

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Mortag

**Proposed Implementation Date:** July 99

**Proponent:** Riverside Contracting, Inc.

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 40,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 9.1-acre site to overlay with asphalt a portion Montana Secondary 330. The proponent would salvage soils, mine sand and gravel, recontour, reseed and reseed the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be pasture. An asphalt plant would be set up at the site. Final reclamation on the site would be completed by November 15, 2000.

**Location:** SW¼, Sec. 1, T17N, R2E

**County:** Cascade

**N = Not present or No Impact will occur.**

**Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts).**

<b>IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
<p><b>1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:</b> Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p><b>[Y]</b> The proposed site is located on a bench on the west side of the Smith River Valley approximately 15 miles south of Ulm. There is an existing gravel pit to the east operated by Cascade County.</p> <p>The soils are a sandy silt loam texture approximately 6 inches deep. The overburden 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.</p> <p>There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, no unusual geologic features or special reclamation considerations.</p>
<p><b>2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:</b> 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><b>[N]</b> There are no water wells within 1,000 feet. The water table is estimated to be at 200 feet. The site would be mined to a depth of 12 feet.</p> <p>The Smith River is approximately 1000 feet to the east and approximately 200 feet lower than the proposed pit.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p><b>3. AIR QUALITY:</b> Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p><b>[Y]</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</b> Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p><b>[N]</b> The vegetation on the site consists mainly of bluebunch wheatgrass, green needlegrass, western wheatgrass, fescue, and prairie junegrass. Both native and nonnative grass species would be seeded upon regrading and retopsoiling. The Montana Natural Heritage</p>

	Program literature search and a ground survey did not identify any rare plants or cover types as being present in the area.
<b>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</b> Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Various mammals, birds, and reptiles occasionally traverse the site.
<b>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> 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. There are no wetlands present on the site of the proposed operation.
<b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A cultural survey was done by Gar Wood and a teepee rings were found along the southeast corner of the bench outside of the proposed contract area. This area is marked and will be avoided by the proponent. 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.
<b>8. AESTHETICS:</b> 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. The proposed operation would not be visible by recreationists on the Smith River or by vehicles on the secondary highway.
<b>9. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:</b> Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N]
<b>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[N]

<b>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b>	
<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
<b>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</b> 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.
<b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] 9.1 acres would be temporarily removed from agricultural production (pasture) until such time as the site is fully reclaimed.
<b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
<b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
<b>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:</b> 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.
<b>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</b> Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] Zoning clearance has been secured from Cascade County. The area is not zoned.

