

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Gray

Proposed Implementation Date: Late winter 1999

Proponent: Riverside Contracting

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile, and transport 19,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 5.9-acre site, for use in overlaying a section of Highway 200 with asphalt. The site would be mined to a depth of 14 feet. The reclaimed use would be wetland and pond. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, reseeding the site with grasses. A wetland/pond would be created with water in the reclaimed area from approximately April through September. An asphalt plant will be set up at the site. Final reclamation would be completed by November 15, 1999.

Location: SW¼, Sec. 14, T20N, R3W

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 their unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed operation is located on a bench south of the Sun River in sands and gravels of the Quaternary to Recent geologic age. The proponent would mine to a depth of 14 feet. All available soil and overburden would be stripped and salvaged from the mine area. The soil is a cobbly silt loam 6 inches deep and the overburden is a rocky loam approximately 18 inches deep. After regrading the overburden and then the topsoil would be evenly replaced on the mine area. The facility and stockpile areas would have 6 inches of soil material stripped and salvaged and would be replaced after the area is regraded and ripped. The site would be reclaimed as a wetland/pond and would have water in it approximately April through September. Soil microbes should recolonize the soils. 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] There is an irrigation canal 1,000 feet to the south and a main ditch 500 feet to the northeast. There are several small feeder ditches in the hayfield which would be mined. The irrigation feeder ditches would be cut off short of the pit area and facility area, but after final reclamation the ditches would be extended into the facility area. There are two gravel pits within 1,000 feet of the site which have been reclaimed as wetlands/ponds. From the period of approximately April through September the groundwater rises to within approximately 5 feet of the surface due to irrigation. There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the site. The site would be mined during the period of low water, which is during the months of February and March when the water is approximately 17 feet below the surface. The site would be mined to a depth of 14 feet. Any bulk fuel storage tanks would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any leaks or spills. The proponent would not need to obtain a Stormwater Discharge Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality, but will implement best management practices to prevent any off site erosion or sedimentation. There should 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 will be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and an Air Quality Permit obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher and asphalt plant.</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] The vegetation on the site is alfalfa. After the site is regraded and topsoiled the facility and stockpile area and road would be seeded with alfalfa, and the mined area with canary reed grass and Garrison creeping meadow foxtail. A literature search was done by the Montana Natural 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] The site may be utilized to some extent by deer, rodents, and various species of birds. The reclaimed gravel pits, which were reclaimed to wetlands/ponds, contain various waterfowl species during the time they have water in them.</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>[Y] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site. The literature search conducted by the Montana Natural Heritage Program did not identify and federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat as present. No species of special concern were noted.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] A cultural resource ground survey was conducted previously and no resources were found. Steve Platt of the Montana Dept. of Transportation has given cultural resource clearance on the site. Any cultural resources which would have been present would have been destroyed by agricultural practices.</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 proposed operation is fairly isolated and is of a short term nature with reclamation being completed no later than November 15, 1999.</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>

<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] There will be increased hazards because of the 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.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[Y] Two acres of the 5.9 contracted acreage would be permanently taken out of agricultural production and replaced by a wetland/pond. The remaining 3.9 acres would be returned to agricultural production.</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 will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area</p>

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]
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. Alternative # 1: Denial. The owner of the gravel resource would be denied full utilization of his property at this time.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Heritage Program, Cascade County Planning Office and Weed Management Board.

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for Air Quality Permit; Mine Safety and Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Labor and Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant because of the proposed operation's size and being short term.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke Title: Opencut Mining Program Supervisor, IEMB

Approved By: Steve Welch Title: Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau Chief

Signature

Date