

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PROPONENT: Pondera County

SITE NAME: Ostrom

LOCATION: SENW, Section 33, T29N, R4W

COUNTY: Pondera

TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: Proponent has applied for a 4-acre openpit mine permit area for mining 40,000 cy of gravel at a location approximately 11 miles northwest of Conrad. Processing equipment would include a crusher. The proponent would be legally bound by the permit to reclaim the site to a postmining land use of cropland.

A = significant unavoidable impacts. B = insignificant as a result of conditioned mitigation. C = insignificant as proposed.

| | POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIVE MEASURES | | | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| | A | B | C | LONG TERM | SHORT TERM | EXPLANATION |
| PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | |
| 1. <u>TOPOGRAPHY</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The site is located on a ridge about one mile southeast of the Dry Fork Marias River. Gravel removal to a maximum depth of 10-12 feet would alter the topography by lowering the surface and creating a small basin. |
| 2. <u>GEOLOGY</u> : stability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. <u>SOILS</u> : quality, distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The average soil thickness is 6 inches of very gravelly loams and loams. Soil would be stripped and used for reclamation. |
| 4. <u>WATER</u> : quality, quantity; distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Ground and surface water do not appear to be factors at this site. There is no surface water in the vicinity of the site, and there are no water wells in or near the site that could be affected by this operation. |
| 5. <u>AIR</u> : quality | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | There would be some degradation of air quality while operations are in progress. The proponent must comply with state air quality regulations. |
| 6. <u>UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | |
| 1. <u>TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN, AND AQUATIC SPECIES AND HABITATS</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The openpit operation would disturb a small area of cropland (barley and wheat). Thus, no significant impacts to wildlife are expected. |
| 2. <u>VEGETATION</u> : quantity, quality, species | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The mining area consists of cropland. The proponent contacted the local weed district about the operation and is in compliance with its requirements. |
| 3. <u>AGRICULTURE</u> : grazing, crops, production | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A small area of cropland would be temporarily out of production. This would not substantially impact local agriculture. The site would be reclaimed back to cropland. |
| HUMAN ENVIRONMENT | | | | | | |
| 1. <u>SOCIAL</u> : structures, mores | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 2. <u>CULTURAL</u> : uniqueness, diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. <u>POPULATION</u> : quantity, diversity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 4. <u>HOUSING</u> : quantity, distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

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|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 5. <u>HUMAN HEALTH & SAFETY</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No problems are anticipated. Restricted hours of operation are not needed at this remote site. |
| 6. <u>COMMUNITY & PERSONAL INCOME</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 7. <u>EMPLOYMENT</u> : quantity, distribution | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 8. <u>TAX BASE</u> : local, state tax revenue | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 9. <u>GOVERNMENT SERVICES</u> : demand | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 10. <u>INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, & AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 11. <u>HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | This site has been previously disturbed by farming activities, thus destroying the integrity of near-surface resources that may have existed. The operator must give appropriate protection to any values discovered in the affected area, and promptly notify the State Historic Preservation Office if such values are found. |
| 12. <u>AESTHETICS</u> : noise, visual | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The site is in a remote location. |
| 13. <u>ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS</u> : local, regional | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The proponent has demonstrated that the operation is in compliance with local zoning regulations. |
| 14. <u>DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES</u> : land, water, air, energy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| 15. <u>TRANSPORTATION</u> : networks, traffic flows | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The proponent would use county roads to transport mine material to project sites. This activity would not substantially affect local traffic. |

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: The Department would deny an incomplete application or one that does not comply with the Act and 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 State Historic Preservation Office, local zoning authority, county weed control board, and landowner.

OTHER GROUPS OR AGENCIES CONTACTED OR WHICH MAY HAVE OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION: DEQ's Air Resources Management Bureau regarding air quality, DEQ's Water Protection Bureau regarding water discharge, DNRC's Water Rights Bureau regarding water rights, and MSHA regarding mine safety.

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.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: No further analysis

INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS EA: None

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