

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Tash

Proposed Implementation Date: Summer 2000

Proponent: Jim Gilman Excavating, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine, crush and transport 65,000 cubic yards of sand & gravel from a 7.0-acre site for the reconstruction of the Scenic highway from Wise River to past Polaris. There would 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 fall of 2001.

Location: NE¼, Sec. 30, T5S, R12W

County: Beaverhead

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 in the foothills of the Pioneer Mountains approximately ½ north of Polaris. This proposal would expand an existing unreclaimed gravel pit from which there has been no soil salvaged in the past. The soils are approximately 6 inches deep and are of a very rocky silty loam texture. Excess soil from the road project will be used to augment the existing soils. 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.</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 sources within 1,000 feet of the proposed operation. A dry coulee is located between the mine area and the facility area and this drainage should not be impacted to any degree. There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the proposed pit. Depth to the water table is estimated to be at 30 feet. The site would be mined to a depth of 15 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 any 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 Air Quality Permits from the Air and Waste Management Bureau of the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher and asphalt plant. 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.</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 of native species of grasses and forbs. Native and non-native species would be seeded on the site after recontouring and retopsoiling. The Montana Natural Heritage Program did a literature search and the Lemhi beardtongue was identified as being present near the site. Botanists from the U.S.F.S. surveyed the area of the proposed gravel pit and did not encounter this or other rare plants or cover types. The habitat of the proposed gravel pit is not conducive to the species. The botanists did locate specimens on the old road cuts of the existing road.</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 species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?</p>	<p>[N] The Montana Natural Heritage Program did a literature search and reported the westslope cutthroat trout as being present in streams near the site and the surrounding area as having habitat potential for the lynx. The site of the proposed operation is outside of the corridor outlined as having potential habitat for the lynx. No wetlands are present in the area.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: 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. 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>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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: 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>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] There will be a temporary loss of grazing on 7 acres of land until the site is successfully reclaimed.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: 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>16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N]</p>
<p>18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>[N]</p>

