

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

December 11, 2000

Project Name: Gingerich Site

Proposed Implementation Date: November, 2000

Proponent: Ravalli county Road Department

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to mine, crush, stockpile, and transport 50,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel from a 10-acre site located 2 miles north of Corvallis. The site would be mined into a flat-lying pasture to a depth of 20 feet leaving a pond. Normal hours of operation at the pit will be 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. A pond will be constructed to provide wildlife habitat and also to enhance aesthetics. The reclaimed use would be pasture and pond. The site would be reclaimed by re-contouring, re-topsoiling the mine, facility and stockpile area and reseeding the site with grasses. The slopes of the pond will be constructed according to DEQ guidelines. Reclamation would be completed in approximately August of 2005.

Location: NE¼ NE¼, Section 29, T7N, R20W

County: Ravalli

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 their unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed operation is located in a glacial alluvial valley in sands and gravels of the Quaternary to Recent geologic age. The Bitterroot Valley is an intermountain valley mainly reworked by the Bitterroot River and was submerged underwater during the last 10,000 years, covered by glacial Lake Missoula. The proponent would mine to a depth of 20 feet which is 10 to 15 feet below the water table. The mine area would have all available soil stripped and salvaged. The topsoil is a dark silty loam with some cobbles. Soil microbes should re-colonize the soils replaced following reclamation. There are no fragile, compactible, or unstable soils present, 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] There are irrigation ditches ½ mile east and west of the site but mining will not impact the ditch. No water will enter or leave the site. The site would be mined with dozers, loaders and an excavator. There would be no discharge from the pit area. There are 27 water wells in Section 29 that average 39 feet deep, average 10 feet static water levels and yield an average of 160 gallons per minute (this high rate is due to some irrigation wells that show yields of 1000 and 500 gallons per minute). The Bob Gingerich well has a static water level of just 4 feet and can yield 50 gallons per minute. The wells show that the shallow water table is extensive throughout the area. The mining operation will not affect these wells. No bulk fuel storage will be located on site. The proponent will not need to obtain a Stormwater Discharge Permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, but will implement best management practices to prevent any off site erosion or sedimentation.</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 will be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and an Air Quality Permit obtained from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality for the crusher.</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] Vegetation on the site of the proposed operation consists of pasture grasses such as various wheatgrasses, quackgrass and roses with some cottonwoods, and covers 95% of the ground. A literature search was done by the Montana Natural Heritage Program and no threatened or endangered plants or animals or rare plants or cover types were identified and none were identified during a ground search.</p>
<p>5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC</p>	<p>[N] The site is utilized by deer, small mammals, and various species of game</p>

LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	and non-game birds. Populations for these species is not known. These animals will be displaced on a small scale as mining progresses, but they will re-inhabit the area as reclamation follows behind mining. Permanent impacts on wildlife is considered to be minimal.
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] A ground search was conducted and no threatened or endangered species or identified habitats were found on the site. The literature search conducted by the Montana Natural Heritage Program did not reveal any species of concern.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A cultural resource ground survey and field inspection was conducted and no resources were found.
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?	[Y] The proposed operation is located on a flat river bench ½ mile east of the Eastside Highway in a rural area. The site will be visible at a distance from the Eastside Highway. Residences and businesses are widely scattered around the area, and there is another large, reclaimed pond/gravel pit directly south of this site. The project is not long termed with reclamation being planned for August of the year 2005.
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 the 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]
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] County zoning clearance has been obtained.
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]
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF	[N]

