

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Cox

Proposed Implementation Date: August 26, 2000

Proponent: Rosebud County

Type and Purpose of Action: The county proposes to mine 12,000 cubic yards of pit run gravel for use on local roads and other projects in the county. The action would disturb 5 acres of rangeland at the edge of a bench 4 miles south of Vananda. Reclamation would be completed by November, 2020, and would return the land to range.

Location: SWSW of 29, and the SESE of Sec 30 T7N R38E **County:** Rosebud

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 site is located on top of an alluvial terrace about a mile from, and several hundred feet above the Yellowstone River.</p> <p>The site was mined previous to the passage of the state reclamation law. Topsoil was not salvaged and several old product stockpiles are scattered around, both on this site and surrounding it. Maximum soil depth is 6 inches. Excess fines from the screening plant may augment the sparse soils.</p> <p>Precipitation ranges from 10 to 14 inches.</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] The Yellowstone River is a mile to the north and is about 200 feet in elevation below the site. No surface waters are closer. The site on top of terrace is flat because of the old mining.</p> <p>The two-track road connecting the county road and the site is adequate for use and would not require any improvement. It is not anticipated that the road would be graveled</p> <p>Mining would proceed to a depth of about 10 feet deep and would not encounter any groundwater.</p> <p>No fuel, asphalt, or other chemicals would be stored on site.</p> <p>No impacts to either groundwater or surface water would occur.</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>[N] The site would be used for pit run and screened gravel. A water truck would be used for dust abatement, if necessary, both on site and on the haul road.</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 site is presently used as rangeland. Because of previous mining the rangeland is in poor condition. Some sage, yucca and cheatgrass grow. No noxious weeds were present. No rare species or cover types were found during a field inspection.</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>[Y] Occasionally deer and antelope wander through the site. Thus, very little impact is expected.</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>[Y] The Montana Natural Heritage Program has no listings in the vicinity. The site does not fit the criteria for wetlands. No species of special concern are present.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] The State Historical Preservation Office has no listings for this area. A field inspection showed that no resources or artifacts were found either on the surface, or other disturbed areas along the road and hay yard. However, if a resource were to be discovered, operations would be curtailed for a reasonable time to allow for assessment of the find.</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?	[N] The site lies miles from the any town about a quarter mile from the nearest county road.
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] The gravel would be used to maintain and upgrade the county's roads. This would promote safer travel and better year-round access for the local residents.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] About 5 acres of poor rangeland production would be lost for a few years.
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] Truck traffic generated by this project would be totally insignificant.
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. 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.

