Environmental Assessment
for the
Proposed Expansion of the Ocotillo Sand and Gravel Mine operated by Huachuca Concrete Inc. DBA: AzConAgg Located at 2150 N. Ocotillo Rd., Benson, Cochise County, AZ

Environmental Assessment: DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-0032

Bureau of Land Management
Tucson Field Office
12661 E Broadway Blvd
Tucson, Arizona 85748

August, 2009

Project Name
Huachuca Concrete – Ocotillo Pit Expansion, AZA 33801

Legal Description
The project area is located north of Benson on Ocotillo road, Cochise County, AZ
T16S, R20E, Secs 17 and18.
Topo Map: Galletta Flat East USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle

Background
Huachuca Concrete, DBA AzConAgg, operates a sand and gravel mine on a 92 acre parcel with private surface and federal minerals. Huachuca Concrete is the owner of the surface estate. Huachuca Concrete mines sand and gravel from ten acres of the parcel under a mineral materials sales contract with the Bureau. Huachuca Concrete's current pit operation is reaching the maximum practical depth for a stable gravel pit. In order to continue the operation, Huachuca Concrete has requested access to an additional 21 acres of federal minerals adjacent to the current operation on the parcel.

Need for the Proposal
The Bureau has received a request from Huachuca Concrete to mine sand and gravel under a mineral materials sale contract. The Bureau must determine if the proposal meets the requirements for a mineral materials sale and if the sale is in the public interest [43 CFR 3601.6].

Conformance with Land Use Plan
This project is in conformance with the Safford Resource Management Plan approved in 1994.

> *Saleable Minerals* - Mineral materials are administered by BLM and will be disposed of on a case-by-case basis.
>
> (Safford District RMP, pg. 23)

The project site is not in a riparian zone or a restricted location for mining minerals as defined in the Safford Resource Management Plan.

Relationship to Statutes, Regulations or other Plans or Policies
The project site is located on a split-estate parcel with privately owned surface rights and federal mineral estate. The proposed project area is covered under a multi-sector general permit for surface water run off and is subject to regulation under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, which is administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. The ephemeral washes on the property have been delineated for jurisdiction by the Army Corps of Engineers.

Cochise County's Tres Alamos Comprehensive Plan (July 11, 2006) designates the area including project site for rural residential and light industrial development. Aggregate mining does not meet the description of a "light industry" under Cochise County's zoning regulations. However, Arizona Statute A.R.S. 11-830 restricts counties from regulating aggregate mining except within established "aggregate mining operations zoning

districts". The project site is not within such a district; therefore the Tres Alamos Comprehensive Plan cannot be applied to the proposed mining operation.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

Proposed Action:

Huachuca Concrete would expand its mining area at the Ocotillo Road site, according to the Approved Mine Plan of Operations, to include an additional 21 acres of split estate land (shown shaded on the enclosed map). It is projected that the site can produce enough material to operate for ten years. Up to 100,000 tons of material are expected to be extracted per year, for a total of 800,000 tons of material over the ten year operational life of the project.

The mine will be operated as an open pit with end loaders used to dig and move material from the proposed expansion area to the existing processing area. The operator will apply a sealant to access roads on the mine site to reduce the need for water for dust suppression. The operator has estimated that the application of a calcium chloride sealant will reduce the volume of water required for dust suppression from 26,000 gallons/day to 12,000 gallons/day. The operator will limit hours of operation of the crusher and wet plant to the hours of 6 am through 6 pm daily.

The mine site will be reclaimed as provided in the approved mine reclamation plan, Reclamation Project for Huachuca Concrete Inc., October 21, 2006.

No Action Alternative:

Federal minerals on the additional 21 acres of split estate land would not be offered for sale to Huachuca Concrete.

Scoping and Issues

BLM received Huachuca Concrete's proposal to expand the Ocotillo Road quarry in July, 2007 and conducted public scoping in September, 2007. Substantive comments received during the public scoping period were analyzed in the development of the EA.

The EA was released on June 9, 2009 for a 30-day comment period. The public comment period was extended to July 21, 2009 to allow time for additional input.

Substantive comments received on the initial EA resulted in modifications to the document including:

- Clarification of Huachuca Concrete operations as they relate to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
- Defined mitigation for dust abatement to reduce the amount of water use
- Modification to the hours of operation to reduce noise and light impacts on neighboring residents.

Affected Environment
The project site is located in the San Pedro River valley on the eastern alluvial fan of the Rincon Mountains. The soil is a sandy loam that is composed of layers of decomposed granite and sand with varying amounts of clay and caliche (Chronic, 1983).

Access to the project site utilizes Ocotillo Road, maintained by Cochise County.

Environmental Effects
The following resources are not affected by the proposed action or alternative because they do not occur in the proposed use area or because of the nature of the proposed action:

1. Floodplain
2. Wetlands/Riparian Zones
3. Wild and Scenic Rivers
4. Prime or Unique Farmland
5. Wilderness
6. National Energy Policy

The following resources are addressed in this EA:

1. Cultural Resources
2. Air Quality
3. Hazardous Wastes
4. Solid Wastes
5. Wildlife
6. Special-status species
7. Vegetation
8. Water Quality
9. Environmental Justice
10. Transportation
11. Noise and Light

Cumulative effects are considered under each of the above resources.

Cultural Resources
A Class III Cultural Resources Survey was prepared by Westland Resources, Inc. in September 2006. The survey covered the entire 92 acre parcel owned by Huachuca Concrete. The survey found no archeological sites on the parcel. Seven isolated occurrences were found on the parcel consisting of lithic flakes, ceramic sherds, and a cartridge case presumed to be historic. No Native American Religious concerns were identified during the scoping process for this proposal.

<u>Impacts of the Proposed Action</u>
The proposed action will have no impacts on known cultural sites. The following stipulation will be included in the mineral material sale contract authorized under this action.

"If in connection with operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (:.L. 101-601; Stat. 3048; 25 U S. C. 3001) are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer of the discovery. The permittee shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

Should any archeological resources or vertebrate fossils be discovered during implementation of projects, all surface disturbing activities in the area of discovery shall cease and the Field Office archeologist shall be notified. The archeologist will evaluate the discovery and provide recommendations to the Authorized Officer (Field Manager). Surface disturbing activities shall not resume until permission is obtained from the Authorized Officer."

Impacts of the No Action Alternative

The twenty one acres will not be disturbed for mine expansion and cultural resources will not be impacted under the no action alternative.

Cumulative Impacts on Cultural Resources

The San Pedro River valley is rich in cultural resources, both of a historic and pre-historic nature. The Class II Cultural Survey completed for the proposed mine expansion found no evidence of cultural sites. Should cultural sites be unearthed, this would contribute to ongoing modifications to the cultural landscape of the San Pedro valley resulting in the loss of in-place cultural resources, but also providing an opportunity to document the existence of any buried cultural features unearthed at the mine site.

Air Quality

Air Quality is currently being managed on the site under two Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Air Quality permits for particulate emissions. One permit covers emissions from the ready mix batch (concrete) plant and the other covers emissions from the combined crusher, screen, and wash plant operation. Current particulate matter production and control is within the opacity limits for these operations and is kept under control with water suppression systems such as water sprays at transfer points and a water truck to control dust on the haul roads.

Impacts of the Proposed Action

The proposed expansion will be subject to ADEQ air quality standards and as such will be monitored and controlled. Concurrent reclamation of mined areas will minimize areas of exposed soil. Modifications to the existing air quality permits will not be required to facilitate the proposed pit expansion.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative

The impacts of the no action alternative would result in lower particulate emissions in the proposed expansion area due to no new disturbance of surface cover.

Cumulative Impacts to Air Quality
The cumulative impacts to air quality from the proposed action would be limited to fugitive dust raised from newly exposed surface. Dust emissions would be controlled by dust suppression systems such as water sprays and environmentally safe soil stabilizers.

Hazardous Wastes and Solid Wastes
Waste Oil: A 500 gallon tank with secondary containment is provided for storage of used oil and will be recycled regularly. Gear Oil and Antifreeze: 55 gallon drums of gear oil and antifreeze will be stored within a 6x40 foot curbed, concrete containment area which is attached to the west side of the shop. This secondary contained area will keep oil, hydraulic fluid, and antifreeze from contaminating the surrounding soils. A spill kit is provided within the area. Equipment batteries are stored in the enclosed shop area and are recycled at the end of their useful life.

Solid wastes consist of small amounts of general office trash and possibly wooden pallets. All solid waste are disposed of into trash dumpsters for disposal at an approved facility or recycled.

Impacts of the Proposed Action
There will be an increase in the possibility of a spill or loose trash within the expansion area, however, steps would be taken in such a case to minimize and contain any such incident. The onsite disposal of hazardous wastes and/or solid wastes would not be authorized in this proposal.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
The possibility of a spill or dump site on the proposed expansion area would be removed as the presence of machinery would be absent. However, equipment would continue to operate on the existing site.

Cumulative Impacts from Hazardous or Solid Wastes
While reclamation activities are underway at the current pit, there will be a limited increase in the volume of hazardous wastes generated such as lubricants or fossil fuel spills while mining equipment is used in both the current pit and proposed expansion area.

Wildlife
The project site lies within the Chihuanhuan desert scrub community (Biological Evaluation prepared by Westland Resources, 2006, pg 3). The three dominant shrubs in this area are Creosote Bush (*Larrea tridentante*), Whitethorn Acacia (*Acacia neovernucosa*), and Catclaw Acacia (*Acacia greggii*). Occasional plants growing in the vicinity would include Morman Tea (*Ephedra trifurca*) and Honey Mesquite in the lower wash areas. The succulent scrub communities are very sparse and include Ocotillo

(*Fouquieria splendevus*), Shindaggars (*agave lechuguilla*) and common Yucca(*Yucca elate*). There are also patches of desert grasses and winter forbes.

Animals Found in vicinity of Project Site
Nelson's Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus nelsoni*)
Desert Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus penicillatus*)
Nelson's Kangaroo Rat *(Dipodomys nelsoni*)
Desert Kangaroo Rat (Dipodomys desertti)
Desert Pocket Gopher (*Geomys arenarius*)
Western Diamondback
Mohave Rattlesnake
Coyote
Desert Shrew (*Notrosorex crawforei*)
Desert Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus crooke*)
Desert Cottontail (*Sylvilegus audubon*)
Mourning Dove
Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianois*)
Lesser Nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutpennid*)
Scotts Oriole (*Leternus parisorum*)
Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus*)
Black-throated Sparrow (*Amphispiza bilineata*)

Impacts of the Proposed Action
The project area with its east facing slope, and diminished vegetation, does not appear to be prime habitat for these species, yet there would be some loss of habitat and some desert species would have to relocate to suitable habitat nearby. Reclamation of this site would occur when mining is finished as described in the Mine Reclamation Plan. Reseeding of the site with native grasses may provide better habitat for wildlife than currently exists on the site.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
Wildlife habitat in the expansion area would not be disturbed under the no action alternative.

Cumulative Impacts to Wildlife
The San Pedro River valley has experienced a loss of wildlife habitat as human modifications to the landscape have converted wildlife habitat to other uses. The proposed alternative would result in a temporary loss of wildlife habitat during the operational period of the mine. Wildlife habitat would be restored during mine reclamation.

BLM Special Status Species
A review of the BLM Special Status Species list revealed potential for the Texas Horned Lizard and Needle-spined Pineapple cactus, as well as several bat species, to occur in the area.

Impacts of the Proposed Action
Although the proposed action could affect the Texas Horned Lizard, the lizard has a wide range and any effects would be insignificant and discountable. Vegetation disturbance at the level proposed in this action would not have any effect on the bat species.

Due to the small stature of the Needle-spined Pineapple cactus, a 100% survey will be performed before the vegetative clearance operations begin. Any Needle-spined Pineapple cactus found will need to be transplanted in a non-disturbed area.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
BLM Special Status species will not be affected by the No Action Alternative

Cumulative Impacts to Special Status Species
There are no cumulative affects to the special status bat species or the Texas Horned lizard because they occur in a very wide range that spans from eastern Arizona to eastern Texas and from Oklahoma to Mexico. Relocation of any Needle-spined Pineapple cactus that may be discovered during the vegetation removal operations will eliminate the cumulative impacts of this project.

Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E)
Twenty three T&E plant and animal species occurring in Cochise County are listed as by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as either threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, or conservation agreement species (Table 1). An initial screening analysis was conducted to determine the potential for occurrence of any T&E species within the Project Area. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Impacts of the Proposed Action
The proposed action will have no effect on T&E species. The upland site is not suitable habitat for any of the T&E species listed for Cochise County.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
The suitability of the project area to T&E species would be unaffected by the no action alternative.

Cumulative Impacts to Threatened and Endangered Species
There is no evidence of inhabitation of the project area by any T&E species. Given the residential and farming nature of the surrounding area, no influx of T&E species would be expected. Therefore, no cumulative loss of habitat for T&E species within the project area is expected.

Table 1. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, Candidate Species for Cochise County, Arizona; Special Status; and Potential for Occurrence in the Analysis Area and Basis for the Determination.
(Information from the USFWS Summary of Listed, Proposed, Candidate, and Conservation Agreement Species in Pinal County Except as Noted.)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Categories

1. **Endangered**-Taxa in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
2. **Threatened**-Taxa likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
3. **Proposed Endangered**-Taxa proposed for listing as endangered throughout all or a significant portion or its range.
4. **Proposed Threatened**-Taxa proposed for listing as Threatened throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
5. **Candidate**-Taxa for which sufficient data exists to support proposals to list , but the formal proposals to list the species as Threatened or Endangered have not been made by the USFWS because this action is prohibited by other listing activity.

Species	Status	Potential Occurrence at Project Site; Basis for Potential Occurrence Determination
Canelo Hills ladies tresses *Spiranthes deliterscens*	Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat (finely grained, highly organic, saturated soils of cienegas).
Huachuca water umbel *Lilaeopsis schaffneriana ssp recurva*	Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat (cienegas, perennial low gradient streams, wetlands).
Cochise pincushion cactus *Coryphantha robbinsorum*	Threatened	None; the analysis area is below the lower elevation limit of this species (4200 ft).
Lemmon fleabane *Erigron lemmonii*	Candidate	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat (crevices, ledges, and boulders in canyon bottoms in pine-oak woodland), and is well outside the known geographic range.
Huachuca springsnail *Pyrgulopsis thompsoni*	Candidate	None; analysis area lacks suitable habitat (aquatic areas, small springs with vegetation and slow to moderate flow), and is below lower elevation limit of this species(4500ft).
Gila chub *Gila intermedia*	Proposed Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable aquatic habitat for this fish (pools, springs, cienegas, and streams).

Species	Status	Potential Occurrence at Project Site; Basis for Potential Occurrence Determination
Yaqui catfish *Ictalurus pricei*	Threatened	None; the analysis area lacks suitable aquatic habitat for this fish (moderate to large streams).
Yaqui chub *Gila purpurea*	Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable aquatic habitat for this fish (deep pools of small streams, pools or ponds near undercut banks).
Yaqui topminnow *Poeciliopsis occidentalis sonoriensis*	Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this fish (small to moderate sized streams, springs and cienegas).
Beautiful shiner *Cypinells Formosa*	Threatened	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this fish (small to medium sized streams and ponds).
Chiricahua leopard frog *Rana chiricahuensis*	Threatened	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this frog (streams, rivers, backwaters, ponds, and stock tanks).
Ramsey canyon leopard frog *Rana Subaquavocalis*	Conservation Agreement	None; analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this frog (artificial ponds in identified canyons), and is well outside the known range of this species.
Sonora Tiger Salamander *Ambystoma tigrinum stebbinsi*	Threatened	None; analysis area lacks suitable aquatic habitat for this frog. (stock tanks and impounded cienegas), and is outside the known range of this species.
New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnake *Crotalus willardi obscurus*	Threatened	None; analysis area lacks suitable habitat (canyon bottoms in pine-oak communities), and is below the lower elevation limit for this species (5000 ft).
Bald eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	Threatened	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this bird, with nesting and winter roosts sites associated with large bodies of water. Although migrating eagles may over fly the region, the project is not anticipated to affect either individuals of this species or its habitat.
California brown pelican *Pelicanus occidentalis californicus*	Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable aquatic habitat (open waters). The brown pelican is a coastal bird that is only an uncommon transient in Arizona.
Mexican spotted owl *Stirix occidentalis lucida*	Threatened	None; the site lacks suitable habitat for this owl (canyons and dense forests).
Southwestern willow flycatcher	Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this bird (dense riparian vegetation).

Empidonax traillii extimus		
Yellow billed cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*	Candidate	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this bird (large blocks of riparian woodlands, cottonwood, willow, or tamarisk galleries)
Northern aplomado falcon *Falcon femoralis septentrionalis*	Endangered	None; the analysis area lacks suitable habitat for this bird (grassland and savannah), and is outside the current known geographic range of this species.
Jaguar *Pantera Onca*	Endangered	None; the infrequent and unconfirmed reports of this species for southern Arizona suggest its occurrence anywhere in southern Arizona is very unlikely at this time.
Lesser long nosed bat (LLNB) *Leptonycteris carasoae yerbabuenae*	Endangered	Extremely unlikely; although the Project Area is within the known range for this bat, the potential for this species to occur in the Project Area is negligible. No roost sites or forage species for LLNB were identified within the parcel during the site visit. However, because of this species' migratory behavior and ability to forage over long distances, it is possible that LLNB may occasionally disperse through the area during spring and summer migration.
Ocelot *Leopardus Felix pardalis*	Endangered	None; the infrequent and unconfirmed reports of this species for southern Arizona suggest its occurrence anywhere in southern Arizona is very unlikely at this time.

Vegetation and Weeds

There is a sparse to dense cover of Creosote bush and native grasses over the expansion area. The native seed mix used in the reclamation phase of this proposed land use area will include: Sideoats Grama, Blue Grama, Rothrock Grama, Green Sprangletop, Indian Wheat (Plantago), Little Bluestem, Sand Drop Seed, and Small Flowered Fescue. Equipment brought to the site will be washed to prevent the spread of weeds.

<u>Impacts of the Proposed Action</u>

Initially, ground cover vegetation will be removed one acre at a time as needed; however, concurrently acreage will be reclaimed, according to the approved mining reclamation plan, at a rate approximately equal with that of land in use. The seed mix used to reclaim disturbed areas will provide a different native community from the creosote and white thorn dominated community that now covers the area.

Excavation equipment is dedicated to the site which will help prevent the spread of weeds.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
Ground cover in the proposed expansion area would not be disturbed.

Cumulative Impacts to Vegetation and Weeds
As a result of disturbance and reseeding a variety of native species will be given the opportunity to grow during the reclamation phase of the project, possibly replacing the creosote and white thorn dominated community that would be cleared. The uplands of the San Pedro River valley have undergone a significant shift from a grass dominated community to a scrub dominated community over the past century. Reseeding reclaimed areas with native grasses may partially reverse this ecological shift.

Water Quality and Quantity
The two wells on the mine site are sealed and provided with inverse screened vents to keep insects and other contaminants out of the ground water. Water from the top well is used to suppress dust on the haul road, to fill the dust suppressant tank at the crusher and as process water for the cement batch plant. Up to 26,000 gallons per day are used for dust suppression, when warranted. However, the operator will apply a sealant to access roads on the mine site to reduce the need for water for dust suppression. The operator has estimated that the application of a calcium chloride sealant will reduce the volume of water required for dust suppression from 26,000 gallons/day to 12,000 gallons/day. Water from the lower well is used as process water for the wash plant. It is estimated that 70% of this process water is recycled through the use of clarifiers and storage tanks, leaving the well to produce less make-up water. The balance is absorbed back as recharge for the aquifer or evaporated. Bottled water is provided as drinking water on site.

Current mine operations occur outside of any delineated Waters of the U.S. as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. No discharges of dredged or fill material into a water of the U.S. are authorized under the current mining plan nor are any such discharges proposed under the proposed action.

Impacts of the Proposed Action
No impacts to ground water quality are expected as a result of the proposed action. Water use for dust suppression will likely increase over the short term as the total area of un-reclaimed surface increases as the proposed expansion area is developed and the current pit area is reclaimed. The operator will apply a sealant to access roads on the mine site to reduce the need for water for dust suppression. The operator has estimated that the application of a calcium chloride sealant will reduce the volume of water required for dust suppression from 26,000 gallons/day to 12,000 gallons/day

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
The no-action alternative would not have an impact on water quality or quantity. Aggregate production and water use would still be in effect on the rest of the site.

Cumulative Impacts to Water Quality and Quantity
The proposed action is not likely to have a cumulative effect the water quality. Pollution prevention measures including secondary containment and spill response plans included

in the proposed action minimize the likelihood of a release of potential contaminants to the subsurface.

The Upper San Pedro River groundwater basin is overdrawn with respect to groundwater resources. More water is removed from the aquifer than is being replenished through recharge. The water use described in this action is roughly equivalent the amount of water used by 15 households.

Environmental Justice
Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative will cause a disproportionate impact on a low income or minority community.

Transportation
Ocotillo Road is used by employees and suppliers accessing the mine site as well as by haul and cement trucks transporting products to market. Ocotillo Road is a paved, two lane road maintained by Cochise County that is also used by local residents to access their homes.

Impacts of the Proposed Action
The proposed action is not likely to change the volume of mine-related traffic on Ocotillo Road from that under the current plan.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
The no action alternative will have no impact on mine-related traffic on Ocotillo Road.

Cumulative Impacts to Transportation
The proposed action is likely to extend the production life of the Ocotillo Pit. Continued rural residential growth is expected to continue in the area, adding traffic to Ocotillo Road.

Noise and Light
The Ocotillo Pit is within the view shed of several nearby residences. Bright lights are used on both stationary and mobile equipment during all hours of operation. Security lighting is used during non-operating hours. Early morning operations are common, particularly in the summer months when customers demand early morning delivery of concrete. Mining activities generate noise from vehicles as well as stationary equipment such as crushers and the concrete mix plant. Off-site noise is generated by vehicles accessing the mine site and trucks hauling products to market.

Impacts of the Proposed Action
The proposed action will move mining operations closer to some neighboring residences and away from others. Mining under the current plan takes place within 900 ft of a residence. Under the proposed action, mining might occur within 400 ft of a residence. The configuration of the proposed mine expansion places much of the mine operations below the natural grade of the land, somewhat mitigating the impacts of noise and light on surrounding areas. Limiting the hours of operation of the crusher and wet plant to the

hours of 6 am through 6 pm daily as specified below will reduce noise and light impacts of the mine operation on neighboring residents

Impacts of the No Action Alternative
Under the no action alternative mining would continue on the current site.

Cumulative Impacts from Noise and Light
Residential development adds noise and light to the rural setting in the vicinity of the mine. Noise and lights from mining activities adds to the light and noise from these other sources resulting in a cumulative diminishment of quiet and solitude.

Preparers
Alfred Denogean, Environmental Coordinator for Huachuca Concrete, Inc.
Daniel Moore, Geologist, Bureau of Land Management

Persons Consulted
Reviewed by Brian Lindenlaub, Environmental Specialist for Westland Resources, INC.
Patricia Gibson, Archaeologist, Bureau of Land Management
Catie Fenn, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management
Nathan Dieterich, Hydrologist, Bureau of Land Management

Works Used:
A Class 111 Cultural Resources Survey of 92 Acres North of Benson in Cochise County, Arizona, John M. Lindly, Ph. D. September 13, 2006.

Biological Evaluation; Huachuca Concrete Inc. Ocotillo Road, Westland Resources Inc., September, 2006.

Roadside Geology Of Arizona, Halka Chronic, 1983.

Management of Southwestern Soils, Wallas H. Fuller, 1975.

Landscaping With Native Arizona Plants,
Y. Harmon Havens, 1973.

Biotic Communities: Southwestern United States and Northwestern Mexico, David E. Brown, 1994.

Safford District Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement-Final, August, 1991, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management.

Reclamation Plan for AZCONAGG, A Division of Huachuca Concrete, Alfred R. Denogean, 2007.

Websites:
www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov
www.blm.gov/az/st/en.html

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

EA Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-0032-EA

Serial/Case File No. AZA 33801, Huachuca Concrete – Ocotillo Pit Expansion

BLM Office: Tucson Field Office

Finding of No Significant Impact:

I have reviewed the environmental assessment (EA), # DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-0032-EA, dated May 2009, including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures listed below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the Safford Resource Management Plan approved in Record of Decision dated August 1991, and amendment dated July 21, 1994.

Below are the substantive reasons for finding no significant impact:

- The impacts of the proposed action are well understood.
- Applying the dust suppression measure specified below will result in a reduction in water use from that specified in the current, approved Mining Plan of Operation while still providing adequate dust suppression.
- By reducing the amount of water necessary for adequate dust suppression, the proposed action, as approved, is not expected to have significant cumulative impacts to the overall groundwater recharge in the area.
- Limiting the hours of operation of equipment as specified below will reduce noise and light impacts of the mine operation on neighboring residents.

Mitigation Measures

- If in connection with operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; Stat. 3048; 25 U S. C. 3001) are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer of the discovery. The permittee shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

- Should any archeological resources or vertebrate fossils be discovered during implementation of projects, all surface disturbing activities in the area of discovery shall cease, and the Field Office archeologist shall be notified. The archeologist will evaluate the discovery, and provide recommendations to the Authorized Officer (Field Manager). Surface disturbing activities shall not resume until permission is obtained from the Authorized Officer.

- The operator will apply a sealant to access roads on the mine site to reduce the need for water for dust suppression. The operator has estimated that the application of a calcium chloride sealant will reduce the volume of water required for dust suppression from 26,000 gallons/day to 12,000 gallons/day.

- The operator will limit hours of operation of the crusher and wet plant to the hours of 6 a.m. through 6 p.m. daily.

- Any Needle-spined Pineapple cactus found before vegetative removal operations begin will be transplanted to a non-disturbed area.

_____

Brian Bellew, Field Manager Date

Attachments: NEPA#: DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-0032-EA

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Tucson Field Office
12661 East Broadway Boulevard
Tucson, Arizona 85748-7208
www.blm.gov/az/

August 20, 2009

In Reply Refer To:
3611 (AZG020)
AZA 033801

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED NO. 7835 8549

DECISION

Huachuca Concrete, Inc.	: Mineral Material Contract Application
423 South Schrader Road	: 43 Code of Federal Regulations 3601.11
Sierra Vista, Arizona 85635	:

Mine Plan of Operations Approved

On August 14, 2007, you filed a Mine Plan of Operations with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Tucson Field Office (TFO) for the mining of federal minerals located on private lands in:

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 16 S., R. 20 E.,
secs. 17 and 18.

Decision: It is my decision to select the proposed action which is to approve the Mine Plan of Operations under which Huachuca Concrete would expand their mining operations at the Ocotillo Road Pit by an additional 21 acres.

Alternatives Considered: The only alternative to the proposed action that was considered in the environmental assessment was a "No Action" alternative. The No Action Alternative would not fulfill the purpose and need of the action.

Scoping and Issues: BLM received Huachuca Concrete's proposal to expand the Ocotillo Road quarry in July, 2007 and conducted public scoping in September, 2007. Substantive comments received during the public scoping period were analyzed in the development of the Environmental Assessment (EA).

The EA was released on June 9, 2009 for a 30-day comment period. The public comment period was extended to July 21, 2009, to allow time for additional input.

Substantive comments received on the initial EA resulted in modifications to the document including:

- Clarification of Huachuca Concrete operations as they relate to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

- Defined mitigation for dust abatement to reduce the amount of water use.

- Modification to the hours of operation to reduce noise and light impacts on neighboring residents.

Rational for Decision: The proposed action is specifically provided for in the Safford RMP to allow mineral material sales on a case-by-case basis except in specified locations. The environmental assessment dated August 2009 analyzed the potential impacts to the environment and the public should the Mine Plan of Operation be approved. A Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) has been signed; therefore, there are no significant impacts to the environment that would require an environmental impact statement. By selecting the proposed action, the Tucson Field Office is implementing this portion of the Safford RMP.

Mitigation Measures:

- Should any archeological resources or vertebrate fossils be discovered during implementation of this project, all surface disturbing activities in the area of discovery shall cease, and the Field Office archeologist shall be notified. The archeologist will evaluate the discovery, and provide recommendations to the Authorized Officer (Field Manager). Surface disturbing activities shall not resume until permission is obtained from the Authorized Officer.

- If in connection with operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; Stat. 3048; 25 U S. C. 3001) are discovered, the permittee shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer of the discovery. The permittee shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the Authorized Officer that operations may resume.

- The operator will apply a sealant to access roads on the mine site to reduce the need for water for dust suppression. The operator has estimated that the application of a calcium chloride sealant will reduce the volume of water required for dust suppression from 26,000 gallons/day to 12,000 gallons/day.

- Any Needle-spined Pineapple cactus found before vegetative removal operations begin will be transplanted to a non-disturbed area.

- The operator will limit hours the daily hours of operation of the crusher and wet plant from 6 a.m. through 6 p.m. The purpose of limiting hours of operation is to reduce noise and light impacts on neighboring residents during night and early morning.

- There will be no adverse energy impact.

Appeals:

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and the enclosed Form 1842-1.

Brian B. Bellew
Field Manager

3 Enclosures
Encl. 1 - Finding of No Significant Impact dated
Encl. 2 - Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AZ-G020-0032-EA
Encl. 3 - Form 1842-1 - Information on Taking Appeals to the Interior Board of Land Appeals