DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Permitting and Compliance Division
Air and Waste Management Bureau
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DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Issued For: Casino Creek Concrete, Inc.
P.O. Box 3501
Lewistown, MT 59457

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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE

Permit Number: #2696-02

Preliminary Determination Issued: 2/15/06
Department Decision Issued:
Permit Final:

1. *Legal Description of Site*: Casino Creek, submitted an application to operate a portable crushing/screening plant in the East ½ of Section 20, Township 16 North, Range 17 East, in Fergus County, Montana. In addition, Permit #2696-02 would apply while operating at any location in the state of Montana, except within those areas having a Department approved permitting program. *A Missoula County air quality permit would be required for locations within Missoula County, Montana.*

2. *Description of Project*: The permit application is for the operation of a 2005 Trio jaw crusher and the construction and operation of two concrete batch plants. The crusher and batch plants are being added to currently permitted equipment.

3. *Objectives of Project*: Casino Creek, in an effort to increase business and revenue for the company, has requested to add additional equipment to Permit #2696-01. The addition of the crushing/screening equipment and mix concrete batch plant and associated equipment could be used to generate more aggregate for sale and use as well as supply wet mix concrete for sale and use in various construction operations.

4. *Alternatives Considered*: In addition to the proposed action, the Department also considered the "no-action" alternative. The "no-action" alternative would deny issuance of the air quality preconstruction permit to the proposed facility. However, the Department does not consider the "no-action" alternative to be appropriate because Casino Creek demonstrated compliance with all applicable rules and regulations as required for permit issuance. Therefore, the "no-action" alternative was eliminated from further consideration.

5. *A Listing of Mitigation, Stipulations, and Other Controls*: A listing of the enforceable permit conditions and a permit analysis, including a BACT analysis, would be contained in Permit #2696-02.

6. *Regulatory Effects on Private Property Rights*: The Department considered alternatives to the conditions imposed in this permit as part of the permit development. The Department determined the permit conditions are reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with applicable requirements and demonstrate compliance with those requirements and do not unduly restrict private property rights.

7. *The following table summarizes the potential physical and biological effects of the proposed project on the human environment. The "no-action" alternative was discussed previously.*

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments Included
A.	Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats			X			yes
B.	Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution			X			yes
C.	Geology and Soil Quality, Stability, and Moisture			X			yes
D.	Vegetation Cover, Quantity, and Quality			X			yes
E.	Aesthetics			X			yes
F.	Air Quality			X			yes
G.	Unique Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resource				X		yes
H.	Demands on Environmental Resource of Water, Air, and Energy			X			yes
I	Historical and Archaeological Sites				X		yes
J.	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			yes

Summary of Comments on Potential Physical and Biological Effects: The following comments have been prepared by the Department.

A. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats

Terrestrials would use the area in which the crushing/screening operations and concrete batch plant operations occur. However, the operations would present only minor impacts upon terrestrial life in the area because of the small size and temporary nature of the operations. Impacts upon aquatic life in the area would also result, but would be minor, as the facility is a small and temporary source that would be located greater than 100 meters, a typical buffering zone, from the stream. Dispersion of the pollutants would, therefore, be sufficient as to protect the aquatic life from pollutant deposition. Also, the area in questions is an existing gravel pit permitted through the Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau (IEMB). Therefore, reclamation activities of the site are addressed by the IEMB permit.

B. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution

Although there would be an increase in air emissions in the area where the crushing/screening operations and concrete batch plant operations occur, there would be little impact on the water quality, quantity, and distribution because of the relatively small size and temporary nature of the operations. While deposition of pollutants would occur, the Department determined that any impacts from deposition of pollutants would be minor because of the small size and temporary nature of the facility. As described in Section 7.F of this EA, due to the conditions placed in Permit #2696-02, the maximum impacts from the air emissions of this equipment would be relatively minor.

Water would be required for dust suppression, but would only cause a minor disturbance to the area. No surface water or ground water quality problems would result from using water for pollution control. Any accidental spills or equipment leaks would be handled according to the appropriate environmental regulations in an effort to minimize any potential adverse impact on the immediate and surrounding area. Therefore, the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would have only minor impacts to water quality, quantity, and distribution.

C. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability, and Moisture

There would be minor impacts to the geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture near the crushing/screening and batch plant operating area due to facility construction, increased vehicle traffic, the use of water to control dust, and deposition of pollutants from the crushing/screening

operations. Any impacts to the geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture would be minor because the relatively small size and portable nature of the operation. As explained in Section 7.F of this EA, the relatively small size and temporary nature of the operations and conditions placed in Permit #2696-02 would minimize the impacts from deposition.

The soils in the affected area would be impacted by the crushing/screening operations due to the construction activities and use of the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations. However, given the relatively small size and portable nature of the operations, any impacts would be minor.

D. Vegetation Cover, Quantity, and Quality

There would be minor impacts on the vegetative cover, quantity, and quality, because small amounts of vegetation would likely be disturbed from the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations. In addition, pollutant deposition would occur on the surrounding vegetation. However, as explained in Section 7.F of this EA, the Department determined that, due to the relatively small size and temporary nature of the operations and conditions placed in Permit #2696-02, any impacts from pollutant deposition would be minor. Also, because the water usage would be minimal (as described in Section 7.B) and the associated soil disturbance would be minimal (as described in Section 7.C) corresponding vegetative impacts would also be minimal.

E. Aesthetics

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would be visible and would create additional noise in the area. Permit #2696-02 would include conditions to control emissions, including visible emissions, from the plant. Since the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations are considered a minor source of air pollution, a portable source, and would be located within an existing pit that has been previously used for crushing/screening activities, any visual and noise impacts would be minor.

F. Air Quality

The air quality pollutant emissions impacts from the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would be minor because Permit #2696-02 would include conditions limiting the opacity from the plant, as well as requiring water spray bars, and other means to control air pollution. Additionally, the facilities capacity is relatively small when compared to other similar permitted sources, would have intermittent use, and would include washing of the aggregate materials. The operations would be limited by Permit #2696-02 to total particulate emissions of 250 ton/year or less from non-fugitive sources at the plant, in addition to any other equipment at the site. However, since the facilities potential emissions are below 100 ton/year for any pollutant generated, the Department recognizes the facility as a minor source of air pollution. The equipment would be required to use water spray to further reduce pollutant emissions from equipment operations, storage piles, and haul roads. The facility would also use a wash plant, which would further reduce emissions from the aggregate. The proposed site is an area where similar industrial disturbance has previously occurred, is a permitted open cut pit, where good pollutant dispersion would occur, and is in an area where any potential impacts would be minimal.

G. Unique Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources

The proposed project would have no impact on any unique endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources because there are no such resources in the area. Since no such resources have been identified and the source is small and portable, no impacts upon these resources from pollutant deposition are expected. The Department, in an effort to assess any potential impacts, contacted the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) to identify any species of special concern associated with the proposed site location. Search results concluded there are no such environmental resources in the area. Area, in this case, is defined by the township and range of the proposed site, with an additional one-mile buffer. The location has been identified by Casino Creek as the East ½ of Section 20, Township 16 North, Range 17 East, in Fergus County, Montana.

H. Demands on Environmental Resource of Water, Air, and Energy

Due to the size of the facility, the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would only require small quantities of water, air, and energy for proper operation, due to the size of the facility. Small quantities of water would be used for dust suppression and would control emissions being generated at the site. The groundwater is reported to be 90' below the ground surface and 500 feet from the stream. Energy requirements would also be small, as the facility is a small crushing/screening operation powered by two small diesel generators. At this site, generators would be used intermittently as commercial power will be the main power source. Air resources and subsequent impacts would also be minor because the source is a small and temporary source with dispersion taking place within a disturbed industrial gravel pit. Generally, the operations are seasonal, and would result in even smaller demands on the environmental resources of water, air, and energy. Any impacts, therefore, would be minor.

I. Historical and Archaeological Sites

The Department contacted the Montana Historical Society - State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) in an effort to identify any historical and/or archaeological sites that may be present in the proposed area of construction/operation. Search results have concluded that there are no historical or archaeological resources of concern. Additionally, the open cut mining program conducted an inspection of the area and found no evidence of such resources. The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would locate within a previously disturbed, permitted open cut pit. Therefore, the operation would not have an effect on any known historic or archaeological site.

J. Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would cause minor cumulative and secondary impacts to the physical and biological aspect to the human environment in the immediate area because the plant would generate emissions of particulate matter, PM_{10}, NO_x, VOC, CO, and SO_x. However, methods of pollution control would be incorporated to ensure that such emissions would be reduced and minimize impacts in the immediate and surrounding area. Noise impacts, as a result of operating the crushing/screening facility near the railway and highway, would have only minor cumulative effects on the surrounding physical and biological environment. There is potential for other operations to locate at this site. However, any operations would have to apply for and receive the appropriate permits from the Department prior to operation. The Department believes that this facility could be expected to operate in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations as would be outlined in Permit #2696-02.

8. *The following table summarizes the potential economic and social effects of the proposed project on the human environment. The "no-action" alternative was discussed previously.*

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments Included
A.	Social Structures and Mores				X		yes
B.	Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				X		yes
C.	Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue			X			yes
D	Agricultural or Industrial Production			X			yes
E.	Human Health			X			yes
F.	Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities			X			yes
G	Quantity and Distribution of Employment				X		yes
H.	Distribution of Population				X		yes
I.	Demands for Government Services			X			yes
J.	Industrial and Commercial Activity			X			yes
K.	Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals				X		yes
L.	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			yes

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS ON POTENTIAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EFFECTS: The Department has prepared the following comments.

A. Social Structures and Mores

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operation would cause no disruption to the social structures and mores in the area because the source is small and temporary and located in an existing rock quarry. There are no established native or traditional communities in the area of operation, and the nearest residence is over ½ mile away. Therefore, no impacts upon social structures or mores would result.

B. Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would have no impact on the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the proposed area because the source is small and temporary and would be operating in a permitted open cut pit in a relatively remote location. The nearest residence is approximately ½ mile away and the site is in a sparsely populated area of Montana. The use of the surrounding area would remain predominantly the same. The proposed operations would be removed from the general population in the surrounding area and would be small, so impacts upon the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area are not expected.

C. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would have little, if any, affect on the local and state tax base and tax revenue because the facility would be a temporary source and it is small by industrial standards. The facility would only need a few employees to operate, so only minor impacts to the local and state tax base and revenue could be expected. Furthermore, the impacts to local tax bases and revenue would be minor because the source would be portable and the money generated for taxes would be widespread.

D. Agricultural or Industrial Production

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would locate in a previously permitted open cut pit. Therefore, the Department does not expect that the permitted operation would affect or displace any agricultural land. Because the facility would operate within a permitted open cut pit, upon completion of the operations, the area would be reclaimed, as specified, by the Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau (IEMB). Further, the crushing/screening operations are small by industrial standards and would, therefore, have only a minor impact on local industrial production.

E. Human Health

Permit #2696-02 would incorporate conditions to ensure that the crushing/screening operations would be operated in compliance with all applicable air quality rules and standards. These rules and standards are designed to be protective of human health. As described in Section 7.F. of this EA, the air emissions from this equipment would be minimized by the use of water spray and other emissions limits established in Permit #2696-02. Since these conditions would be incorporated, only minor impacts to human health would be expected from the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant equipment.

F. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would not affect access to recreational and wilderness activities because the area is along the nearby railway and surrounded by roadways. However, minor effects on the quality of recreational activities, as a result of search for quite aesthetics, would be created by noise from the site. However, other sources of noise already exist in the area, such as the railway and Highway 81.

G. Quantity and Distribution of Employment

The facility is a small and portable source that would move the equipment and corresponding employees to various locations throughout the state of Montana. The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would not affect the quantity and distribution of employment in the area because Casino Creek would only use a few employees for the project and the project is expected to be temporary for the portable source.

H. Distribution of Population

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations are small. The human population within the area is also small and the nearest residence is ½ mile from the proposed site. Therefore, the population distribution in the area is not expected to be effected because of the temporary nature of the project, because the area in question is sparsely populated, and because the area has previously been used for similar operations.

I. Demands of Government Services

Minor increases of traffic would be seen on existing roadways in the area while the crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations are in progress. In addition, government services would be required for acquiring the appropriate permits from government agencies. Demands for government services would be minor.

J. Industrial and Commercial Activity

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would represent only a minor increase in the industrial activity in the given area because of the small size of the operations and the portable and temporary nature of the facility. No additional industrial or commercial activity is expected as a result of the proposed operation.

K. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals

The Department is not aware of any locally adopted environmental plans or goals that would be affected by the proposed project. The state standards would protect the proposed site and the environment surrounding the site.

L. Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

The crushing/screening and concrete batch plant operations would cause minor cumulative and secondary impacts to the social and economic aspect of the human environment in the immediate area. Operation of the portable, temporary source would cause increases in traffic in the immediate area, which would have secondary impacts on the social environment as a result of possible traffic delays. Because the source is a relatively small, temporary source, only minor cumulative economic impacts to the local economy could be expected from the operation of the facility.

Recommendation: An EIS is not required.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: All potential effects resulting from construction and operation of the proposed facility are minor; therefore, an EIS is not required. Permit #2696-01 includes conditions and limitations, which, if properly applied, will safeguard the environment.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: Department of Environmental Quality - Permitting and Compliance Division (Air and Waste Management Bureau and Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau); Montana Natural Heritage Program; and State Historic Preservation Office (Montana Historical Society).

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Department of Environmental Quality (Air and Waste Management Bureau and Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau), Montana Natural Heritage Program, and State Historic Preservation Office (Montana Historical Society).

EA prepared by: Trista Glazier
Date: February 1, 2006