

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Frying Pan Site

Proposed Implementation Date: Fall 98

Proponent: Beaverhead County

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, stockpile and transport 25,000 cubic yards of pit run sand & gravel from a 20-acre site for use on county roads. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeded the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grazing. Reclamation would be completed by December of 1999.

Location: SE¼, Sec.35, T6S, R9W

County: Beaverhead

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 operation would be located in the southern end of an old unreclaimed gravel pit, used for the construction of Interstate 15. The proposed operation is located four miles north of Dillon and one mile west of Interstate 15. The site is located on a pediment of Tertiary valley fill on the east side of the Pioneer Mountains. The topsoil was previously removed from the site in the early 1970's. There is six inches of a sandy cobbly material on the site which supports some vegetation and this material will be salvaged and stockpiled and after regrading would be evenly replaced. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present or no unusual geologic features or special reclamation considerations. The site would be reclaimed to have slopes 3:1 or flatter. Microorganisms should invade the site.</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] The estimated depth to the water table is greater than 200 feet below the proposed pit floor, as estimated from the U.S.G.S. Topographical Quadrangle Map. The proposed mining depth is 15 feet. There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the site and there would be no impact to the groundwater. The only surface water within 1,000 feet is a wet area located in the existing unreclaimed pit. This wet area would not be impacted by the proposed operation. There would be no fuel stored on site. Daily, a fuel truck or trailer would be brought in to fuel equipment. Silt fences would be installed if necessary to prevent any off site sedimentation or erosion.</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 would be degraded due to the removal of the sand and gravel and by hauling the material from the site. No processing of the sand and gravel would occur. Therefore, an Air Quality Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality would not be needed.</p>
<p>4. VEGETATION COVERS, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[N] The dominant vegetation is very sparse alfalfa and needle and threads which have invaded the site from the surrounding area. The estimated cover is between 10% and 15%. Species of grasses, compatible with the land use, would be seeded onto the site upon recontouring and placement of what growing media there is. 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>

5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Various mammals, birds, and reptiles occasionally traverse the site.
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?	[N] Ground and literature searches were conducted and no threatened or endangered a species or identified habitats were found on the site. No wetlands are present. No threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were identified by a file search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A cultural survey was conducted on the site and no cultural resources were found and clearance has been obtained from the State Historic Preservation Office. The integrity of the site was destroyed by previous mining. 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.
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?	[N] The site is visible from Interstate 15. The operation as proposed is of a short term and would reclaim a portion of an existing unreclaimed gravel pit.
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?	[N]
10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[N]

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] 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.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] Up to 20 acres will be taken out of grazing and wildlife habitat until the site is successfully reclaimed, but the grazing and wildlife habitat is minimal due to the existing unreclaimed gravel pit.
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 will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.

Signature

Date