

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Duncan Colony

Proposed Implementation Date: Winter 1998-1999

Proponent: Riverside Contracting, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 29,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 7.8 acre site for use in overlaying a stretch of Highway 12 with asphalt. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil the site would be planted with grain during the first appropriate agricultural season. The reclaimed use would be grain field. The proposed operation is 6 miles west of Harlowton. There would be an asphalt plant located on site and the site would be reclaimed by November 15, 1999.

Location: SW¼, Sec. 15, T8N, R14E

County: Wheatland

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 is located on a bench on the south side of the Musselshell River valley. The proposed operation would be located in a cultivated field used for growing grain. The topsoil is a very rocky silty clay loam, up to 12 inches deep. The overburden is up to 24 inches deep. The topsoil and the overburden would be stripped and stockpiled separately and after regrading the overburden and then the topsoil would be evenly replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the soil. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, unusual geologic features, or 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] The depth to the water table is estimated to be greater than 30 feet. The seasonal high and low water tables are unknown. The proposed operation would be mined to a depth of 10 feet. There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the site. There will be no impact to the groundwater. Mexican John Creek is approximately 1,000 feet east of the proposed operation. Earthen berms or other erosion control measures would be used to control and prevent any off site erosion and sedimentation. Any accidental spills of petroleum-based products would be immediately cleaned up and the contaminated material properly disposed. The site upon reclamation would be daylighted to the east with 5:1 or flatter slopes in the other directions. There would be no impact to any ground or surface water.</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. The proponent will need to get Air Quality Permits from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality as processing facilities and an asphalt plant are involved with the proposed operation.</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 site is currently in grain stubble. The landowner would seed the site with a grain crop after recontouring and retopsoiling are 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>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>[N] Various mammals, birds, and reptiles occasionally traverse the site. The literature search done by the Montana National Heritage Program noted the presence of the mountain plover, ferruginous hawk, and Baird's sparrow as present in the area, but location of the proposed operation does not support the habitats necessary for the mountain plover, ferruginous hawk or Baird's sparrow.</p>

6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or an endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	[N] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered a species or identified habitats were found on the site. No wetlands are present. See Section 5.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] Due to the amount of previous disturbance the Montana Department of Transportation did not require a cultural survey on the site. 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 a Highway 12, but it is a short term operation and will be reclaimed by the November 15, 1999.
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] 7.8 acres will be taken out of grain production until such time as the site is successfully reclaimed.
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.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] County Zoning clearance has been obtained.
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]

