

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**PROPONENT:** Daniels County  
**LOCATION:** NENE34, T35N, R49E

**SITE NAME:** Brenden  
**COUNTY:** Daniels

**TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:** Proponent has submitted an amendment application to update their 1970s permit. The amendment adds 2.2 acres for a total of 2.7 permitted acres. All application materials required under the Openpit Mining Act and the Rules adopted thereunder have been submitted. Proponent commits to properly conducting openpit operations and reclaiming the site to a postmining land use of grassland. Proponent will be legally bound by their permit to reclaim the site. The final reclamation date given in the plan is 11/2026.

A = significant unavoidable impacts. B = insignificant as a result of conditioned mitigation. C = insignificant as proposed.

	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIVE MEASURES					
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Removal of gravel to a maximum depth of 10 feet has/will alter the topography. All surfaces will be graded to 3:1 (horizontal:vertical) or flatter as required for a postmining land use of grassland. The site will be graded to blend into the surrounding topography and drainageways.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> : stability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Potential impacts due to the removal of mine material have been reviewed. The Department has determined that the site can be reclaimed to a stable condition.
3. <u>SOILS</u> : quality, distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Soil materials will be salvaged and placed on areas prepared for resoiling, or stockpiled for later reclamation use. The plan states that 0 to 12 inches of soil will be stripped and used for site reclamation.
4. <u>WATER</u> : quality, quantity; distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is an ephemeral prairie drainageway south of the site. It will not be affected by the operation. It does not appear that ground water is a factor at the site. Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology water well information shows no wells in the area.
5. <u>AIR</u> : quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There would be some degradation of air quality while operations are in progress. Proponent must comply with state air quality regulations.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None identified.
<b>BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, AND AQUATIC SPECIES AND HABITATS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Most of the site is already disturbed. No species of special concern have been observed on site. Abundant similar habitat exists in the area.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> : quantity, quality, species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Most of the site is already disturbed. No species of special concern have been observed on site. Abundant similar habitat exists in the area.

3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> : grazing, crops, production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A small area of grassland is temporarily out of production. This will not substantially impact local agriculture. The site will be reclaimed to grassland.
<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> : structures, mores	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> : uniqueness, diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3. <u>POPULATION</u> : quantity, diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4. <u>HOUSING</u> : quantity, distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No problems are anticipated.
6. <u>COMMUNITY &amp; PERSONAL INCOME</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> : quantity, distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> : local, state tax revenue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> : demand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, &amp; AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
11. <u>HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No resources have been identified.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u> : noise, visual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The site is next to a rural county road. There are no nearby residences.
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS</u> : local, regional	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposed operation complies with the county's zoning regulations.
14. <u>DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> : land, water, air, energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> : networks, traffic flows	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Operator will use county roads to transport mine material to project areas. This should not substantially affect traffic.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:** The Department would deny an incomplete application or one that does not comply with the Act and Rules. The proponent could then submit a modified application or submit an application for another site.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:** Agencies and individuals involved in the process included the Montana Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office, local zoning authority, county weed control board, and landowner.

**OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION:** DEQ's Air Resources Management Bureau regarding air quality, DEQ's Water Protection Bureau regarding water discharge, DNRC's Water Rights Bureau regarding water rights, and MSHA and OSHA regarding mine safety.

**REGULATORY IMPACT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY:** The analysis done in response to the Private Property Assessment Act indicates no impact. The Department does not plan to deny the application or impose conditions that would restrict the use of private property so as to constitute a taking.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:** NO FURTHER ANALYSIS

**INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS EA:** NONE

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature)

Prepared by: Mark Carlstrom