

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Kincheloe

Proposed Implementation Date: May, 2001

Proponent: Rosebud County

Type and Purpose of Action: The county proposes to mine and screen about 10,000 yards of gravel from a 5-acre rangeland site. The product would be used for county road projects in the vicinity over the years. Mining would occur to a depth of 10 feet. The site would be reclaimed to rangeland by the Fall of 2020.

Location: SW of the SW of Sec 28 T12N R31E

County: Rosebud

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 rangeland site is located to the east of and adjacent to the county road. The site is a Quaternary terrace. The site is bounded by a draw to the south. The terrace is about 50 feet high on the west side. The main knob of gravel would be mined from the west to the east. The center of the site was previously mined to a depth of about 8 feet.</p> <p>The soils are of alluvial origin, probably of the "Lolo" series. They are fairly shallow, consisting of about 6 to 8 inches of loamy topsoil overlaying the gravel. Scrapers would be used for salvaging the soil materials. Previously salvaged topsoil stockpiles would be moved and used during final reclamation.</p> <p>The site would be reclaimed to daylight to the west with 4:1 or flatter slopes so that grazing could continue.</p> <p>Annual precipitation is about 12 inches.</p> <p>The site should revegetate well because of the additional topsoil that is available.</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 Musselshell River is about a half mile to the west across its floodplain. The draw to the south is dry except during major precipitation or snowmelt events. No wells or springs are located in this section. The nearest house well is located to the northwest on the Musselshell floodplain. Test pits did not intercept any groundwater. The nearest groundwater seems to be at the level of the floodplain about 60 feet lower in elevation.</p> <p>The site would be accessed from the county road and an existing access so no more roadway would be built.</p> <p>Rosebud County uses fuel tanks carried in pickups, so no fuel would be stored on site. No trash would be buried on-site. Some oversized material could be used for erosion control along the county road, but otherwise, reject materials would be placed by the highwall and buried.</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. There would not be any processing equipment involved with this operation. A water truck would be available for dust control on-site.</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 needle and thread, wheatgrasses, sagebrush, and yucca. Several 30-foot tall cottonwoods inhabit the gully.</p> <p>The site would be reclaimed to a 4:1 slope slanting away from the terrace face. The loamy topsoil holds moisture and would allow good revegetation. This area would return to rangeland use after reclamation.</p>

	<p>No noxious weeds were seen on site; the county would control or eliminate any weeds that should invade the site. The landowner would control grazing on site until vegetation is reestablished.</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, occasional antelope and upland game birds have been observed. The small disturbance area 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, the 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 top of the terrace next to the county road. Temporary stockpiles and topsoil stockpiles would be visible from the county road. Noise from the operation would be heard. The plan calls for the pit to be open for 20 years.
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] This location has been mined in the past. This terrace runs about a half mile. 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 times when the county is hauling out of the pit, 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] 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 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]

