

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Howell Borrow

Proposed Implementation Date: September 98

Proponent: MK Weeden Construction

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine and transport 50,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 4-acre site for the reconstruction of US Highway 89. The proponent would salvage soils, mine borrow, recontour, reseed and reseed the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grazing. Final reclamation on the site would be completed in late October of 1998.

Location: N½NE¼, Sec.35, T17N, R6E

County: Cascade

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 13 miles south of Belt along a ridge which runs east-west. The soil is a silty loam which is 12 inches deep. The overburden will be mined as a product. The soils are not fragile, compactible or unstable. The soil would be stripped and salvaged prior to mining and replaced following recontouring. The site would be mined to a depth of approximately 15 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. There is a developed spring which flows approximately 1 gallon per minute up gradient 50 feet northeast of the proposed borrow site. The water table is estimated to be at 200 feet. The applicant would mine the site to a depth of approximately 15 feet. This is a short term operation and no fuel would be stored on site. 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, borrow material being hauled and soil replaced. The applicant would not need to secure an Air Quality Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality. The hard stand areas and soil stockpiles 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 are native species of grasses and forbs, 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. 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, but 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] 4 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]</p>
<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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

