

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SITE NAME: Ponessa Station 50 APPLICANT: MK Weeden
 LOCATION: NW Sec 18, SW Sec7T10N R45E COUNTY: Custer
NE Sec 13, 10N 44E

PROPOSED ACTION: MK Weeden proposes to mine 80,000 yards of sand borrow from a 17-acre site near milepost 20 on Highway 59, north of Miles City. The site is about a quarter mile away on the east side of the highway. Access would be by a new 25-foot wide road. The product would be used for an MDT project. Reclamation would be completed to rangeland by June 2008. The bond is \$30,850. The mineral in this part of Section 18 is owned by the BLM but the surface belongs to Ponessa.

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		Gently sloping rangeland going downhill toward the highway.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability									X	X		Recent sand deposit from erosion of the sedimentary rocks.
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution									X		X	The sandy soil is about 6 inches deep. Good soil salvage would result in no significant impacts to this soil. Average annual precipitation is about 14 inches.
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality; Quantity; Distribution									X		X	Sunday Creek is just across the highway to the west. Groundwater is about 400 feet deep. There would be no impact to water quality or quantity from mining.
5. <u>AIR</u> ; Quality									X		X	Fugitive dust would be controlled with the use of water trucks. Air quality reduction would be minimal.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources												None. No species were identified. The area is at the southern extent of the Missouri Breaks Megasite.
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT												
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats									X		X	This general area is inhabited by mule deer, antelope, small non-game animals, and possibly a few sage grouse. Mining would have minimal impact because of the small area that would be disturbed and the relatively short timeframe.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; quantity, quality, Species									X		X	Vegetation is a mix of sagebrush and native grasses. Mining would have minimal impact because of the short duration of the project and reclamation to a rangeland seed mix.
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT												
1. <u>SOCIAL</u> ; structures and mores									X		X	

	POTENTIAL IMPACTS					
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
2. <u>CULTURAL</u> uniqueness/diversity			X		X	
3. <u>POPULATION</u> ; quantity/diversity			X		X	There are no nearby residences.
4. <u>HOUSING</u> ; quantity/distribution			X		X	
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY</u>			X		X	
6. <u>COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME</u>			X		X	
7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> ; quantity, distribution			X		X	This highway project would result in temporary employment in the area.
8. <u>TAX BASE</u> ; state/local tax revenue			X		X	
9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> ; demand			X		X	
10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL</u> and <u>AGRICULTURAL</u> activities			X		X	
11. <u>HISTORICAL</u> and <u>ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>			X		X	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 temporarily moved to another area until SHPO was contacted and the importance of the site was determined.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X		X	
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS</u> and <u>GOALS</u> ; local and regional			X		X	
14. <u>DEMANDS</u> on <u>ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> of land, water, air and energy			X		X	
15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> ; networks and traffic flows			X		X	This material is for reconstruction of Highway 59.

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.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Landowner, Natural Heritage Program, State Historic Preservation Office

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: Air Resources Management Bureau, Mining Safety and Health, MT Dept. of Transportation, Custer and Rosebud County Commissioners, Custer and Rosebud County Weed Boards

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: Denial

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PREPARATION OF AN EIS: Unnecessary, No Significant Impacts

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Prepared by Jo Stephen, July 2006