

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Yurko

Proposed Implementation Date: January, 2001

Proponent: Riverside Construction

Type and Purpose of Action: Riverside Construction proposes to mine and crush about 30,000 yards of gravel from a 13.8-acre rangeland site. They would also operate an asphalt plant. The product would be used for an interstate construction project in the vicinity. Mining would occur to a depth of 10 feet. The site would be reclaimed to rangeland by the Fall of 2001.

Location: NW of the NW of Sec 5 T2S R19E **County:** Stillwater

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 rangeland site is located on the north side of, and adjacent to the Interstate. The site is a Quaternary terrace and alluvial fan deposit. The site is bounded by a draw to the south and shallow swale to the north. The terrace slopes from the north to the south.</p> <p>The soils are of the "Lonna" Series. They are a silty loam of alluvial origin, generally developed from sandstone and shale. They are shallow, consisting of about 6 inches of loamy topsoil and several more inches of subsoil. Scrapers would be used for salvaging the soil materials.</p> <p>The west half of the site would be reclaimed to a shallow bowl with 4:1 or flatter slopes so that grazing could continue. The east half would slope gently from north to south.</p> <p>Annual precipitation is about 12 inches.</p> <p>The 4:1 slopes shallow bowl will help retain water on site and help revegetation. The site will be fenced for grazing management.</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. The Yellowstone River is about half a mile to the south, across the Interstate and the railroad. No wells or springs are located in this section. Test pits did not intercept any groundwater. The nearest groundwater seems to be at the level of the Yellowstone about 35 feet lower in elevation.</p> <p>The gully to the south carries runoff during major precipitation events and spring thaw. The site would be accessed from the Interstate. No groundwater or surface water would be impacted by this operation.</p> <p>If a fuel tank were used on site it would be placed in a lined and bermed area so no fuel would be spilled. No trash would be buried on-site. Reject materials would be placed by the highwall and buried. No stockpiles would be left on site.</p> <p>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>[Y] Air quality would be degraded, but the proponent must comply with air quality standards and have Air Quality Permits from the Air and Waste Management Bureau of the Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality for the crusher and asphalt plant. A water truck would be available for dust control on-site. The crusher is equipped with spray bars and the asphalt plant is equipped with a bag house for dust control. No designated Class I or Class II airsheds exist in the area.</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 rangeland and has a fair cover of range grasses, including wheatgrasses, needle and thread, with a little sagebrush, and yucca.</p>

	<p>The mined half of the site would be reclaimed to a 4:1 slope slanting inward. The silty loam nature of the soils holds moisture and would allow for revegetation. This area would return to rangeland use after reclamation.</p> <p>No noxious weeds were seen on site but the general vicinity does have knapweed and other noxious weeds. Spraying would probably be necessary to control or eliminate 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>
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Some wildlife use the site. Deer, coyotes, and upland game birds have been observed. The small disturbance area, short life span of the project and its location next to the Interstate, would have 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. No wetlands are present on the site. No species of special concern are present.
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, Shpo would be notified and 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 on an alluvial fan next to the Interstate and would be visible from it. Noise from the operation would be heard but would blend in with the traffic noise. The nearest residence is the landowners and is about half a mile away across the Interstate and the railroad track. The plan calls for the pit to be open for 1 year.
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] The Yellowstone Valley contains many gravel sites. The test pit data indicates that the whole terrace top has quality gravel.
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 construction project traffic on the Interstate would be controlled by flagmen and would not increase in safety risks. No other roads would be impacted.
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 on the Interstate project. 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 not impact local residents. But with any road construction it could be annoying to the public. 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 and located next to the Interstate. 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 site of the products, 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, Stillwater County Weed Control District, Stillwater County Commissioners, Stillwater County Planning Board

24. Other Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction, List of Permits Needed: Mine Safety & Health Administration for safety permit; Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Bureau of Safety for safety permit; MtDEQ Air and Waste Management Bureau for air quality permits,

25. Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: Impacts are unlikely to be significant on the general environment because of the small area of disturbance and the short duration of the project.

26. Regulatory Impact on Private Property: The analysis conducted in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By: Jo Stephen Title: Reclamation Specialist

Approved By: Jerry Burke Title: Opencut Mining Program Supervisor, IEMB

Signature

Date