

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Penwell

Proposed Implementation Date: Fall 2000

Proponent: Wickens Construction, Inc.

Type and Purpose of Action: The proponent proposes to mine and transport 50,000 cubic yards of borrow from a 7-acre site for the reconstruction of the Highway 200. There would not be an asphalt plant connected with this operation. The site would be reclaimed by recontouring, resspreading the topsoil and reseeding the site with grasses the reclaimed use would be grazing or farming. The site would be reclaimed by May of 2001.

Location: SE¼, Sec. 24, T21N, R1E **County:** Cascade

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 on a terrace immediately to the east of Muddy Creek. This terrace has an old cutoff meander of Muddy Creek located on it. The bottom of the cutoff meander is approximately 13 feet above water table and the current level of Muddy Creek. The cutoff meander itself is cut off on the upstream side by Highway 200. The proponent would salvage the upper 12 inches of soil material in two lifts, and then 10 feet of material would be mined for borrow. The soils are of a sandy to silty clay loam texture. After regrading the site would daylight to the south and southwest and have slopes varying from 3:1 to 9:1 in the other directions. After regrading the lower lift of salvaged soil would be replaced followed by the upper lift. 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>[Y] Muddy Creek immediately adjoins the site to the west of the proposed borrow area. A portion of the creek bank would be removed as a result of construction of a new bridge and the proposed borrow area. There is also a wetland area just west of the proposed borrow area, between the creek and the borrow area. Silt fence would be used along the banks of Muddy Creek and the wetland to protect them from erosion and sedimentation. Prior to any activity the proponent must obtain a Stormwater Discharge Permit from Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality's Water Protection Bureau. There are no water wells within 1,000 feet of the proposed pit. The site would be mined to a depth of 12 feet. The water table is reflected by Muddy Creek, which is 13 feet below the elevation of the lowest point mining would occur. No bulk fuel storage containers would be used at the site. The proposed operation should 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. No crusher or other processing equipment would be utilized with this proposed operation. A water truck would be used to control dust on the haul road and the mine 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 various wheatgrasses. Native species would be seeded on the site after recontouring and retopsoiling. A literature search was done by the Montana National Heritage Program and no rare plants or cover types were identified as being present on the site and none were observed during a ground search.</p>

5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N]
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 did a literature search and no federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat was noted as being present. No impact should occur to the wetland due to the installation of silt fence. No species of special concern were identified as being present on the site.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A cultural resource survey was done by Gar Wood and no cultural resources were identified on the site. 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.
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]
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?	[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.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] There will be a temporary loss of grazing on 7 acres of land until the site is successfully reclaimed.
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] The site will require periodic site evaluations, but these will be done in conjunction with other operations in the area.
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]

