

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Ramage Gravel Site **Proposed Implementation Date:** December 1998

Proponent: Golden Valley County

Type and Purpose of Action: Proponent has applied for a 1.84-acre Mined land Reclamation Contract where they propose to mine 6,000 cubic yards of weathered sandstone from a 0.64-acre pit. Only mobile equipment will be used in the operation. The mineral will be used on county roads. Proponent has submitted all application materials required under the Opencut Mining Act and the Rules and Regulations governing the Act. Proponent proposes to properly prepare, mine, and reclaim the site in an environmentally responsible manner to a postmining use of rangeland. Proponent is legally bound through their reclamation contract with the state to reclaim the site. The estimated date for final reclamation is 5/2000.

Location: NWNW32, T6N, R21E **County:** Golden Valley

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
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?	[Y] The proposed operation is located on a slightly sloping bench above a small coulee containing a small perennial stream that flows into the nearby Big Coulee Creek prairie drainageway. The surrounding area consists of outcrops, benches, rolling hills, and drainageways all sloping or draining toward Big Coulee Creek. The soil is a sandy clay about 6 inches deep. There is no overburden. The soil will be stripped and stockpiled. The site will be mined and graded to a stable condition blended into the surrounding topography. Soil will be evenly replaced. Although the ground surface and topography will be changed by mining and reclamation, no significant edaphic (soil), topographic, or geologic impacts are anticipated. There are no special reclamation considerations concerning these or other topics.
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?	[N] No groundwater is apparent within or around the area to be mined. The site is about 50 yards above and back from the perennial stream and is buffered by good vegetative cover. Surface and groundwater resources should not be affected by the operation. There are no wells in the immediate area. Proponent has committed to protecting surface water and groundwater resources.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N] Pollutants and particulates may be produced on a temporary basis by this operation. The site is relatively small and in a remote location. Proponent is required to comply with state air quality regulations.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY, AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[Y] The site is currently native range. The site will be reclaimed to rangeland consisting of native grasses and yellow sweetclover. Proponent has committed to appropriate weed control measures. The Montana Natural Heritage Program reports no element occurrences within or near the site.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds, or fish?	[N] The site consists of basic rangeland habitat common to the area.

<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?</p>	<p>[N] None of the mentioned resources are apparent. The Montana Natural Heritage Program reports no element occurrences within or near the site.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] If cultural resources are found during mining and reclamation operations, proponent has committed to promptly notifying the State Historic Preservation Office and routing the operation around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be made.</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] Any aesthetic impact will be temporary. The site is located in a remote area. There are no nearby residences.</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] There should be no impacts on other natural resources.</p>
<p>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans, or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N] Author is not aware that any of the mentioned items are applicable.</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>[N] This project should not significantly increase health and safety risks in the area if the proponent and landowner manage the operation and site in a responsible manner. Proponent is required to comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] No significant impacts are anticipated.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move, or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N] No significant impacts are anticipated.</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N] Tax revenues have not been significantly affected by similar projects in the state.</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 proponent will use local roads to distribute their product. No other government services should be significantly affected.</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] Author is not aware of any other environmental plans or goals. The local zoning authority has been contacted and clearance obtained.</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] No such areas are nearby or accessed through the site. Recreation potential within the tract is insignificant.</p>

