

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Cook Lehrkind

Proposed Implementation Date: January, 2001

Proponent: Cook Lehrkind Investments

Type and Purpose of Action: Cook Lehrkind Investments proposes to mine and crush about 2.5 million yards of gravel from a 102.8-acre site located just off the end of the airport runway at Belgrade. They will also have an asphalt plant and a batch plant. The product would be used for general construction projects in the vicinity. Mining would occur to a depth of 20 feet. The site would be mined in two phases, the first in 34.5 acres and the second in 68.3 acres. The site would be reclaimed to pasture by the Fall of 2010.

Location: W½ of the E½ of Sec 8 T1N R5E

County: Gallatin In EA 2000, December

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 This site is located between the Spain Ferris Fork Ditch and Hyalite Creek about 4 miles south of the East Gallatin River. off the southeast end of the Gallatin Field runway. This flat site is on an alluvial plain and does not flood.</p> <p>The soils are of alluvial origin. They are fairly deep, with 12 inches of loamy topsoil and up to 24 inches of coarse sand and cobbly subsoils and overburden. Scrapers or other available equipment would be used for salvaging the soil materials. Twelve inches of topsoil would be replaced during reclamation. Excess soil materials could be sold.</p> <p>The mine site would be reclaimed to dryland pasture. Mining would extend from the south end of the site northward in two stages or phases. Concurrent reclamation would be accomplished. At final reclamation the site would look like a large bowl with 4:1 slopes. Both the floor of the pit and the facilities area would be flat. The road would remain to access the property.</p> <p>Annual precipitation is about 15 inches. The site would revegetate well.</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>Needs well data</p>	<p>[N] Two surface water features are nearby. The Spain Ferris Fork Ditch is a large irrigation ditch up gradient to the northwest. Hyalite Creek is a perennial stream that runs along the eastern boundary, down gradient from the site. However, this is a flat site with 0 to 2 percent slopes. During and after mining the surface drainage would flow inwardly away from Hyalite Creek. If necessary, the proponent would erect silt fences along the east boundary to control erosion and keep sediment from reaching the creek.</p> <p>Two monitoring wells were drilled on site. They encountered groundwater at 22 and 23 feet. No water quality samples were taken. The maximum depth of mining would be 20 feet so dewatering is not necessary. This operation would not impact the ground water.</p> <p>The proponent has shares from the Spain Ferris Ditch and would use this water or on-site well water for the wash plant. A set of sedimentation ponds would be constructed near the wash plant to allow for the silt to settle out and then reuse of the water. This system does not adversely impact groundwater.</p> <p>The fuel storage facility would be lined and bermed according to DEQ guidelines, so fuel would not be able to leak into the groundwater.</p> <p>One household well 38 feet deep is located 200 yards southwest of the site</p>

	<p>on the floodplain.</p> <p>No trash would be buried on-site.</p> <p>No groundwater or surface water would be impacted by this operation.</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. Magnesium chloride may also be used on the access or haul roads. The crusher is equipped with spray bars.</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 a fenced, irrigated hayfield in good condition. The dominant species are grasses. Cover is 100 percent.</p> <p>The Bluebunch wheatgrass option would be used for seeding the visual berms and the site between the cessation of farming and the beginning of mining operations. The site would be reclaimed to dryland pasture using the Bluebunch wheatgrass Option.</p> <p>No noxious weeds were found on the site. The county-approved weed plan would control weed invasion through spraying. The proponent will seek to obtain "Noxious Weed Free Certification" before disturbing or mining an area.</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 use the site to some degree. Deer, raptors, songbirds and small mammals have been observed. The riparian habitat along Hyalite Creek is used the most. This habitat would not be disturbed. Final reclamation would return the site to previous use, provided that surrounding land use did not change.</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 old Low Line railroad bed travels for miles through this part of the valley. The new access road would use about ½ mile of this route, which would be built up to Gallatin County road standards. This is considered a continuation of the old historic use for transportation and is compatible with historic use guidelines. At the intersection of the access road and Highway 89 the proponent would install an historical marker for the public's edification.</p> <p>The State Historical Preservation Office has no listings of prehistoric sites 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, the SHPO would be notified and operations would be shifted to another area for a reasonable length of time to allow for assessment of the new find.</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>[N] The site is located across the road and directly off the end of the runway at Gallatin Field. Zoning regulations prohibit the residential use of this property. Also, trees, buildings or other structures have strict height limitations. The facilities would be placed on the floor of the mine to limit visual and noise impacts. Noise from the operation would be heard but would not exceed the decibel level of the air traffic. However, the noise from the facilities area would be considered constant compared to airport traffic.</p> <p>The plan calls for the pit to be open for 10 years.</p> <p>Several residences are located within 1,000 feet of the mine perimeter but the crusher, asphalt plant, etc., are located in the interior at least ¼ mile from any residences.</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] This location has had several gravel operations nearby. One is directly across the highway.</p>

10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[N]
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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] 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]
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N] The product from this operation would be used for many projects in the area. Since this a new operation an increase in employment would occur. Employment.
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N] There would be an increase in taxes. Real property taxes would increase due to the industrial use of this property. Business taxes would also increase because of the value of the equipment.
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 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 and right off the end of the airport runway. 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]

22. Alternatives Considered:

Alternative I: Alternate location of the site. Another pit location could be farther from the proposed use sites of the product, and thus would increase transportation costs and risks unnecessarily from this alternative.

Alternative II: Denial. This alternative would result in denying the use of a resource to the landowner.

23. Public Involvement, Agencies, Groups or Individuals contacted: Montana Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office, Gallatin County Weed Control District, Gallatin County Commissioners

