

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
ELLISON CATTLE COMPANY
ELLISON SITE
RAVALLI 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: Ellison Cattle Company

PROJECT NAME: Opencut Gravel Mining – Ellison Site

LOCATION: SE4 NE4 Section 23, T9N, R20W **COUNTY:** Ravalli

PERSON PREPARING EA: Rod Samdahl

E.A. COMPLETED: 06/06/08
(Date)

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION:

The applicant proposes to mine, crush and haul 150,000 cubic yards of gravel from a pit located 1.5 miles northeast of Stevensville adjacent to the Eastside Highway. The site is a gravel outwash deposit in the alluvial fan below the Burnt Fork drainage approximately 1.5 miles east of the Bitterroot River at approximately 3370 feet, MSL, where groundwater lies at about 15 feet below the ground surface. An irrigation ditch runs through the middle of the site. The site would be mined into topography that is gently sloping toward the northwest, in an area where the topsoil averages 8” to 10” of cobbly sandy loam. All topsoil would be salvaged and replaced following mining. The slopes of the reclaimed area would be reduced to 2% east of the ditch and 6:1 west of the ditch, and planted into grasses to be irrigated for pasture. The site would be reclaimed by December 2010.

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	AMPLIFICATION
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u>			X	X		Mining would permanently alter the topography, but reclamation would level and smooth the site and 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 including the irrigation ditch that flows across the permit area.
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 sprinklers or by dipping water from the ditch with a loader. The operator is responsible to maintain dust control on the crusher as required by the Air Quality Permit.
6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, or LIMITED</u> environmental resources						No unique, endangered, fragile or limited species or habitat are known at this site.
BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT						
1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, and AQUATIC</u> ; species and habitats			X		X	Wildlife temporarily displaced during active mining would return following reclamation.
2. <u>VEGETATION</u> ; Quantity, quality, species			X		X	Existing pasture would be replanted into grasses of a compatible type.
3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> ; grazing, crops, production			X		X	The site has been used as pasture and would be temporarily taken out of production. It would be replanted with grasses and returned to pasture following reclamation.
				POTENTIAL IMPACTS		
	A	B	C	LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	AMPLIFICATION
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 the quantity or distribution of housing due to this gravel pit.
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 revenue 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 aggregates are hauled and used to improve adjacent land.
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 pasture use, and used commercially until reclamation 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	The site sits alongside the Eastside Highway and is visible to the general public.
13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS and GOALS</u> ; local and regional					There are no plans known for this site.
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 additional traffic added as this gravel pit accesses the state highway.

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, and the County Weed Control Board.**

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

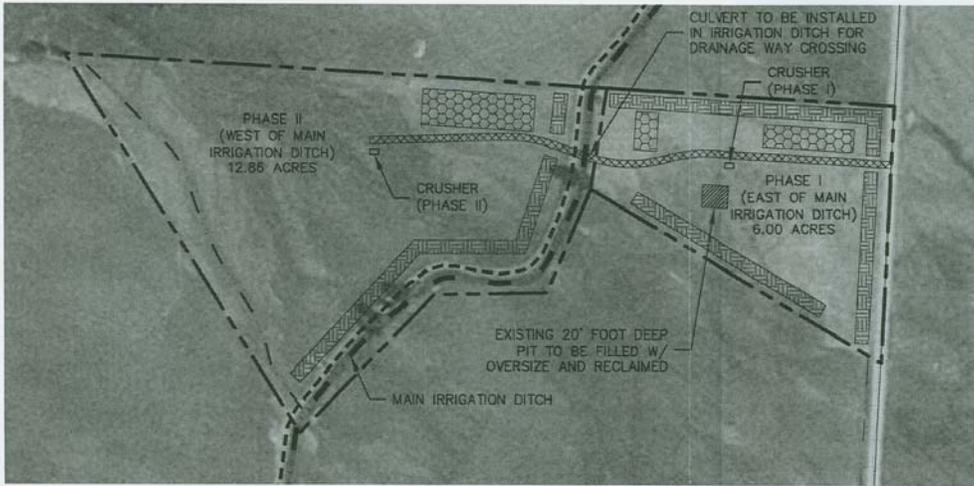
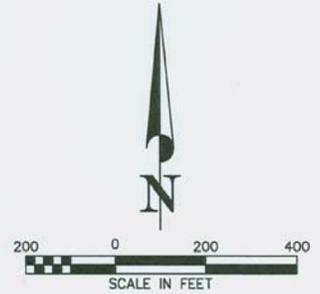
RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: **No further analysis is required.**

Approved By _____
(Signature)

(Date)

ELLISON GRAVEL MINING PLAN

T 9 N, R 20 W, SEC. 23
RAVALLI COUNTY



LEGEND

- MINING BOUNDARY
- EXISTING IRRIGATION DITCH
- EXISTING 8' GRAVEL ROAD
- PROPOSED TOPSOIL STOCKPILE
- PROPOSED 1" GRAVEL STOCKPILE
- PROPOSED 16' GRAVEL ROAD

RECEIVED

MAY 03 2002

Department of
Environmental Quality
Kalispell Regional Office

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	ELLISON GRAVEL PIT
GRAVEL MINING PLAN	
PREPARED FOR: ELLISON CATTLE COMPANY	
DATE: 4/29/02	DRAWN: NDL DESIGNED BY: NDL CHECKED BY: GL
SHEET NO. 1 OF 1	JOB NO. 6637-02 Z81-24