

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

9/3/98

Project Name: Cole Site

Proposed Implementation Date: 3/10/98

Proponent: Schellinger Construction, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to mine and haul 50,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 7 acre pit located 2 miles east of the town of Dixon. There will be 6 acres mined and 1 acre disturbed for facilities and roads. The estimated start-up date is March 10, 1998 and will result in a pit that is no deeper than 14 feet with 3:1 slopes. The pit will be reclaimed to pasture after grading the backslopes to at least a 3:1, replacing all topsoil and re-seeding to grasses.

Location: SW¼NW¼ Section 27, T18N, R21W

County: Sanders

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 mine is located on a relatively level glacial outwash terrace left from the last great release of water from the Glacial Lake Missoula around 12,000 years ago. The deposit consists of stratified layers of alluvium and glacial outwash sand, gravel and cobbles that cover the deeper Precambrian rocks. The billion year old Precambrian rock of the Belt Series sandstone, mudstone and limestone rocks, sometimes injected with black basalt, forms both the Coeur d'Alene mountain range south of the highway and the Cabinet range north of the highway.</p> <p>Up to 12 inches of fairly well drained, clayey, sandy loam topsoil with six to twelve inches of clayey overburden overlies the glacial sands and gravels. Local terrace slopes demonstrate reasonably good stability, and ripping after activities are complete should alleviate soil compaction. All soil material will be salvaged and stockpiled away from the affected land. Following mining, grading and ripping, the overburden and soils will be replaced, disked and seeded to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. The overburden has exhibited the ability to support vegetative growth. Microbes are expected to re-colonize the soil due to the relatively short time that soils will be in stockpiles.</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>[Y] There are 2 water wells in all of sections 27 and 28 and are as follow:</p> <p>Location: 18N 21W 27 AD Site Name: REHDER, HENRY J. Depth: 58.5 Yield: 30.0 Static Water Level: 8.00 Pumping Water Level: 11.0 Casing: Top (ft.) Bottom (ft.) Diameter (in.) Type 0.00 58.50 5.00 Year drilled: 1966 Driller: LEWIS</p> <p>Location: 18N 21W 28 AD Site Name: COLE, DANIEL Depth: 14.0 Yield: 1000.0 Static Water Level: 0.00 Pumping Water Level: 0.0 Casing: Top (ft.) Bottom (ft.) Diameter (in.) Type 0.00 0.00 0.00 Year drilled: 1972 Driller: WAGNER</p> <p>The nearest major surface water is the Jocko River located across Highway 200 to the north of the permit area. No potable water is expected to be adversely impacted.</p> <p>Any accidental spills or major leaks from equipment operating in the pit will immediately be excavated and removed from the site. Therefore, the quality and quantity of the groundwater should not be impacted.</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>[Y] Air quality may be degraded and there may be an increase in particulate matter. Loaders, dozers and trucking equipment typically cause dusty conditions in disturbed soil sites.</p>
<p>4. VEGETATION COVERS, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[Y] Vegetation will be removed during mining, and the ground will be re-planted with alfalfa.</p> <p>There are no known rare or sensitive plants in the area. No mining will be done in any live stream, riparian or isolated wetland habitat areas. Vegetation consists of planted pasture grasses which lie on a gentle southwest facing slope. Vegetation covers 100% of the ground and will be removed and planted with species compatible with the proposed reclaimed use.</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>[Y] Although the area is used primarily for pasture, it also supports populations of deer, bears, skunks, coyotes, rodents, game and non-game birds, insects and various other animal species. The mine site is frequented by those animals and they may be displaced as the mine expands. The proposed mine is not expected to significantly degrade wildlife populations.</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] There are not expected to be any impacts on those species from the proposed mining operation. The Natural Heritage Program and site evaluations have not revealed any endangered or threatened plant or animal species that would be directly affected. Bald eagles are known to range all along the Jocko River Valley, but no nesting sites are known on or near the proposed permit area. No adverse effects are anticipated on the eagles as a result of this proposed action.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] Although there are important cultural values in the general area, this site has been previously disturbed by modern man, thus destroying much of the integrity of resources that may have existed. A surface reconnaissance did not discover any cultural, historical or archeological resources.</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>[Y] The site is located in a scenic, but not unique area. There may be a deterioration of aesthetics while the operation is under way. However, reclamation can leave the site in a landscape condition that is compatible with the surrounding area. The viewshed has been extensively altered by other man made modifiers such as farming, ranching and road construction. The site is visible by one or two homes in the local area and to traffic along Highway 200. Floodlights from dark period operations would increase visibility and awareness of the operation.</p> <p>Noise may increase from present levels when mining equipment is active. Noise levels are generally within the range of 60 to 90 decibels measured on-site, decreasing with distance. As a comparison, sound levels for ordinary activities such as close conversation at 60 decibels and music from a radio at 70 decibels are considered to be moderate. Levels above 90 decibels are severe, and prolonged exposure can lead to hearing loss. These impacts are intermittent and of relatively short duration but are in addition to the noise created by the increased truck traffic hauling to various projects.</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]</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] Heavy equipment and facilities including trucks, loaders and dozers may create hazards, but the operator must comply with all MSHA and OSHA regulations. Excessive and prolonged noise and light could increase stress and induce difficulty sleeping. Both of these effects may be considered harmful to human health if the activities are continuous. This proposed operation is expected to create these impacts sporadically and for short periods; it therefore should not significantly affect human health.</p>

12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] The acreage listed in the Type and purpose of Action will be taken out of grazing and put into industrial/commercial use. Upon completion of mining, the land will be reclaimed to grazing again.
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?	[Y] The operation will require periodic site evaluations by DEQ staff. However, these evaluations are usually performed in conjunction with other area operations.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] This site lies within the Flathead Indian Reservation Boundary. The tribe has been contacted by the applicant.
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:

No Action: The pit would not be permitted at this location and impacts would be translated to another, similar location elsewhere.

Approval of Application as submitted: The pit would be permitted and reclaimed as requested.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted:

State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Heritage Program, Sanders County Commissioners.

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: None.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the size and location of the project and the short time the site will be in operation.

26. Regulatory impact on private property: The analysis conducted in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact since this Plan of Operations would not require "Special Stipulations" in order to comply with the Opencut Mining Act.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Prepared By: Rod Samdahl

Title: Reclamation Specialist

Approved By: Jerry Burke

Title: Supervisor, Opencut Mining Program, IEMB

Signature

Date