

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Lafond

Proposed Implementation Date: Winter 2000

Proponent: Montgomery Construction

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush and transport 16,000 cubic yards of sand & gravel from a 2 acre site for highway construction. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, respreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses. The reclaimed use would be grazing. The site would be reclaimed by the December of 2006.

Location: SW¼, Sec. 12, T29N, R39E

County: Valley

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 gently rolling hills on the north side of the Milk River Valley approximately 2.5 miles north of Malta. This proposed operation would expand an existing reclaimed gravel pit to the west. The soils are approximately 6 inches deep and are of a very pebbly silty loam texture on the proposed mine area. There is no overburden. There is no soil on the area that would be used stockpiling the minerals and placing the crusher. After regrading the soil would be evenly replaced on the proposed mine area. Microorganisms should reinvade 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>[Y] There is an irrigation canal approximately 450 feet to the south. There are no wells within 1,000 feet of the proposed operation. It is estimated that the water table is approximately 20 feet plus below the existing reclaimed pit floor, as judged by the Malta NE USGS Topographical Quadrangle Map. The seasonal high and low water table depths are unknown, but we will mine into the toe of the existing hill to the maximum height of the hill, which is approximately 12 feet. Any bulk fuel storage containers would be lined and bermed and be of sufficient size to contain any spills. Best Management Practices would be used to prevent any off site sedimentation or erosion. The proposed operation would not impact groundwater or surface water sources.</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 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.</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 on the site consists mainly sparse fescue, green needle grass and bluebunch wheatgrass. Native and non-native species would be seeded on the site after recontouring and retopsoiling. The native grasses from the surrounding area should reinvade the site with time. 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.</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</p>	<p>[N] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered</p>

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	species or identified habitats were found on the site. The literature search conducted by the Montana Natural Heritage Program identified the swift fox as present in an area north of the Milk River from Chinook to Hinsdale and extending to Canada. There maybe at least four breeding pairs. It is highly unlikely that this proposed operation would impact the fox due to the lack of suitable habitat on the site and the nearby presence of residences. No wetlands are present.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A cultural resource survey was previously done on this site and no resources were found on 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 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, 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 grazing on 2 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]
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	

