

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** John Medearis Pit

**Proposed Implementation Date:** July 7, 2000

**Proponent:** Gratech Company, Ltd.

**Type and Purpose of Action:** Gratech Company intends to mine, crush and screen 55,000 cu. yds. of gravel on a 7-acre site. The mined material will be used for various road projects in the area. The site is presently used for pasture and will be reclaimed with a native seed mix to continue this use after reclamation. The proposed life of this project is 6 months.

**Location:** SE¼NE¼ Sec 13, T 8N R55E

**County:** Fallon

**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><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?</p>	<p>[ N ] The site is located on a flat alluvial bench, underlain by sedimentary rocks. The soils are loams. Test holes revealed about 12” of topsoil and 11” of sandy, gravelly subsoils. These two layers will be stripped and stockpiled separately. The soils have no peculiar characteristics that would impede reclamation.</p> <p>No unusual geologic or other characteristics exist on site that would require special consideration during reclamation.</p>
<p><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?</p>	<p>[ N ] Cottonwood Creek lies about a half mile to the northwest. The county road ditch 50 yards to the west ponds water intermittently. The site lies about 50 feet above the county road. The high water table is at 30 feet. There are no wells near the site.</p> <p>Mining will not disturb the vegetated slope down to the county road. Runoff will be controlled within the mine and ancillary facilities area. If necessary, sediment from the haulroad will be contained by silt fences. The haulroad will be removed at final reclamation.</p> <p>Mining will occur to a depth of 20 feet so it will not affect groundwater. No water quality or quantity impacts are anticipated.</p>
<p><b>3. AIR QUALITY:</b> Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>[ N ] The proposed plan includes using a water truck to reduce dust on site and on the haul road. The crusher is equipped with spray bars to reduce dust emissions. Both the crusher and screening plant have separate Air Quality permits issued and regulated by the Air Quality Bureau of MTDEQ.</p> <p>No impacts are anticipated.</p>
<p><b>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</b> Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[ N ] A field inspection by DEQ and literature search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program did not identify any rare species or species of special concern.</p> <p>The existing sod-forming grassland is typical of the eastern Montana plains. Some sagebrush, prickly pear cactus, and wild rose occur on previously disturbed land immediately to the south. The field to the north was planted to crested wheatgrass years ago.</p> <p>Reclamation will be to a native species grassland allowing the present land use to resume.</p>
<p><b>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</b> Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>[ N ] The site is occasionally used by antelope, sharptail grouse, mule deer, and small mammals. The surrounding vicinity also contains whitetail deer, wild turkeys, and pheasants.</p> <p>A field inspection by DEQ and a literature search by the Montana Natural Heritage Program did not identify any rare species or species of special concern.</p>

<p><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?</p>	<p>[ N ] No threatened or endangered species, rare vegetative communities, species of special concern or wetlands exist on or near the site.</p>
<p><b>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:</b> Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[ N ] A literature search conducted by the State Historical Preservation Office did not identify any cultural resource sites in the area.  DEQ staff conducted a field reconnaissance. No artifacts or sites were discovered on the surface. Inspection of previously disturbed land immediately to the south gave no indication of a subsurface resource.  However, if a cultural resource were uncovered during mining, operations would be halted or rerouted until significance could be determined and appropriate actions could be taken.</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>[ N ] Although the pit is located on a small rise close to the county road, traffic is light. The undisturbed western slope will tend to mask the operation to some extent. The nearest house is close to a half mile away.  No aesthetic impact is anticipated.</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>	
<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>[ N ] Upgrading of roads in the area will make travel safer for the local population. The intersection of the county road and the haulroad is very visible in both directions.</p>
<p><b>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</b> Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[ N ] A temporary interruption of grazing on the property will occur, but reclamation should return the land to as good or better grazing than before.</p>
<p><b>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</b> Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[ Y ] No permanent jobs will be created. Some temporary construction jobs will move into the area during the project.</p>
<p><b>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</b> Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[ Y ] A small revenue increase will occur because of the project.</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 ]</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>

