

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
PUMCO, INC.  
KEMPF BORROW SITE  
FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA**

This Environmental Assessment (EA) is required under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). An EA functions to identify, disclose, and analyze the impacts of a proposed action. This document may disclose impacts that have no legislatively required mitigation measures, or over which there is no regulatory authority.

The state law that regulates gravel mining operations in Montana is the Opencut Mining Act. This law and the rules adopted thereunder place operational guidance and limitations on a project during its lifetime, and provides for the reclamation of land affected by opencut mining operations.

Approval or denial of the application will be based on a determination of whether or not the proposed operation complies with the Opencut Mining Act, the rules adopted thereunder, and local laws and regulations--not on the popularity of the project.

**PROPONENT:** Pumco, Inc.

**PROJECT NAME:** Opencut Borrow Mining – Kempf Site

**LOCATION:** N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Section 36 and the S<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> S<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Section 25, T30N, R22W

**COUNTY:** Flathead

**TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:**

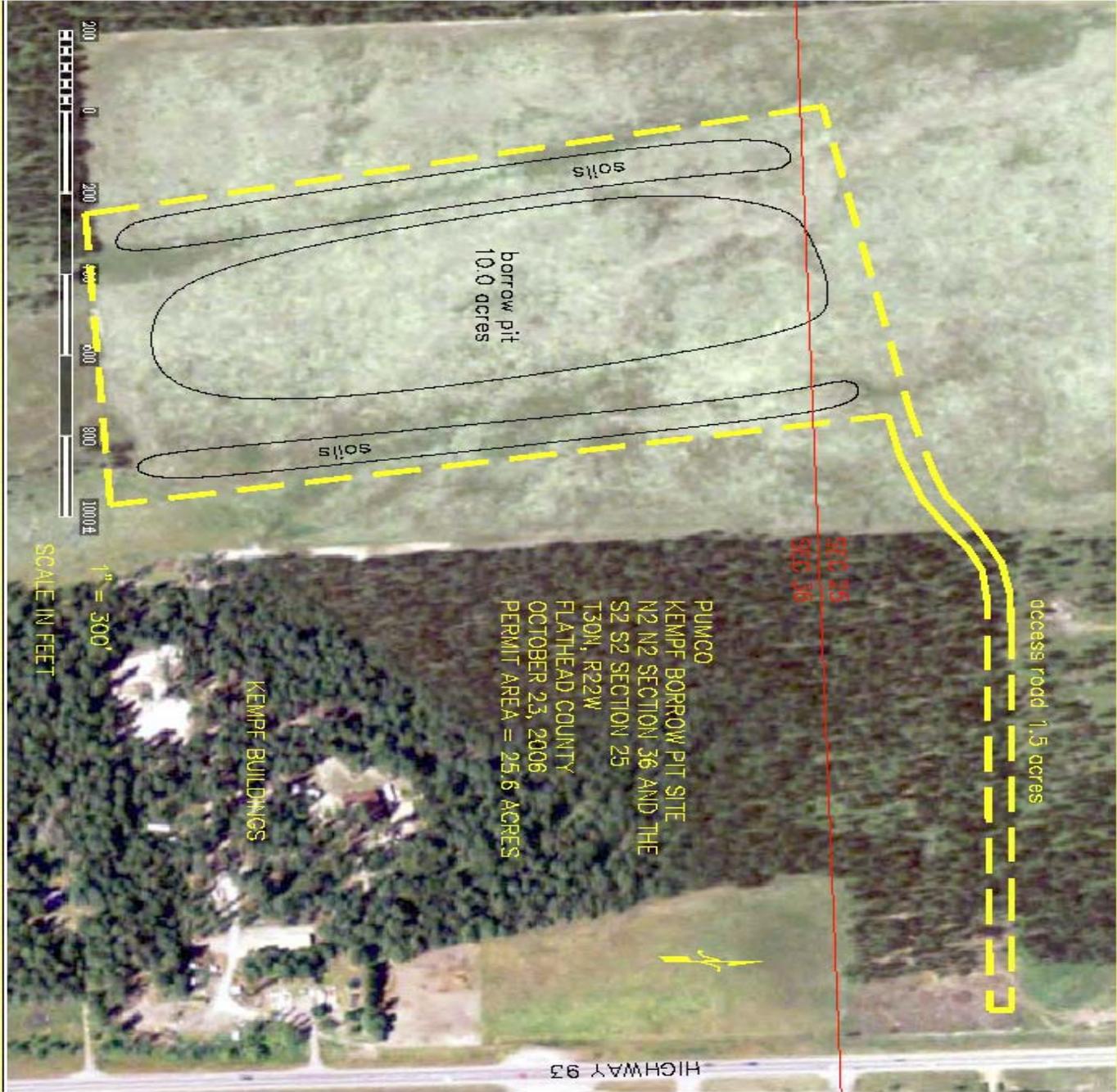
The applicant proposes to mine and haul 130,000 cubic yards of clay borrow from a pit located ½ mile southwest of Happy Valley. The site is a remnant clay deposit left over from glacial Lake Missoula in rocky terrain between the Stillwater and Whitefish Rivers at approximately 3120 feet, MSL, where groundwater lies approximately 200 feet below the ground surface. Approximately 10 feet would be removed off the top of a long, narrow clay ridge in a pasture where the topsoil averages 6” thick. A 35-foot wide, 1,500-foot long access road would be built from the north end of the borrow site east to the Highway 93 project. The road would traverse through a forested area in the south half of Section 25. The mine area would be graded out flat with no slopes and planted into grasses. The road would be reduced to a 24-foot wide permanent road to provide the landowner with access to the pasture. Hours of operation for this project would be 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. The site would be reclaimed by October 2007.

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
<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>			X	X		Mining would permanently alter the topography, but the site would be reclaimed to a level and smooth site. Grasses would be planted to stabilize the soils.
2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> ; Stability						No effect on geology.
3. <u>SOILS</u> ; Quality, Distribution			X		X	Soils would be stripped, saved and replaced after mining is finished.
4. <u>WATER</u> ; Quality, Quantity; Distribution			X		X	The operation would not affect ground or surface waters.
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 a water truck.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources						No unique, endangered, fragile or limited species or habitat are known at this site.
<b>BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats			X		X	Much of the wildlife displaced during active mining would return following reclamation.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; Quantity, quality, species			X		X	The site is infested with common yarrow. Existing pasture in the mine area would be replanted into grasses of a compatible type.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops, production			X		X	The site is a low production pasture that was logged off years ago. Grazing land would be temporarily taken out of production.
<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>						
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 would be expected on the quantity or distribution of housing due to this gravel pit. It is possible that the flat area left following mining could create desirable homesites for future development.
5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</u>			X		X	Some dust and additional traffic would be generated at the site and along the access road but the operator must comply with existing traffic, safety and air quality laws.

6. <u>COMMUNITY &amp; PERSONAL INCOME</u>			X	X	The landowner may benefit from additional revenue and/or value added by 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 borrow material is hauled and used for this improvement to Highway 93.
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 grazing and limited forest use, and used commercially until closure when it would be reclaimed to grassland.
11. <u>HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u>					No historical, cultural or archaeological values are present.
12. <u>AESTHETICS</u>			X	X	<p>The site sits back 1500 feet from Highway 93 and is not visible to the general public. The Opencut Mining Act requires that it be reclaimed to a beneficial use. The proposed reclaimed use would meet that standard by providing a graded, grass covered landscape with stable soils. This site would be usable as habitat for birds and mammals indigenous to the area, as well as horses and cattle.</p> <p>There would be some noise and dust generated by the operation, but water trucks and the anticipated hours of operation would reasonably mitigate those impacts by limiting activities to normal daytime working hours so that they would not impact people who are trying to sleep at night, or who wish to enjoy evening and weekend activities. Audible backup alarms are required on mobile equipment for worker safety by the US Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). The decibel level of the alarms is regulated by MSHA. Mobile equipment would operate near the boundaries of the site and could be within hearing distance of some homes. There are no other regulatory limits on noise generated at a mine site other than for worker safety within the operation itself.</p>
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS and GOALS</u> ; local and regional					The Flathead County Planning and Zoning Office indicates that this land is zoned as SAG-5 but has waived the requirements of a Conditional Use Permit in this case by determining that the borrow area is a necessary component of the Highway 93 project and that impacts would not be significantly long-lasting or residual. The county has declared this site to be in compliance with local zoning regulations for this type of activity and signed a DEQ Zoning Compliance Form on October 12, 2006.
14. <u>DEMANDS on 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 traffic generated as this borrow pit accesses the nearby highway project.





access road 1.5 acres

SECTION 25  
SECTION 36

PUMCO  
KEMPF BORROW PIT SITE  
N2 N2 SECTION 36 AND THE  
S2 S2 SECTION 25  
T30N, R22W  
FLATHEAD COUNTY  
OCTOBER 23, 2006  
PERMIT AREA = 25.6 ACRES

KEMPF BUILDINGS

HIGHWAY 93



1" = 300'

SCALE IN FEET