

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**PROPONENT:** Schellinger Construction Co., Inc.  
**LOCATION:** NWNW Section 30, T20N, R6W

**SITE NAME:** Tee Bar Ranch Site  
**COUNTY:** Lewis & Clark

**TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:** Proponent submitted an application to the Opencut Mining Program for a 12-acre permit to mine about 25,000 cubic yards of gravel on the northwest side of Route 435 approximately 3 miles southwest of Augusta, Montana. Operations will begin within an old mining area and proceed to the northwest. The area disturbed by mining includes heavily grazed ground used for winter feeding of cattle. All application materials required under the Opencut Mining Act and the Rules adopted thereunder have been submitted. Proponent commits to properly conducting opencut operations and reclaiming past and present disturbances to a postmining land use of pasture and hay storage. Proponent will be legally bound by their permit to reclaim the site as well as site conditions and available resources allow.

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

	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIVE MEASURES</b>					
	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 will alter the topography. All surfaces will be graded to 3:1 (h:v) or flatter.
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"/>	Approximately 11" of soil will be salvaged.
4. <u>WATER</u> : quality, quantity; distribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All wells within 1000' of the site are owned by Tee Bar Ranch. The site will not intersect the groundwater table. The pit intersects one non-functioning irrigation ditch, is adjacent to another, and is approximately 1000' from Elk Creek. Surface and ground water should not be affected by this operation.
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"/>	The Montana Natural Heritage Program reported the grizzle bear, Baird's sparrow, chestnut-collared longspur, McCown's longspur, and long-billed curlew as species of concern in the area but none were noted near the permit site during inspection. Better habitat exists in the surrounding 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"/>	The Montana Natural Heritage Program reports great basin downingia as a species of special concern. The area was heavily grazed while feeding cattle during the winter: better habitat exists in the surrounding 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 will be taken out of production without impact to local

						agriculture.
<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"/>	Access from and onto Route 435 will introduce a greater potential for accident. Impacts should be limited (Item #15 below).
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"/>	A walkover of the area did not reveal any artifacts or signs of occupation. If during operations resources were to be discovered, activities would be halted and moved to another area until SHPO was contacted and the importance of the site was determined.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u> : noise, visual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are marginally reclaimed pre-law gravel pits on each side of the Route 435.
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 county 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"/>	There is good visibility in both directions onto Route 435.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: Peter Mahrt

(Signature)