

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROPONENT: Chouteau County
LOCATION: NWNW Sec 1 & NENE Sec2, T25N, R2E

SITE NAME: Maurer
COUNTY: Teton

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: Proponent has submitted a permit application to mine ~50,000 cubic yards of gravel over 10 years from a 16 acre permit area that is split into two small pits connected by a haulroad. Most of the area is cultivated farm ground. 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 the site to a postmining land use of wheat or rangeland. Proponent will be legally bound by their permit to reclaim the site. The final reclamation date given is 11/2016.

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 |
| PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | |
| 1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rolling pre-mine topography. Removal of gravel to a maximum depth of 10 feet would alter the topography. All surfaces would be graded to 3:1 (horizontal:vertical) or flatter as required for a postmining land use. The site would be graded to blend into the surrounding topography. |
| 2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> : stability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Department believes the site could 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 would be salvaged and placed on areas prepared for resoiling, or stockpiled for later reclamation use. The plan states that an average of 6 inches of soil could 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"/> | The east side of the west pit has a small ephemeral swale located in it. Surface water should not be affected. The landowner has a water well in the area. Mining would not affect the groundwater aquifer. |
| 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. The surrounding area is cultivated farmland: any dust from gravel operations would be minimal. |
| 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. |
| BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | |
| 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 reports no species of special concern. 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"/> | The Montana Natural Heritage Program reports no species of special concern. The county weed district has approved a noxious weed control plan for the proposed operation. |

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|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 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 hayland and/or cropland would be temporarily out of production at any point during the life of the operation. This would not substantially impact local agriculture. |
| HUMAN ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | |
| 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 & 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 & 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, & 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 permit is in a remote agricultural area. The pits are small in comparison to the nearby agricultural activity. |
| 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"/> | |

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: Peter Mahrt