

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Stone Mountain

Proposed Implementation Date: August 1999

Proponent: The Bluffs Company

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport up to 50,000 cubic yards of gravel from a 4.5 acre site for providing the local area with sand and gravel. The site would be reclaimed to ponds, with slopes and other areas topsoiled and seeded with grasses. The reclaimed use would be ponds for fish, people and fire protection. Reclamation would be completed by October of 2005.

Location: SW¼, Sec. 34, T9N, R3W

County: Jefferson

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 the alluvial valley of Little Prickley Pear Creek in sand and gravel deposited during the Quaternary era. The area has an average of 12 inches of loamy textured topsoil which would be salvaged and respread after recontouring down to the high water mark of the ponds. There is no overburden. 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>[Y] There are several water wells in the immediate area, the majority of which were placed to monitor water for a proposed subdivision. All of the wells within 1,000 feet are owned by the applicant and have no beneficial use. Little Prickley Pear Creek is located 100 feet to the east, across the abandoned railroad bed. The water table is estimated to be 6 to 10 feet below the current ground surface. The site would be mined to a maximum depth of 18 feet. The site would be dewatered by placing a suction hose in the bottom of the pit. The mine bottom would be sloped to drain to the suction hose. The suction hose inlet would be suspended either by being attached to steel post driven into the bottom or attached to an empty thirty-gallon drum. A pump running eight hours per day should keep the pit dewatered. Twenty feet of pipe would be connected to the outlet side of the pump. The discharge from pipe would be into a trench 10 feet long, 7 feet deep and 2 feet wide. As the trench becomes full the water would be discharged over the ground in a sheet. Due the topography of the area no discharge water would reach any state waters. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Water Protection Bureau, would require no discharge permit or stormwater permit. Any leaks or spills of petroleum-based products would be immediately cleaned up and properly disposed of. No fuel would be stored onsite.</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, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards, and Air Quality Permits obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher and asphalt plant. Water would be used to control any dust on the access road and facility area.</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 in the area of the proposed operation contains smooth brome, wheatgrasses and bluegrass. The site has been cultivated in the past. There is also some knapweed, whitetop, and Canadian thistle. The applicant has a weed control plan with the Jefferson County Weed Board. Native and non-native grass species would be seeded upon recontouring and retopsoiling but will be different than what is currently growing on the site. 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>

5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N]
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] Ground and literature searches were conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitat were found on the site. There are no wetlands present.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] Modern man has previously impacted the area. Therefore any cultural resources would have been destroyed. 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]
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, and 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?	[Y] Acreage would be taken out of pasture/grazing and replaced with ponds.
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. The area of the proposed operation is not zoned.
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]

