

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Saier

**Proposed Implementation Date:** Winter 2000

**Proponent:** A.M. Welles, Inc.

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The proponent proposes to mine, crush and transport 50,000 cubic yards of sand & gravel from a 3.7-acre site for the reconstruction of Highway 287. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeded the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be pasture. The site would be reclaimed by December of 2001.

**Location:** SW¼, Sec. 11,T6S, R1W

**County:** Madison

**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>
<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?	<b>[N]</b> The proposed operation is located on the west facing slope of a bench on the east side of the Madison River valley, just east of Highway 287. The soils are approximately 3 inches deep and are of a sandy loam texture. After regrading soil would be replaced. Microorganisms should invade the soil. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, no unusual geologic features, or special reclamation considerations.
<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?	<b>[N]</b> There is a drainage on the east side of the proposed mining area, which carries water during spring runoff. This drainage would not be impacted by the proposed operation. There are no wells within 1,000 feet of the proposed operation. Depth to the water table is estimated to be 15 to 20 feet below the elevation of the highway. The elevation of the toe of the bench, which the proponent proposes to mine, is the approximately same elevation as the highway. Mining would not be conducted below the toe of the bench. The site will be mined to the height of the bench (24 feet). No fuel would be stored on site. Best Management Practices would be used to prevent any off site sedimentation or erosion. The proposed operation would not impact groundwater or any surface water sources.
<b>3. AIR QUALITY:</b> Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	<b>[Y]</b> Air quality would be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and have an Air Quality Permit from the Air and Waste Management Bureau of the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher. To control dust, spray bars would be utilized on the crusher and a water truck on the haul road and the mine area.
<b>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</b> Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	<b>[N]</b> The vegetation on the site consists mainly of very sparse rubber rabbit brush and various native grasses. Native and non-native species would be seeded on the site after recontouring and retopsoiling. A literature search was done by the Montana National Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified as being present on the site and none were observed during a ground search.
<b>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</b> Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	<b>[N]</b>
<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?	<b>[N]</b> The Montana Natural Heritage Program did a literature search and no federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were identified as being present on the site. A ground search did not reveal any threatened or endangered species or identified habitat or species of special concern. No wetlands are present.

<p><b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] Steve Platt, archaeologist for the Montana Dept. of Transportation did not require a cultural resource survey as the majority of the area had been previously surveyed. 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.</p>
<p><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?</p>	<p>[Y] The proposed project is located on Highway 287 to Yellowstone National Park and would be visible from the highway, but it would be a short-term operation and would be reclaimed by December of 2001.</p>
<p><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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</b> Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

<b>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b>	
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<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
<p><b>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</b> Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[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.</p>
<p><b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] There will be a temporary loss of pastureland on 3.7 acres of land until the site is successfully reclaimed.</p>
<p><b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><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?</p>	<p>[N] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.</p>
<p><b>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</b> Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:</b> Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</b> Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p><b>19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</b> Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

