

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Wolenetz **Proposed Implementation Date:** February 1, 2000

Proponent: Fallon County

Type and Purpose of Action: The county proposes to mine 25,000 yards of gravel from an 8-acre agricultural site. The product would be used for county road projects in the vicinity over the next year. Mining would occur to a depth of 15 feet. The site would be reclaimed to cropland by the Fall of 2000.

Location: SE of the SE of Sec 23 T4N R59E **County:** Fallon In EA 2000, November

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>[Y] The site is located in cropland next to the county road. The field is flat. The soils consist of about 6 inches of sandy clay loam topsoil and 8 inches of sandy overburden. Scrapers would be used for salvaging the soil materials in two lifts.</p> <p>The site would be reclaimed to a shallow bowl so that farming could continue.</p> <p>Annual precipitation is about 15 inches, most of which falls during May, June and July. The site does get good snow cover most years.</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] No surface water is close to the site. A small swale lies adjacent to the site, but it carries very limited runoff during snowmelt and heavy precipitation events due to the sandy nature of the soils.</p> <p>There is no indication that groundwater would be intercepted during the operation. The nearest wells show a groundwater level of about 40 feet. A fuel tank would be bermed to contain possible spills.</p> <p>No trash would be buried on-site. Reject materials would be placed by the highwall and buried. No stockpiles would be left after final reclamation. No impacts are expected from this project.</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] No designated Class I or Class II airsheds exist in the area. A water truck would be available for dust control on-site. No crusher would be used.</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 small grain cropland. The site would be reclaimed to a shallow bowl next to the road. This area would be usable as cropland after reclamation.</p> <p>No noxious weeds were seen on site; the county would control or eliminate any weeds that should invade the site.</p> <p>No rare species or cover types were found during a field inspection, and none were reported in an NRIS 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] Wildlife uses the site very little. Deer, antelope, coyotes, and upland game birds have been observed.</p> <p>Mining would have little impact on wildlife.</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] The Montana Natural Heritage Program has no listings for the site. No wetlands are present on the site. 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. During a field survey no evidence was found to indicate that any surface or subsurface cultural resources exist on site. If some resource were discovered,</p>

	operations would be shifted to another area for a reasonable time period to allow for assessment of the new 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 located next to the county road. Noise from the operation would be heard from the road. The plan calls for the pit to but open for 10 years, but the landowner wishes to get back in and farm the ground, so the majority of this site is expected to be reclaimed by this fall.
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] Good gravel generally is in short supply in Fallon County.
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] During the times when the county is hauling out of the pit, truck traffic on the county road could create a minor increase in the safety risk.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] The site would be taken out of crop production for about 1 year, and a small part for the life of the project.
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N] Most of the product from this operation would be used on county road projects. There would be no impact to employment.
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N] There would be no effect on taxes.
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 impact local residents during construction activity and could be annoying to the public, but it would not be dangerous or overburden the county's infrastructure.
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] The recreational potential of this site is low because it is private ground. Impacts are not anticipated.
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]

