

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Schritz

Proposed Implementation Date: Winter 2000

Proponent: Fisher Sand & Gravel

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to mine, crush, stockpile and transport 50,000 cubic yards of sand & gravel from a 12.3 acre site to provide gravel for the reconstruction of U.S. Highways 12 and 287 through Townsend. No asphalt plant would be involved with this operation. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring the slopes, and then respreading the topsoil to make the area suitable for grain production by May of 2001. The proposed operation would operate 24 hours per day and the crew would work 9 days straight and then take 5 days off. The mining and crushing operation would last a total of approximately 3 weeks.

Location: NE¼SW¼, Sec. 29, T7N, R2E

County: Broadwater

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 within the Missouri River valley approximately 1.3 miles NNE of Townsend. The soils are approximately 6 inches deep and are a gravelly sandy loam texture. There is 12 inches of overburden. After regrading, the overburden and then the 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.</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] There are no surface water features within 1,000 feet of the proposed operation. There is a well owned by the landowner within 100 feet of the proposed operation. This well is used for domestic purposes and is 30 feet deep with a static water level at 12 feet. The water table fluctuates at the site between 10 to 12 feet. The proposed operation would mine to a depth of 8 feet, which is above the depth to the water table. The replacement of the overburden and topsoil would bring the elevation of the site to a minimum of 3 feet above the high ground water table. Fuel for the proposed operation is stored in a van. Best Management Practices would be used to prevent any off site sedimentation or erosion.</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 an Air Quality Permit obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher. A water truck would be used to control any dust on the stockpile and facility areas.</p>
<p>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[Y] The vegetation on the site consists mainly of kochia, ragweed and a few plants of spotted knapweed. The site is a grainfield, which is in fallow. The proponent has obtained a weed control plan from the Broadwater County Weed District. After the site has been regraded and retopsoiled, grain would be seeded on the site by the landowner during the first appropriate agricultural season. 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]</p>
<p>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered</p>	<p>[N] The Montana National Heritage Program did a literature search and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitat or species of special concern were found on the site. The search did note the</p>

species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	presence of abandoned blue heron and double-crested cormorant nests on an island in the Missouri River approximately 1 mile northwest of the proposed operation. The operation as proposed would have no effect on the birds if they were to return to the island. Canada geese have also been seen nesting on the island and the operation would have no effect on the birds as the site would be mined during the winter. A ground search did not reveal any threatened or endangered species or identified habitat or species of special concern. No wetlands are present.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] Steve Platt, archaeologist for the Montana Dept. of Transportation did not require a cultural resource survey on the site due to the impacts of modern man. 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?	[Y] The site is not located on a prominent topographical feature. The proposed operation is located on the east side of canton Lane, and immediately to the west of there, is the Mountain View Mobil Home Court. The proponent has proposed to operate the site 24 hours per day for 9 days and the crew would then take 5 days off. The mining and crushing operations would last approximately 3 weeks. The residences of the mobile homes were notified of the proposed operation, including the hours of operation and they signed Resident Notification Forms as not being opposed to the proposal. The proponent would place the overburden and topsoil stockpiles to the west to reduce the impacts of the lights and noise from the proposed operation. The gravel stockpiles would be oriented to help reduce those impacts too. The proponent will also reduce the volume on equipment backup alarms. The operation, as proposed, would be short term for the mining and crushing. The material would be hauled from the site on an as needed basis for the reconstruction of the highways. The site would be fully reclaimed by May of 2001.
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?	[N] There will be a temporary loss of grainfield on 12.3 acres of land until 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]
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
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. Impacts would not occur at this location but, however, the proponent could apply to mine another area where similar impacts may be expected.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program & Broadwater County Commissioners and Weed Control District. The department received 38 Resident Notification forms, which were filled out and signed by residents of the Mountain View Mobil Home Court and none were opposed to the proposed operation.

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Mine Safety & Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit; Air Quality Bureau of DEQ for air quality permit for the crusher.

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the small amount of disturbance and short duration of the project.

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

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jerry Burke Title: Supervisor, Opencut Mining Program, IEMB

Approved By: Steve Welch Title: Bureau Chief, Industrial & Energy Minerals Bureau

Signature

Date