

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

September 19, 2000

Project Name: Kalispell Pit Site **Proposed Implementation Date:** Fall, 1999

Proponent: LHC, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to amend its existing permit to include an additional 36 acres to mine, crush, stockpile, and transport another 4,500,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel over a 20 year period from its site located 4.5 miles northwest of Kalispell. The mine would continue to dig easterly into a bench to a depth of 50 feet leaving the floor of the site level with the lower existing pasture to the east. The gravel is currently mined and processed by crushers, a wash plant, a screen and some is hauled out as pit run. An asphalt plant is used occasionally. Traditional land use (pasture and grain farm) will continue throughout the life of the mine on the pre-mine and post-mine areas of the 116-acre site. A pond is used for wash plant overflow to provide wildlife habitat, livestock water and also to enhance aesthetics. This amendment also substantially upgrades the Plan of Operations from the original issued in 1986. The reclaimed use would be grassland and residential lots. The site would be reclaimed by re-contouring and re-topsoiling the mine, facility and stockpile area and reseeding the site with grasses. The slopes of the pit would be reduced to at least 3:1. Reclamation would be completed in approximately 2020.

Location: NE¼ NW¼, Section 25, T29N, R22W

County: Flathead

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 their unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed expansion is located in a glacial alluvial valley in sands and gravels of the Quaternary to Recent geologic age. The Flathead Valley is an intermountain valley mainly reworked by the Flathead River and was submerged underwater during the last 10,000 years, covered by glacial Lake Missoula. The proponent would continue to mine into a bench of gravel that stands 50 feet high, which is 20 feet above the water table. The mine area would have all available soil stripped and salvaged. The topsoil is a dark silty loam underlain by a layer of silty clay. Soil microbes should re-colonize the soils. There are no fragile, compactible, or unstable soils present, unusual geologic features, or special reclamation considerations. The reclaimed slopes will be reduced to a 3:1 or flatter angle.</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>[Y] The mine's wash plant has a clean water overflow and groundwater recharge that creates a substantial pond north of the permit area. This pond is a refuge for many deer and birds, and serves as watering for livestock. The site would be mined with dozers, loaders and scrapers. There are no water wells in the area except for the proponent's source well. The mine will not intercept potable water. Bulk fuel storage is located on site. The proponent will need to obtain a Stormwater Discharge Permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and will implement best management practices to prevent any off site erosion or sedimentation.</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 is degraded by this operation, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and an Air Quality Permit obtained from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality for the crusher and hot plant.</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] Vegetation on the site of the proposed operation consists of grain crop and pasture grasses such as various wheatgrasses, quackgrass and alfalfa, and covers 85% of the ground. No threatened or endangered plants or animals or rare plants or cover types were identified and none were identified during a ground search.</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] The site is utilized by deer, small mammals, and various species of game and non-game birds. Populations for these species is not known. These animals will be displaced on a small scale as mining progresses, but they will re-inhabit the area as reclamation follows behind mining. Permanent impacts on wildlife are considered to be minimal.</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] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] A cultural resource ground survey and field inspection was conducted and no resources were found.</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>[Y] The proposed operation is located on a flat river bench east of a county gravel road in a rural area. Residences are widely scattered around the area although none are within direct view of the pit, and there are two other gravel pits directly north and northwest of this site. The project is long termed with reclamation being planned for the year 2020. Aesthetic impacts are mitigated by placement of a topsoiled berm along the west side of the operation and by planting and irrigating trees.</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>

<p align="center">IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>	
<p align="center">RESOURCE</p>	<p align="center">POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</p>
<p>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[N] There will not be increased hazards resulting from this expansion because of the equipment activity and hauling of the sand and gravel. Granting the amendment to increase the size of the mine will not change the daily appearance of the operation, only the length of time it will remain active. 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>[Y] The land will be taken out of agricultural (pasture) production and placed into industrial (mining) for a few years at a time. Following mining, the site will be reclaimed back to pasture.</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 permit 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>

