

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Dietz

Proposed Implementation Date: October 1, 2000

Proponent: Carbon County

Type and Purpose of Action: The county proposes to mine and crush an unknown quantity of gravel from a 5.0-acre site adjacent to the present Dietz site. The product would be used for county road projects in the vicinity over the next 10 years. Mining would occur to a depth of 25 feet on a terrace 1 mile west of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River. The county also would reclaim several acres from previous mining, theirs and others. The site would be reclaimed as pasture by the Fall of 2010.

Location: NW of the SW of Sec 22 T4S R23E **County:** Carbon

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 an old alluvial terrace 1 mile west of, and 150 feet above, the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River.</p> <p>The soils consist of 4 inches of clay loam overlying 6 to 12 inches of subsoil. This topsoil has a high water-holding capacity which should help in revegetation. Topsoil would be salvaged and stockpiled toward the south.</p> <p>The site lies next to the existing facilities area which was permitted by the county most recently in 1993, but has been mined for 30 years or more.</p> <p>Annual precipitation is about 12 inches, most of which falls during May, June and July.</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 wetlands are present on the site. There is no surface water in the vicinity. A small ephemeral swale lies south of the site but there is little evidence that it carries much water. The site is fairly well vegetated with sagebrush and bunchgrasses.</p> <p>The plan of operations calls for mining to proceed to a depth of 25 feet in the form of a day-lighting basin draining to the east onto a 40-acre flat.</p> <p>No groundwater has been intercepted during the operation of this pit over the years. As mining proceeds to the west, groundwater would not be intercepted or impacted.</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. The crusher is equipped with sprayer nozzles and is permitted by the DEQ Air and Waste Management Bureau.</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 dryland pasture. The 50 percent cover consists of sage, grasses, and some yucca. The site would be reclaimed to daylight to the east, with highwall slopes being no less than 3:1. This would probably increase production at reclamation.</p> <p>Noxious weeds are a problem in Carbon County. There is a healthy population of knapweed, leafy spurge, and other undesirables. The county road department, commissioners, and the weed department all actively spray noxious weeds to control their spread.</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 does not use the site much, although deer, coyotes, skunks and other plains animals have been observed.</p> <p>The reclaimed site would provide better grazing, but otherwise would have</p>

	little impact on wildlife.
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 the site. Bald eagles are seen commonly and yearround in the Clark's Fork and Rock Creek drainages, but there is no habitat for them at this site. The writer has no knowledge of nests within a mile of the Dietz site.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[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, operations would be shifted to another area for a reasonable period of time 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 not visible from the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River. It is visible from Highway 310, a major road, which runs half a mile to the east, and would have slight visual impacts to travelers on this road. Noise from the operation would not be heard from the highway.
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] During the times when the county is hauling out of the pit, truck traffic interfacing with Highway 310 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 rangeland production for the life of the project. However, the county is also cleaning up and reclaiming a 10-acre storage area which would offset any loss of production.
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 peak 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]

