ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SITE NAME: **Albin** APPLICANT: **Richland County Public Works**
LOCATION: **SW of Section 19, T23N, R59E** COUNTY: **Richland**
NW of Section 30, T23N, R59E
PROPOSED ACTION: **Richland County proposes to mine and crush gravel from a 15-acre portion of a 160-acre site just outside Sidney off Highway 16. The site is on the northeast side of the highway with access from an existing gravel road. The product would be used for county road maintenance and other county jobs.**
A large majority of the site is not planned for disturbance. The site is bisected by several large coulees. Mining would remove the ridge tops but not encroach into the gully bottoms. If the initial mining area were depleted, the State would be informed of where and how a second area across the gully would be developed.

Reclamation would be completed to rangeland by September 2016.

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. TOPOGRAPHY			X	X		High, tabletop cut by deep gullies. Previous mining has occurred in several areas in and around the application area.
2. GEOLOGY; Stability			X	X		Glacial till
3. SOILS; Quality, Distribution			X		X	The Vida and Williams Series soils developed in glacial till on the flat tops of the ridges. Depths are about 12 inches of clay loam with little overburden. These are classified as fair for rangeland since they hold moisture well in the upper horizons and the underlying gravels drain well. Average annual precipitation is about 13 inches. Good soil salvage would result in no significant impacts to this soil.
4. WATER; Quality; Quantity; Distribution			X		X	There are no wells in the area and no indication of shallow groundwater or springs. The county would use berms, ditches and silt fence to control run-off or run-on. There would be no impact to water quality or quantity from mining.
5. AIR; Quality			X		X	The crusher would have an air quality permit. Fugitive dust would be controlled with the use of water trucks. Air quality reduction would be minimal.
6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED,						This site is not prime habitat for the Meadow

				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
FRAGILE, or LIMITED environmental resources						Jumping Mouse and its inferred range does not include the proposed permit area. Pale-spiked Lobelia is on the extreme western edge of its range which covers all the states east of Montana with the exception of Florida. The site is within the extended inferred range circle. Since the plant prefers moist sites that would suggest areas close to creeks or water sources in Montana. The disturbance portions of the site would be high and dry, so probably would not be suitable habitat.
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC; species and habitats			X		X	Some mule deer, pheasant, and other upland game birds have occasionally been seen in the vicinity. Mining would have minimal impact because of the small area that would be disturbed and the relatively short timeframe for disturbance.
2. VEGETATION; quantity, quality, species			X		X	Rangeland. Mining would have minimal impact because of the small area to be disturbed, the relatively short timeframe for disturbance, and reclamation to a rangeland seed mix.
3. AGRICULTURE; grazing, crops Production			X		X	Mining would result in a minimal short term reduction of grazing production.
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT						
1. SOCIAL; structures and mores			X		X	
2. CULTURAL uniqueness/diversity			X		X	
3. POPULATION; quantity/diversity			X		X	There are no homes near the site. A power line does cross the south edge of the disturbance area. Because of its proximity to Sidney the hill top is pock-marked with old gravel scratchings. The trap club facilities are nearby.
4. HOUSING; quantity/distribution			X		X	
5. HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY			X		X	With control of air emissions, mining would not affect any residences.
6. COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME			X		X	
7. EMPLOYMENT; quantity, distribution			X		X	Road construction and maintenance projects are providing access to many rural locations where oil and gas drilling are prevalent.
8. TAX BASE; state/local tax revenue			X		X	The oil patch is booming providing many jobs and tax revenue for the county.
9. GOVERNMENT SERVICES; demand			X		X	

				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	EXPLANATION
10. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL and AGRICULTURAL activities			X		X	
11. HISTORICAL and ARCHAEOLOGICAL			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. AESTHETICS			X		X	
13. ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS and GOALS; local and regional			X		X	
14. DEMANDS on ENVIRON-MENTAL RESOURCES of land, water, air and energy			X		X	
15. TRANSPORTATION; networks and traffic flows			X		X	This material is for reconstruction of county roads and other local jobs.

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, Richland County Commissioners, Richland County Weed Board

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: Denial

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

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE: _____

Prepared by Jo Stephen, July 2006