and are of a sandy loamy with cobbles texture. There is up to 24 inches of overburden, which is of a very sandy gravelly nature, which would be mined and processed as a product. After regrading the topsoil would be evenly replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the site. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils, or unusual geologic features or 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 a well onsite from which the proponent obtains water for the washplant. The washplant and the two settling ponds are contained within the existing pit area. The site will be mined to a depth of approximately 9 feet which is well above the depth to the water table which is estimated to be at 40 feet as judged from a U.S.G.S. Topographical Quadrangle Map. 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.</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 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><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] The operation would be in a place which has been previously cultivated. Currently there is red top, bluegrass, basin wild rye, various wheatgrasses, knapweed and thistles on the site. Cover is approximately 5%. A native seed mixture would be seeded on the site after regrading and topsoiling have been completed. 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><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]</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 and literature search were conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site and none were encountered during a ground search. No wetlands were present.</p>
<p><b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] A cultural survey was conducted previously on the site and no cultural resources were found. If the operator of the proposed operation discovers any 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 if a discovery of cultural resources is made by the proponent.</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>[N]</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>

**IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION**

<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
<b>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</b> 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.
<b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] There will be a temporary loss of grazing on a total of 18.0 acres of land until the site is successfully reclaimed. Reclamation would be concurrent with mining.
<b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
<b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
<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?	[N] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.
<b>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</b> Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N]
<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?	[N]
<b>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b> Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
<b>19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</b> Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]

<b>20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:</b> Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]
<b>21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</b>	[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 mined at a different location.

**23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted:** Montana Natural Heritage Program & Anaconda/Deer Lodge County Commissioners & Weed Control District

**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; Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality Division for air quality permit.

**25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts:** Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the small amount of disturbance and 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: Supervisor, Opencut Mining Program, IEMB

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

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Signature

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Date