

DEQ OPENCUT MINING PROGRAM

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Davey Gravel Site

Proposed Implementation Date: Ongoing

Proponent: Hill County

Type and Purpose of Action: Proponent has submitted an application to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for a 4-acre permit to mine 20,000 c.y. of gravel. The site is located on relatively flat bench in rolling hill and drainageway country, next to Box Elder Creek. The present land use of the site and the surrounding area is cropland and rangeland. There is no past mining disturbance in the area. There are no other significant features in the area.

Proponent has submitted all application materials required under the Opencut Mining Act and the Rules and Regulations governing the Act. They propose to properly prepare the site, remove the mine material from a 3-acre pit up to 16' deep, process the material with a crusher, and reclaim the site to a postmining land use of farmland. Proponent is legally bound through their reclamation permit to reclaim the site. The estimated date for completion of final reclamation is 11/2002.

Location: SWNE35, T32N, R17E

County: Hill

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? Is any on-site waste disposal planned? Are any special reclamation features planned? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[Y] Geology and Topography. The proposed site is in the glaciated sedimentary plains portion of the state. There are no unusual geologic features.</p> <p>Soil and Overburden. The soil appears to be 6-18" thick over gravel. All soil material will be salvaged and stockpiled for future reclamation use or direct hauled to areas ready for final reclamation.</p> <p>Roads, Waste Disposal, and Grading. A single-lane, 0.5-mile trail has been bladed to the site and will remain for the landowner's use. There will be no waste disposal on site. The site will be reclaimed to farmland with 5:1 sideslopes and a relatively flat pit floor. It does not appear that surface water or groundwater needs to be taken into consideration in the grading plan. The site will be blended into the surrounding topography.</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] Surface Water. The main site is on a high and dry bench. The county planned to use the lower bench next to the creek but has abandoned that plan.</p> <p>Groundwater and Wells. Groundwater does not appear to be a factor at this site. There are no wells in the area that could be affected.</p> <p>Other. There will be no on-site fuel storage. Operator has committed to taking appropriate measures to protect surface and groundwater.</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] Pollutants and particulates will be produced when the operation is active. Proponent is required to comply with state air quality regulations. They have committed to spraying as needed to suppress dust.</p>

<p>4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY, AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>[Y] Premining Vegetation. The site is predominately farmland.</p> <p>Postmining Vegetation. The site will be seeded to farmland.</p> <p>Site Protection and Weed Control. Proponent will implement adequate site protection and management measures until seeded vegetation is established. They will control noxious weeds as specified by the local weed district.</p> <p>The Montana Natural Heritage Program reports no occurrences of plants of special concern on record for the area. Abundant similar habitat exists in the area.</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 Montana Natural Heritage Program reports no occurrences of animals of special concern on record for the area. Abundant similar habitat exists in the area.</p>
<p>6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or an endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?</p>	<p>[N] None of the mentioned resources appear to be present. Similar habitat is abundant in the area. No wetland, riparian, or other uncommon habitat will be affected.</p>
<p>7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] The site was walked and no cultural resources were found. If cultural resources are found during mining and reclamation operations, proponent has committed to promptly notifying the State Historic Preservation Office and routing the operation around the site of discovery for a reasonable time until salvage can be made.</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 site is in a rural area and will be used on a short-term basis. There are no nearby residences. Some mine material may remain stockpiled after final reclamation. The aesthetic impact will be minimal.</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] The operation will not use resources that are limited in the area. The operation should not affect or be affected by other activities in the area.</p>
<p>10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other studies, plans, or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[N] Author is not aware of any environmental studies, plans, or projects on this tract.</p>

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[N] This project should not significantly increase health and safety risks in the area if the proponent and landowner manage the operation and site in a responsible manner. Proponent is required to comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations.</p>
<p>12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[N] Up to 4 acres will be temporarily taken out of agricultural production.</p>
<p>13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move, or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[N] No significant impacts are anticipated.</p>
<p>14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[N] Tax revenues have not been significantly affected by similar projects in the state.</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] Proponent will use public roads to distribute their product. No other government services should be significantly affected.</p>

