

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Gilman Construction, Staging Area
Proposed Implementation Date:	May-August, 2022
Proponent:	Gilman Construction
Location:	Section 28, Township 5 South – Range 9 West
County:	Beaverhead County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Gilman Construction of Butte, MT has applied for a Land Use License (LUL) to store and utilize a stockpile of chip material for an MDT highway project on Interstate-15 near Apex, MT. The LUL would grant Gilman Construction the ability to store and access a stockpile for the duration of the work to be performed. This document analyzes the impact the proposed action would have on the environment.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Beaverhead County Road Department
Beaverhead County Commissioners
Cottonwood Cattle Ranch
Montana DNRC – MMB and Dillon Unit

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

A. Action Alternative: Grant an LUL to Gilman Construction to utilize an area within the existing apex gravel pit on state land as a stockpiling area during road construction on the I-15 corridor near Dillon.

B. No Action Alternative: Deny an LUL to Gilman Construction to utilize an area within the existing apex gravel pit on state land as a stockpiling area during road construction on the I-15 corridor near Dillon.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain *POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS* following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Beaverhead County currently has a gravel permit at this location. The county was contacted and agreed to allow Gilman Construction to use the pit as a stockpiling area. This activity will not interfere with the County's operations. The County also has an existing LUL for the storage of asphalt at the pit location.

The soils where the gravel pit is located are classified as Bronec- Kalsted gravelly sandy loams as identified by the NRCS soil survey. The area is well drained and rutting is usually not an issue with these types of soils. Soil surveys indicate that the typical profile for such soils are as follows; 0-5 inches soils are gravelly sandy loam, 5-17 inches are very gravelly sandy loam, 17 to 31" very gravelly sandy loam and 31- 60" Extremely gravelly sandy loam.

Top soils have been scraped and stored on the site for reclamation once the storage site is no longer in use. Native grass seed mixture will be spread over the disturbed areas to prevent erosion of the soils when the County has completed mining.

Land capability classification is listed at 4e. The soils are well drained and stony.

This project should cause no long term or cumulative effects to soils in the existing gravel pit, or area.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The existing pit has a water table approximately 15 feet below the ground surface. Tests reveal that the current gravel permit should only be excavated to a depth of 10 to 11 feet. Ground water is located 5 feet below the current elevation of the existing pit. There is a layer of clay that is found at approximately 15 feet.

The pit currently has good water drainage; however, there is one area of the pit that has a heavy clay layer where in the past gravel was extracted below 12-15 feet. This area can hold surface water after a heavy rain or snow events. The clay area will not be used for stockpiling. If a license is granted the project should not affect water abundance or quality.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Minimal short term affects to air quality are anticipated. Dust particulates will increase in the area due to truck traffic during the project. The proponent may be asked to water the dirt road to and from the project to keep dust to a minimum. No long term affects to air quality are anticipated.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

The stockpiling area has been stripped of topsoil and vegetation through previous mining done by the County. There are no anticipated affects to vegetation because of the proposed action.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The project would not create nor destroy any habitat. The existing gravel pit has stripped all vegetation and topsoil. The area being utilized for stockpiling is barren gravelly soil.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program identified one species of concern observed within a half-mile of the project over the past ten years. The long-billed curlew was observed in 2017 in section 28. The Long-billed Curlew is classified by the BLM as sensitive. Due to the short duration and relative impact to the land of the proposed project, there are no affects anticipated from the proposed action.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

Because the ground has already been pre-disturbed from previous mining activity, there are no anticipated affects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

This proposal would be visible from the I-15 interstate as one drives North and South near mile marker 74. It will also be visible from the Birch Creek County Road. There is a subdivision to the north of Birch Creek County Road. Increased noise from truck traffic would occur during the proposed action. No long term or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated if the license is granted.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The area is currently being used as a gravel pit by Beaverhead County and the land around the pit is being grazed by livestock. This is a dry arid location. The stockpiling would have no known effects on environmental resources of land, water, air, or energy in this area. This is a temporary agreement; no long term or cumulative effects are anticipated.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

Montana DNRC Dillon Unit doesn't know of any other projects planned for this area. The EA for the existing gravel pit was completed in June 2010.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

This proposal will increase large truck traffic and road construction equipment on the Birch Creek Road for the duration of the project. Birch Creek Road can be heavily used by recreationists in the spring and summer. Truck hauling signs would need to be erected to warn traffic of heavy truck traffic on the road if the project is permitted. The area is flat, and visibility is excellent. The risks to human health and safety associated with this proposal are low but do exist.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The use of the pit as a stockpiling area should not affect the commercial and agricultural activities on the state section. The area could still be used for grazing if cattle are present, however the gate would need to be closed during this period of use.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

This project will not create move or eliminate jobs.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

The license would not generate an increase or decrease of tax revenue.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

Beaverhead County would still be responsible for maintaining the gravel pit; however, the licensee would be required to remove all garbage, debris or material from the stockpiling activities.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

None

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

None

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

None

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

This proposal would be of short duration and no change in cultural uniqueness and diversity would be anticipated if this license is granted.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The license would generate a onetime fee of \$1,000 for the Pine Hills trust if the license is granted.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Zack Winfield	Date: 3/15/2022
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V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The Action Alternative has been selected and Gilman Construction will be granted an LUL to store and utilize a stockpile of chip material for the road project on Interstate 15.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:


There are no long-term impacts to the environment resulting from the action alternative

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Trevor Taylor Title: MMB Bureau Chief
Signature: 	Date: 3/15/22