

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

9/28/98

Project Name: DNRC Site

Proposed Implementation Date: 11/1/97

Proponent: Konitz Contracting, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to mine, crush and haul 6,900 tons of sand and gravel from a pit located 2 miles west of the town of Pendroy. There will be 1.5 acres mined and 1.5 acres disturbed for facilities and roads. The estimated start-up date is November 1st, 1997 and the project will result in a pit that is no deeper than 10 and daylighted out toward the draw to the southeast. The pit will be reclaimed to grassland after grading the backslopes to at least a 5:1, replacing all topsoil, and re-seeding to grasses.

Location: NW¼ NW¼ Section 26, T27N, R6W

County: Teton

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] Up to six inches of fairly well drained, sandy clay loam topsoil overlies the glacial sands and gravels. Local terrace slopes demonstrate reasonable stability, and ripping after activities are complete should alleviate soil compaction. The site is susceptible to wind erosion and some spots are blown off bare along the breaks where the pit will be located. All soil material will be salvaged and stockpiled away from the affected land. Following mining, grading and ripping, and soils will be replaced, disked and seeded to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion. 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>[N] There is no surface water within ¼ mile of the site. The site is located up on a well drained bench and mining will be well above the groundwater.</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] Crushers, dozers and trucking equipment typically cause dusty conditions in disturbed soil sites. The site is not located within a Class 1 airshed. No wash plant will be used. Air quality may be degraded and there may be an increase in particulate matter.</p> <p>Applicable federal regulations for air quality which are implemented by the state are the Standards of Performance for New Stationary Sources, 40 CFR Part 60, Subpart OOO (Nonmetallic Mineral Processing Plants). Subpart OOO sets an opacity limitation on fugitive dust emissions from the gravel crushing and handling operations.</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] Native vegetation will be removed during mining, and the ground will be re-planted with species compatible with the proposed reclaimed use. The site contains some alfalfa in planted crop areas, native grasses, prickly pear cactus and various forbs which lie on a southeast facing slope. Vegetation covers 90% of the ground and will be removed and planted with species compatible with the proposed reclaimed use.. Native grass species would be reseeded on the site, but the species and composition would be different then what is currently on site. But with time native species from the surrounding native range should reinvade the site. 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. No mining will be done within 100 feet of any live stream, riparian or isolated wetland habitat areas. Because of the short timeframes, plant seeds and roots may remain viable in the soils. Under ideal conditions, native species from undisturbed, adjacent land may reinvade the site.</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] Although the area is used primarily for grazing, it also supports populations of deer, rodents, 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 literature search and site evaluations have not revealed any other endangered or threatened plant or animal species on site that would be significantly impacted.</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, much of this site has been previously disturbed by modern man, thus destroying the integrity of resources that may have existed. A surface reconnaissance did not discover any cultural, historical or archeological resources. The operator must give appropriate protection to any values or artifacts discovered in the affected area. If significant resources are found, the operation must be routed around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be conducted. The State Historical Preservation Office will 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>[Y] There will be a deterioration of aesthetics while the operation is under way. However, reclamation may leave the site in a landscape condition that is compatible with the surrounding area. There is and has been an alteration of the viewshed as a result of this existing sand and gravel mine. The site is visible by traffic along the county road. Floodlights from dark period operations would increase visibility and awareness of the operation.</p> <p>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 the project.</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>

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<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 screens may create hazards, but the operator must comply with all MSHA and OSHA regulations. This proposed operation is expected to create these impacts sporadically and for short periods; it therefore should not significantly affect human health.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[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.</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>[Y] The operation will require periodic site evaluations by DEQ staff. However, these evaluations are usually performed in conjunction with other area operations. The site will add further traffic to the county road during times of operation and may cause need for county road department services.</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]</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:

No Action: The pit expansion would not be permitted and impacts would not occur at this location.
Approval of Application as submitted: The pit would expand and be reclaimed as requested.

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

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

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed:

Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Air Quality Bureau for crusher permit; Mine Safety and Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit.

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, the lack of human occupancy and the lack of significant, threatened or endangered species or habitat.

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 Program, IEMB

Signature

Date