

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Dye Trust

Proposed Implementation Date: July 15, 2000

Proponent: Fallon County

Type and Purpose of Action: Fallon County wishes to open an 12-acre gravel pit with crushing operation to mine 40,000 cubic yard of material to be used for normal road maintenance. Length of the project would be about 5 years, and then would be reclaimed to its present use as pasture and hay ground.

Location: NENE Sec 7 T9N R60 E **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
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 thin soils have developed from sedimentary rocks of the Fort Union formation. Test holes showed an average of 6 inches of sandy clay loam topsoil and about 8 inches of sandy overburden. Precipitation averages about 14 inches per year.
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?	[N] There are no surface water features in the vicinity. Depth to groundwater is approximately 40 feet. Mining would proceed to a 20-foot depth leaving a large buffer zone. Groundwater would not be affected by this project.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N] The crusher is permitted by the Air Quality section of DEQ. Sprayers on the crusher reduce dust emission to approved levels. A water truck would be used to control dust from vehicular traffic. No special airsheds exist in this part of Montana. No impacts are anticipated.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N] The land is presently being used for raising small grain. No natural habitat exists on site.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Occasionally deer and antelope graze the field. Small rodents and birds also utilize it to a small degree.
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?	[N] The Montana Natural Heritage Program has no listings for this area. Since this is a plowed agricultural field used for raising grain no native species exist on site.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] The Montana Historic Preservation Office reports that one lithic scatter site was discovered in this section. A field reconnaissance was performed. The site has been plowed to a depth of about 1 foot. No artifacts were found on the surface. No subsurface resources were found by checking the roadside or edge of field ditches. However, if a resource were uncovered during operations, mining activity would be diverted to another location for a reasonable length of time to allow for proper assessment of the find.
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] The site is flat on low-lying plains. The site is located off the county road but is several miles from Highway 7.

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?	[N] Product will be used to maintain local roads in the area and, therefore, should add to the safety of the driving public.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] The field would be out of agricultural production during the life of the project. Revenue for the landowner would be generated by the sale of the gravel. After reclamation the site would be returned to agriculture.
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]
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. This alternative would result in denying the use of a resource to the landowner, and in an increased safety risk to the driving public where the road maintenance would not occur.

Alternative 2: Alternate location of the site. Since another pit location would be farther from the proposed use sites of the product, transportation costs and risks would increase unnecessarily from this alternative.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office, Weed Control District, Fallon County Commissioners

