



Montana Department of  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Brian Schweitzer, Governor

P.O. Box 200901 • Helena, MT 59620-0901 • (406) 444-2544 • [www.deq.mt.gov](http://www.deq.mt.gov)

November 13, 2008

Interested Party List

RE: Draft Checklist EA for Valley Sand and Gravel, LLC for an Operating Permit

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review and comment is the Draft Checklist Environmental Assessment (CEA) for an operating permit requested by Valley Sand and Gravel, LLC (VSG) located at 7510 Applegate Drive, Helena, MT 59602. VSG filed an application for an Operating Permit on June 19, 2007, from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Environmental Management Bureau in Helena. The application was later revised on February 13, 2008 and again on July 21, 2008.

VSG has proposed expanding a quarry and rock crushing operation currently covered under a Small Miner Exclusion Statement (SMES). This proposed expansion would exceed the acreage allowed under an SMES, and therefore an Operating Permit must be obtained. The crushed rock would be used for road base material and concrete mix. The quarry would be excavated using heavy equipment such as excavators, loaders, and dozers, as well as screening equipment. Some blasting may occur. The excavated areas would be sloped and contoured to blend in with the surrounding areas.

The proposed site is about 11 miles north of Helena, MT in portions of Section 26 and 35, Township 12 North, Range 4 West in Lewis and Clark County. Existing roads would be used to access the proposed quarry site. Access roads for public use have been established through state land, and border the site to the north and west. A road connects Applegate Drive with Diamond Springs Road, providing access to property owners and state land in the area. Mining would take place alongside the boundary of this road, eliminating the need for additional access road construction. The site would consist of a total of about 371 acres of which no more than 30 acres would be disturbed at any one time.

Mining, screening, or crushing operations would take place during daylight hours from 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday and from 8 AM to 4 PM on Saturday and/or Sunday during summer months. Summer months are defined as those months during which children are not attending public schools. Operating hours would change to 8 AM to 8 PM from Monday through Friday and 8 AM to 4 PM on Saturday and/or Sunday during

the remaining months.

A certified, licensed blaster would conduct all blasting at the site. A pre-blast survey would be conducted for any resident or owner of a dwelling or structure within one half mile of the permit boundary, if requested by the resident or owner. Pre-blasting surveys would also be used to identify general water quality and quantity of area wells. Wells damaged by blasting to the point of inadequate performance as identified by DEQ would be replaced.

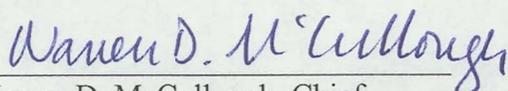
The proposed operation has been reviewed for compliance under a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Assessment (SPEA) for a General Quarry Operating Permit published by the DEQ in February 2004. DEQ has determined that this operation does not meet the requirements listed in the SPEA since there would be more than five acres unreclaimed at any one time. An operating permit may be issued once the application is complete, an environmental analysis is performed, and the reclamation bond has been posted to ensure reclamation after completion of the proposed activities. If VSG develops additional lease agreements on other sites in the future, they would have to apply for an amendment or revision to the operating permit.

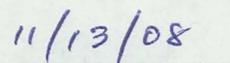
VSG must obtain an operating permit as the site cannot stay under the five acre disturbed and unreclaimed limit required under the Small Miner Exclusion Statement. The operating plan calls for reclamation of all surface disturbances with a post-mining land use of livestock grazing.

The Draft CEA addresses issues and concerns raised during public involvement and from agency scoping. The agencies have decided to approve the permit as proposed as the preliminary preferred alternative. This is not a final decision. This conclusion may change based on comments received from the public on this Draft CEA, new information, or new analysis that may be needed in preparing the Final CEA

Copies of the Draft CEA can be obtained by writing DEQ, Environmental Management Bureau, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620, c/o Herb Rolfes, or calling (406) 444-3841; or sending email addressed to [hrolfes@mt.gov](mailto:hrolfes@mt.gov). The Draft CEA will also be posted on the DEQ web page: [www.deq.mt.gov](http://www.deq.mt.gov). Public comments concerning the adequacy and accuracy of the Draft CEA will be accepted until December 12, 2008.

Since the Final EA may only contain public comments and responses, and a list of changes to the Draft CEA, please keep this Draft CEA for future reference.

  
Warren D. McCullough, Chief  
Environmental Management Bureau

  
Date