ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Bateman **Proposed Implementation Date:** Spring 2000
Proponent: Fisher Sand & Gravel
Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush and transport 35,000 cubic yards of sand & gravel from an 18.0-acre site for the reconstruction of the Little Whitetail Creek road. There would not be an asphalt plant connected with this operation. 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 late September of 2001.
Location: SW¼, Sec. 28,T3N, R4W **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**
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?	**[N]** The proposed operation is located on a bench directly to the east of Little Whitetail Creek. The soils are approximately 12 inches deep and are of a very rocky sandy loam texture. After regrading the soil would be replaced. Microorganisms should reinvade the soil. There are no fragile, compactible or unstable soils present, no unusual geologic features, or special reclamation considerations.
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?	**[Y]** Little Whitetail Creek is approximately 200 feet to the west of the proposed operation. Fitz Creek, an intermittent stream, is approximately 50 feet north of the proposed operation. There is an irrigation ditch to the west approximately 70 feet. The proponent may use water from Little Whitetail Creek to control dust. If this is the case the proper permit will be obtained from the Montana Dept. of N atural Resources. A storm water permit has been obtained from the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality Water Protection Bureau. It is estimated that the groundwater table is approximately 50 feet below the current ground surface. The site would be mined to a depth of 14 feet. There would not be any bulk fuel storage at this 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.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	**[Y]** Air quality would be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and have Air Quality Permits 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 and facility area.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	**[N]** The vegetation on the site consists mainly of silver sagebrush, fescue bluebunch wheatgrass, club moss and rubber rabbitbrush.. 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.
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	**[N]** The Montana Natural Heritage Program did a literature search and reported the mountain plover as being present in the general area. The

any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	site was walked in a random pattern by Chris Yde, wildlife biologist for the department, and the author; and no nests or birds were observed. The habitat at the site is considered to be minimum quality for what is needed for the mountain plover. The proposed operation would be operated prior to or early in the breeding and nesting season; therefore, minimal impacts to the mountain plover are anticipated. No wetlands are present in the area.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	**[N]** Steve Platt, archaeologist for the Montana Dept. of Transportation, required a cultural resource survey and no resources were found. 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 18 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 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 and similar impacts may be expected.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program & Jefferson County Planning Dept. & Weed Control District.

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 & an Air Quality Permit from the Air and Waste Management Bureau of the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality 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 [X] 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

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Signature Date