ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Miller Colony **Proposed Implementation Date:** March 99
Proponent: Riverside Contracting, Inc.
Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 22,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 5.2-acre site to overlay with asphalt a portion of Highway 87. The proponent would salvage soils, mine sand and gravel, recontour, resoil and the landowner would reseed the site with grain. The reclaimed use would be grainfield. An asphalt plant would be set up at the site. Final reclamation on the site would be completed by November 15, 1999.
Location: SW¼, Sec. 8, T25N, R5W **County:** Teton

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 site is located in gently rolling country 9 miles northwest of Choteau. The proposed operation would expand a reclaimed gravel pit to the east. The soils are a loam texture approximately 6 inches deep. The overburden is a clayey texture and is approximately 6 inches deep. The soil and overburden would be stripped and salvaged separately and after regrading and replacement of the overburden the soil would be replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the site. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, no unusual geologic features or special reclamation considerations.
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]** There are no water wells or surface water sources within 1,000 feet. The water table is estimated to be at 40 feet. The site would be mined to a depth of 15 feet. Any accidental spills of petroleum-based products would be immediately picked up and properly disposed of. If necessary, the applicant would install straw bales and/or silt fence to control any off site erosion or sedimentation. There should be no impact to ground or surface water sources.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	**[N]** There would be an increase in airborne particulates while the soil is being salvaged, the gravel being crushed and hauled, asphalt plant operating and soil replaced. The applicant would need to secure an Air Quality Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality prior to crushing activities and asphalt plant use and must abide with all applicable air quality guidelines. Spray bars will be placed on the crusher to suppress dust. The hard stand areas, soil stockpiles, and haul roads would be watered as necessary.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	**[N]** Existing vegetation 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. The site currently contains grain. The site would be seeded back to grain. Since the site is a cultivated field in grain production any rare plants or cover types would have been destroyed when the site was first cultivated. The Montana Natural Heritage Program literature search did not identify any rare plants or cover types as being present in the area.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use	**[N]** Various mammals, birds, and reptiles occasionally traverse the site. According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program the site is

of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	within the ecosystem which supports grizzly bear.
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]** The Montana Natural Heritage Program has not identified any threatened or endangered plant or animal species present on this site. A ground search did not reveal the presence of any federal listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat or species of special concern. The site is in an upland area and is approximately 2 mile from the nearest riparian area, which is typically used as a travel corridor for grizzly bear. There are no wetlands present on the site of the proposed operation.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	**[N]** A cultural resource survey was previously done and no resources were found. Clearance was given by the State Historic Preservation Office. 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.
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 operation is of a temporary nature.
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]** Zoning clearance has been obtained.

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]** 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.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	**[Y]** 5.2 acres would be temporarily removed from agricultural production (grain) until such time as the site is fully 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 would require periodic site evaluations by DEQ staff, however they would generally be conducted in conjunction with other regional sites.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	**[N]** Zoning clearance has been secured from Teton County.
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	**[N]**

POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	
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. Alternatives Considered: 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: Montana Natural Heritage Program; Teton County Commissioners and Weed Board; & Steve Platt, Montana Dept. of Transportation archaeologist

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Teton County for Zoning Compliance and weeds, DEQ for air quality permits and stormwater permit, & OSHA & MSHA for safety permits

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: No significant impacts associated with the proposed operation are anticipated.

26. Regulatory Impact on Private Property: The analysis conducted in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

[ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [X] No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: _____Jerry Burke_____ Supervisor, Opencut Mining Program, IEMB

Name Title

Approved By:_____Steve Welch_____ _Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau Chief_____

Name Title

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Signature Date