

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Ike's Butte site

Proposed Implementation Date: March, 1999

Proponent: Liberty County Road Dept.

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 10,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 5 acre site located 9 miles northeast of Whitlash. The excavation would make a 20 foot cut into the side of a rolling hill and will reclaim by contouring, spreading the topsoil and reseeding with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grassland. Reclamation would be completed by 2008.

Location: SE¼ SE¼, Sec. 2, T37N, R4E

County: Liberty

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 in a large swale in rolling pasture land. The topsoil is 12 to 18 inches of black silty loam underlain by glacial sand and gravel. The topsoil would be stripped and stockpiled separately, and after mining they would be replaced and graded. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present and there are no unusual geologic features. Microorganisms should re-invade the soil.</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 800 feet. The seasonal high and low water tables are unknown. The proposed operation would mine the pit to a depth of approximately 20 feet. There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the site. There will be no impact to the groundwater. There is no surface water near the site. The proposed gravel pit would mine into a glacial ridge, daylighting out towards the draw to the southwest. Any accidental spills of petroleum-based products would be immediately cleaned up and the contaminated material properly disposed. Best management practices should prevent any impacts to 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 would need to obtain an Air Quality Permit from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality as processing facilities are involved with the proposed operation. The site is not within a Class I Airshed.</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 native range with the grasses consisting of junegrass, wheatgrasses and blue gramma. Vegetative cover varies from 80 to 90%. Grass species (native and nonnative) which would be compatible with the proposed land use of rangeland would be seeded on the site after re-contouring and re-topsoiling 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 did not indicate the presence of any species of special concern.</p>
<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] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site. No wetlands are present. See Section 5.</p>

7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] No historical, archaeological or paleontological resources were identified at 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 and the BLM 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 not visible to any but local farm and oilfield traffic.
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] 5 acres will be taken out of rangeland 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]

