

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROPONENT: Kenneth L. McPherson
LOCATION: SWSW Sec 14, T8N, R20W

SITE NAME: McPherson Site #1
COUNTY: Ravalli

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:

The applicant proposes to mine, crush and haul an additional 20,000 cubic yards of gravel from an existing 4-acre gravel pit located 5 miles south of Stevensville. The site is an older 70,000 cubic yard gravel pit, which has grown steadily over the past 10 years. The site is a gravel outwash deposit in the foothills of the Sapphire Mountain Range at approximately 3380 feet, MSL where groundwater lies at about 12 feet below the ground surface. The site is being mined into an alfalfa field, in an area where the topsoil averages 9” with no overburden below it. The site is located along Black Elk Road. It will be reclaimed to grasses with slopes reduced to 3:1 or flatter and the floor will be graded fairly flat. The site would be reclaimed by June 2012.

A: Significant Unavoidable Impacts. B: Insignificant as a result of conditioned mitigation. C: Insignificant as proposed.

				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>			X	X		Mining would continue to permanently alter the topography, but reclamation would level and smooth the site.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability						No effect on Geology.
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution			X		X	Soils would be stripped, saved and replaced.
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality, Quantity; Distribution			X		X	The operation would not affect ground or surface waters including the nearby irrigation ditch. No mining activity would occur any closer than 50 feet from the ditch.
5. <u>AIR</u> ; Quality			X		X	Some deterioration of air quality would occur, but episodes would be infrequent. Dust would be controlled around the site with water.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources						No unique, endangered, fragile or limited species or habitats are known at this site.
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats			X		X	Wildlife displaced during active mining would return following reclamation.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; Quantity, quality, species			X		X	Existing hayfield would be replanted into grasses of a compatible type.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops, production			X		X	Some grassland would be temporarily taken out of production, but will be replanted with grasses.
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> , structures and mores						No Social impacts are anticipated.
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> ; Uniqueness, diversity						No unique or diversified cultural values exist.

3. <u>POPULATION</u> ; quantity and diversity					No effect on the population is anticipated.
4. <u>HOUSING</u> ; quantity and distribution					No effects are anticipated on housing.
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY</u>			X	X	Some dust and additional traffic may be generated at the site but the operator must comply with existing traffic and air quality laws.
6. <u>COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME</u>			X	X	The landowner may benefit from additional income from this operation.
7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> ; quantity and distribution			X	X	No additional employees would be hired to assist in daily operations.
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; local and state tax revenue			X	X	Additional taxes may be generated for the state and county as aggregates are hauled and sold.
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ; demand			X	X	The site would be monitored through its permit life along with other sites in the area.
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL and AGRICULTURAL</u> activities			X	X	The site would be removed from hayfield use, and used commercially until reclamation time when it would be reclaimed to hayfield.
11. <u>HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>					No historical, cultural or archaeological values are present.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X	X	The site sits along Black Elk Road and is visible to the general public.
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS and GOALS</u> ; local and regional					There are no known land use plans for this site.
14. <u>DEMANDS</u> on <u>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> of land, water, air and energy					There are no unusual demands on environmental resources.
15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> ; networks and traffic flows			X	X	There would be some additional traffic added as this gravel pit accesses the county road.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: **The Department would deny an incomplete application or one that does not comply with the Act or 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 authorities, county weed control board, and the landowner. Resident Notifications were distributed in the area by the applicant and 6 were received back. None wished to see the EA.**

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: **DEQ's Air Resources Management Bureau regarding air quality, MSHA regarding mine safety.**

REGULATORY IMPACT ON THE APPLICANT'S 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.**

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

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: **No further analysis is required.**

Approved By _____
(Signature)

(Date)

Prepared By Rod Samdahl