U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Little Snake Field Office
455 Emerson Street
Craig, CO 81625-1129

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA-NUMBER: DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2009-0004-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER/LEASE NUMBER: COC 073556

PROJECT NAME: Little Snake Pit #26 Mineral Material Disposal Permit

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: T9N R96W; SE¼SE¼ Sec. 4 (portion); N½NE¼ Sec. 9 (portion)

APPLICANT: Moffat County Road Department

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The proposed action is subject to the following plan:

> Name of Plans: Little Snake Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (ROD) approved on April 26, 1989.
>
> Remarks: The proposed mineral material permit would be located within Management Unit 16 (Little Snake Resource Management Plan). The objectives of Management Unit 16 are to protect and restore this riparian ecosystem. Other resource uses/values within this unit are allowed consistent with the management objectives for this unit. Special stipulations, such as seasonal restrictions will be added to permits, licenses, leases, or project plans, if necessary, to prevent or mitigate impacts resulting from any resource development or use on public lands. Public lands are open to leasing of federal minerals and mineral material sales consistent with the management objectives for this unit.

The proposed action was reviewed for conformance with this plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3). The proposed action is in conformance with the objectives for this management unit.

NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION: Moffat County has 1,718 miles of gravel roads to maintain. This permit would provide sand and gravel for road base to surface county roads.

PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS: This project is published on the Little Snake Field Office NEPA log.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES: The proposed action is the permitting of a Free Use Permit for mineral materials disposal to the Moffat County Road Department. Moffat County Road Department has had a mineral material permit for this site since November 1998. That permit expired in November, 2008, and Moffat County Road Department wants a new 10 year permit in the same location using the same mine plan. The alternative action would be the No Action Alternative.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE: A permit would not be issued. Moffat County would have to develop a new mineral material pit at a new location to provide sand and gravel for surfacing of county roads.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES/MITIGATION MEASURES

CRITICAL RESOURCES

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: There are no special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas nearby that would be affected by the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Short term, local impacts to air quality resulting from diesel engine exhaust and dust from surface disturbing operations would result from opening and operating the gravel pit. The emissions from these activities consist of both gaseous and particulate fractions. Gaseous constituents from diesel engine exhaust include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide, nitric dioxide, oxides of sulfur and hydrocarbons. Fine particulates of soot from diesel exhaust and fugitive dust from crushing operations would be localized to the project area. The health effects of these emissions are largely from long-term and occupational exposure in confined areas. The proposed action would not adversely affect the regional air quality.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: There would be no project-related impacts to air quality.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/14/09

AQUATIC WILDLIFE

Affected Environment: There is no aquatic wildlife habitat present at the proposed project site.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/30/08

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Not Applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not Applicable

Name of specialist and date: Gina Robison 2/2/09

CULTURAL RESOURCES:

Affected Environment: Cultural resources, in this region of Colorado, range from late Paleo-Indian to Historic. For a general understanding of the cultural resources in this area of Colorado, see ***An Overview of Prehistoric Cultural Resources, Little Snake Resource Area, Northwestern Colorado***, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resources Series, Number 20, ***An Isolated Empire, A History of Northwestern Colorado***, Bureau of Land Management Colorado, Cultural Resource Series, Number 2 and ***Colorado Prehistory: A Context for the Northern Colorado River Basin,*** Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The proposed project, Moffat County Little Snake Pit #26 Free Use Permit Renewal, has undergone a Class III cultural resource survey:

Survey ID:	MF.LM.R338
Title:	PROPOSED GRAVEL MINE AND ACCESS ROAD IN MOFFAT COUNTY (97-008) (ORIGINAL AND ADDENDUM)
Author:	0BERNARD, MARY C.
Date:	11/04/1997
Contractor:	INTERMOUNTAIN ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICES FOR BLM, LSRA

Environmental Consequences, No Action: No project-related impacts would result to cultural resources.

The survey identified one eligible to the National Register of Historic Places cultural resource. The proposed project may proceed as described with the following mitigative measures in place.

Mitigative Measures:
To protect 5MF4424 the one eligible to the National Register of Historic Places cultural resource restrictions on the upgrade of the road will apply to this permit. On County Road 26, there will be no bulldozer blading below the six inches of pit-run course and two inches of road base, a total of eight inches. If any road surface repair is needed in these areas it will be limited to placing more road base in these areas.

The following standard stipulations apply for this project:

1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are encountered or uncovered during any project activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate vicinity of the find and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO) at (970) 826-5000. Within five working days, the AO will inform the operator as to:

- Whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- The mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the identified area can be used for project activities again; and
- Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) (Federal Register Notice, Monday, December 4, 1995, Vol. 60, No. 232) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone at (970) 826-5000, and with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

2. If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation costs. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris January 9, 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Affected Environment: The proposed action is located in an area of isolated dwellings. Oil & Gas development, ranching, and farming are the primary economic activities.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: The project area is relatively isolated from population centers, so no populations would be affected by physical or socioeconomic impacts of either alternative. Neither alternative would directly affect the social, cultural or economic well-being and health of Native American, minority or low-income populations.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Louise McMinn 1/27/09

FLOOD PLAINS

Affected Environment: The proposed expansion of the Little Snake Pit #26 would be located on an upland terrace east of the Little Snake River. Floodplain of the Little Snake River will not be affected.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/14/09

INVASIVE, NONNATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Invasive species and noxious weeds occur within the affected area. Downy brome (cheatgrass), yellow alyssum, blue mustard and other annual weeds are common along roadsides and on other disturbed areas. Halogeton, also an annual weed is increasing in the area, but it is not as common. Hoary cress (whitetop), perennial pepperweed (tall whitetop), Canada thistle, salt cedar and Russian-olive are found along the river corridor; these noxious weeds are on the Colorado B List of Noxious Weeds. Halogeton and cheatgrass are on the Colorado C List of Noxious Weeds. Other species of noxious weeds are not known to be a problem in this area, but they can always be introduced by vehicle traffic, livestock and wildlife. The BLM, Moffat County, livestock operators, pipeline companies and oil and gas operators have formed the Northwest Colorado Weed Partnership to collaborate their efforts on controlling weeds and finding the best integrated approaches to achieve these results.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The surface disturbing activities involved with sand and gravel excavation would create a favorable environment for invasive species and noxious weeds to become established. Construction equipment and any other vehicles and equipment brought onto the site can introduce weed species. Wind, recreation vehicles,

livestock and wildlife would be the primary vectors for weed dispersal. The annual invasive weed species (yellow alyssum, blue mustard and other annual weeds) occur on adjacent rangelands and would occupy the disturbed areas; the bare soils and the lack of competition from a perennial plant community would allow these weed species to grow unchecked. Seeding the topsoil pile followed by successful establishment of perennial grass species would help reduce the amount of annual weeds and seed produced. When the pit is active the activity and traffic around the pit would also reduce weed growth. Halogeton would also occupy the area disturbed, but halogeton would require intensive control with herbicides to prevent it from moving into adjacent rangelands. Since vegetation and weed growth would be limited any establishment of biennial and perennial noxious weeds that occurs should be easily detected.

Once the pit has been exhausted of suitable materials reclamation activities would commence. Soil and climate characteristics would favor early growing plants like Sandberg bluegrass and the annual invasive weed species, including cheatgrass. Growth of invasive annuals can reduce the success of seeding efforts. Under optimal conditions the establishment of adapted perennial grasses, other seeded plant materials and native colonizers is expected to provide the necessary control of invasive annual weeds within 2 or 3 years. Depressed areas remaining after final recontouring would increase site conditions that would be more favorable for the establishment of biennial and perennial noxious weeds. Additional seeding treatments of the disturbed areas and readjustment of the seed mixture may be required in subsequent years if initial seeding efforts have failed. Moffat County will be required to control any noxious weeds that become established within the disturbed areas. All principles of Integrated Pest Management should be employed to control noxious weeds on public lands.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: No project-related impacts to nonnative species would occur.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/23/09

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: The area surrounding the pit provides suitable nesting habitat for Brewers sparrow and sage sparrow. Both species are listed on the USFWS's 2002 Birds of Conservation Concern list.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: There would be no new loss of habitat for either species as a result of the Proposed Action. Chance of take occurring would be limited to vehicle collisions along the access road. Most vehicular traffic using the access road would be traveling at low speeds due to the nature of the work they would be conducting. The chance for take to occur as a result of the Proposed Action is low.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: There would be no chance for take to occur as a result of the No Action Alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/30/09

NATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

A letter was sent to the Uinta and Ouray Tribal Council, Southern Ute Tribal Council, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council on May 5, 2008. The letter listed the FY08 and FY09 projects that the BLM would notify them on and projects that would not require notification. A follow-up phone call was performed on June 16, 2008. No comments were received (Letter on file at the Little Snake Field Office). This project requires no additional notification.

Name of specialist and date: Robyn Watkins Morris January 9, 2009

PRIME & UNIQUE FARMLANDS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/14/09

T&E AND SENSITIVE ANIMALS

Affected Environment: There are no threatened or endangered species or habitats for such species present within the proposed project area. The project area does provide potential nesting habitat for greater sage-grouse and burrowing owls, both are BLM special status species. The burrowing owl nest site is a historical recording from 1997. The white-tailed prairie dog colony in which it was nesting is no longer active. The inactivity of the prairie dog colony makes this location an unlikely spot for burrowing owls to nest. The nearest greater sage-grouse lek site is located approximately 3 miles from the pit location.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The proposed action would not have any impact on threatened or endangered species or their habitats.

The issuance of the mining permit for gravel would not have any impact on the greater sage-grouse lek location. Active mining may result in greater sage-grouse avoiding the area surrounding the pit site for nesting activities. There is adequate nesting habitat for greater sage-grouse outside the project area. No new habitat for greater sage-grouse would be lost

as a result of the reissuance of this mining permit. This action is not likely to have any impact on greater sage-grouse populations in this area.

The proposed action is not likely to impact any nesting burrowing owls due to the loss of nesting habitat that resulted from the white-tailed prairie dog going inactive. The inactivity of this prairie dog colony is believed to be the result of the outbreak of plague during the 1990s.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: The No Action alternative would not have any impact on threatened, endangered or special status species or their habitats.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/30/09

T&E AND SENSITIVE PLANTS

Affected Environment: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species within or in the vicinity of the proposed action.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 1/28/09

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: If a release should occur, the environment affected would be dependent on the nature and volume of material released.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: If there are no releases, there would be no impact on the environment. Consequences of a release would be dependent on the volume and nature of the material released. In most every situation involving hazardous materials, there are ways to remediate the area that has been contaminated. Short-term consequences would occur, but they can be remedied, and long-term impacts would be minimal.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: No project-related releases would occur.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Jennifer Maiolo 01/14/2009

WATER QUALITY – GROUND

Affected Environment: The surface material consists primarily of Wasatch age Brown's Park Formation overlain by Quaternary alluvium. While the Brown's park formation is an aquifer, the proposed action should not impact any strata that contain useable groundwater.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn D. Wegweiser, 02/09/09

WATER QUALITY – SURFACE

Affected Environment: Any runoff water that would drain from the affected area would flow towards the Little Snake River. The water quality of the Little Snake River needs to support Aquatic Life Warm 2, Recreation 1a and Agriculture. This Little Snake River segment from the confluence of Powder Wash to its confluence at the Yampa River is presently included on the 2008 303(d) List of Water-Quality-Limited Segments requiring Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). This listing is based on some evidence that elevated iron levels have exceeded a water quality standard. The State of Colorado has given this segment a low priority for developing a TMDL. Further analysis of the sources of iron contaminant would be required under the TMDL process.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: Much of the runoff water that would flow from the disturbed area would flow towards the depressed area created from topsoil salvage and sand and gravel extraction. Very little of the disturbed area runoff water would likely reach the Little Snake River. Sources of iron in streams are usually attributed to previous mining activity and from geologic strata.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: No project-related impacts to surface water quality would occur.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/14/09

WETLANDS/RIPARIAN ZONES

Affected Environment: Riparian areas associated with the Little Snake River occur to the west of the Little Snake Pit #26. Activities at the gravel pit or indirect consequences, including runoff and wind erosion would have no affect on these riparian resources.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/14/09

WILD & SCENIC RIVERS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Not Applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not Applicable

Name of specialist and date: Gina Robison 2/2/09

WSAs, WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTICS

Affected Environment: Not Present

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: Not Applicable

Mitigative Measures: Not Applicable

Name of specialist and date: Gina Robison 2/2/09

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

FLUID MINERALS

Affected Environment: The proposed action would not impact sedimentary rock units containing hydrocarbon resources.

Environmental Consequences, both alternatives: None.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Marilyn D. Wegweiser, 02/02/09

SOILS

Affected Environment: The Fonce sandy loam, 1 to 8 percent slopes and the Ruedloff sandy loam, 1 to 8 percent slopes are the two soil mapping units found within the Little Snake Pit #26 permit area. These soils are deep and have a low water holding capacity. Water infiltration and permeability of these soils is moderately high (Fonce) to high (Ruedloff). Each of these soils is listed as a poor source for gravel, a fair source for sand and a good source for road fill (use in low embankments).

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The primary concern that the proposed action poses is the apparent extraction and use of the subsoil. Although 8 to 12 inches of topsoil would be salvaged and redistributed for reclamation of the site it would likely be insufficient to support the existing range site plant community. After topsoil is redistributed the resulting soils would have variable depths and subsoil characteristics. Water holding capacity of the topsoil and resulting plant growth medium that would be substituted for the subsoil upon reclamation of the site would be very low. The proposed seed mixture may not be adapted to these soil conditions and climate and it may need to be adjusted if additional seeding needs to occur.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: Soils would not be affected.

Mitigative Measures: None

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen, 2/23/09

UPLAND VEGETATION

Affected Environment: The permit area is located in sagebrush/grass and saltbush plant communities. Much of the original native plant community has been removed due to the existing pit.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The existing pit would perpetuate the existing loss of native vegetation and any expansion over the next ten years would result in further removals within the permit area. This removal is minor within the larger plant community and would not adversely affect the ability of the adjacent plant communities to continue to provide values such as soil and watershed protection, livestock forage, and wildlife habitat. Continual working of the pit resulting in the continual churning and compaction of soils on the site would keep invasive weeds to a minimum during the permitted period of the pit.

Environmental Consequences, No Action: Not renewing the previous permit would result in an impact that would have the potential to be a major vector for weeds within the general area as well as be a long term source for increased sedimentation into the Little Snake River. This alternative would require intensive reclamation in order to address these impacts. On its own, the site would be colonized by "pioneer" plant species, most of which would be invasive and noxious weeds. Without implementation of an aggressive reclamation plan which would include re-contouring, replacement of topsoil, and reseeding, the site could take decades to reach a stable, productive plant community on its own.

Mitigative Measures: Under the No Action Alternative, Moffat County would need to reclaim the site to BLM-prescribed standards.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 1/28/09

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL

Affected Environment: The proposed project area is capable of providing year round habitat for mule deer, elk and pronghorn antelope. Mule deer and pronghorn are likely to be present throughout the year, while elk are likely to use the project site only during light and moderate winters. A variety of small mammals, songbirds and reptiles are likely to use the project area at various times throughout the year.

Environmental Consequences, Proposed Action: The Proposed Action to reissue the mining permit for an additional ten years is unlikely to have any new impacts to wildlife species in this area. Animals in the area surrounding the pit are used to the disturbances associated with this pit. There would be no new habitat lost as a result of this action.

Environmental Consequences, No Action Alternative: There would not be any negative impacts to wildlife populations as a result of the No Action Alternative.

Mitigative Measures: None.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/30/09

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS:

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Forest Management	JAM 2/10/09		
Hydrology/Ground		MDW, 02/02/09	
Hydrology/Surface		OO 2/21/09	
Paleontology		MDW 02/02/09	
Range Management		JHS 1/28/09	
Realty Authorizations	LM 1/27/09		
Recreation/Transportation		GMR 2/2/09	
Socio-Economics		LM 1/27/09	
Solid Minerals		JAM 1/14/09	
Visual Resources		GMR 2/2/09	
Wild Horse & Burro Mgmt	JAM 2/09/09		
Wildlife, Aquatic	TMN 1/30/09		

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: This mineral material permit has been active for ten years. Numerous maintained and unmaintained roads exist throughout the area. These roads are used regularly by local residents and ranchers as well by recreation users in the area. Wildlife populations in the area are high. The Proposed Action to continue mining sand and gravel from this existing pit with other uses, both historic and present, and would not add any new or detrimental impacts to those that are already present.

STANDARDS:

PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITY (plant) STANDARD: The proposed action would indirectly meet this standard as it would have minimal impact on the surrounding plant community during the permit term. Continuing to work the pit would, in itself, minimize the site's potential as a weed vector and other concentrated impacts on the site would have no direct effect on native species indicators within the surrounding plant community.

The No Action Alternative would not meet this standard without a reclamation plan that would include recontouring, replacement of topsoil, and reseeding. Allowing the pit to rehabilitate naturally would result in a weed-dominated plant community that would persist for decades and potentially spread into, or at least increase weed abundance, in adjacent plant communities.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 1/28/09

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal) STANDARD:

The area surrounding the Little Snake # 26 gravel pit is currently capable of supporting healthy, diverse wildlife populations. The Proposed Action would not result in the loss of any new habitats. There can be some disturbance associated with the mining and crushing of gravel products from this site. Most wildlife populations would be used to this ongoing disturbance. This standard is currently being met and would continue to be met in the future under either alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/30/09

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (plant) STANDARD: There are no federally listed threatened or endangered or BLM sensitive plant species within or in the vicinity of the proposed action. This standard does not apply.

Name of specialist and date: Hunter Seim 1/28/09

SPECIAL STATUS, THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES (animal) STANDARD:

The proposed project site does not contain any threatened or endangered species or habitats for such species. The area surrounding the pit site is capable of supporting nesting greater sage-

grouse, a BLM special status species. The Proposed Action would not result in the loss of any additional nesting habitat for greater sage-grouse. This standard is currently being met and would continue to be met under either alternative.

Name of specialist and date: Timothy Novotny 1/30/09

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS STANDARD: This standard does not apply. The riparian system associated with the Little Snake River would not be affected by the proposed action. Any additional sediment that would be received from runoff water leaving the project area would be negligible in relation to the sediment that presently exists in the stream.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/23/09

WATER QUALITY STANDARD: The proposed action would meet the water quality standard. Although the Little Snake River is presently listed as an impaired stream segment with elevated iron levels intermittently reported it is not likely that the limited amount of runoff water from the project area would substantially contribute to this impairment. The sources of iron that are causing the water quality impairment have not been identified, but it is not likely that elevated iron concentrations would be attributed to this project.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/23/09

UPLAND SOILS STANDARD: The proposed action would not meet the standard for upland soils, but it is not expected to, while it is in the operational phase. Once reclamation activities commence excessive sheet and rill erosion may occur during the early succession phase of site revegetation. Reduced forage productivity due to a change in the capability of the reclaimed soil to support pre-existing plant communities is also likely in the long term. However, in the long term it is expected that a desirable plant community would be supported and the reclaimed site would meet the upland soil standard.

Name of specialist and date: Ole Olsen 2/23/09

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council, Colorado Native American Commission, Colorado State Historic Preservation Office.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

DOI-BLM-CO-N010-2009-0004-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA and all other available information, I have determined that the proposal and the alternatives analyzed do not constitute a major Federal action that would adversely impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an EIS is unnecessary and will not be prepared. This determination is based on the following factors:

1. Beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts have been disclosed in the EA. Analysis indicated no significant impacts on society as a whole, the affected region, the affected interests, or the locality. The physical and biological effects are limited to the Little Snake Resource Area and adjacent land.

2. Public health and safety would not be adversely impacted. There are no known or anticipated concerns with project waste or hazardous materials.

3. There would be no adverse impacts to regional or local air quality, prime or unique farmlands, known paleontological resources on public land within the area, wetlands, floodplain, areas with unique characteristics, ecologically critical areas, or designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

4. There are no highly controversial effects on the environment.

5. There are no effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Sufficient information on risk is available based on information in the EA and other past actions of a similar nature.

6. This alternative does not set a precedent for other actions that may be implemented in the future to meet the goals and objectives of adopted Federal, State, or local natural resource related plans, policies, or programs.

7. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.

8. Based on previous and ongoing cultural surveys and through mitigation by avoidance, no adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified or anticipated. There are no known American Indian religious concerns or persons or groups who might be disproportionately and adversely affected as anticipated by the Environmental Justice Policy.

9. No adverse impacts to any threatened or endangered species or their habitat that was determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act were identified. If, at a future time, there could be the potential for adverse impacts, treatments would be modified or mitigated not to have an adverse effect or new analysis would be conducted.

10. This alternative is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and requirements for the protection of the environment.

DECISION AND RATIONALE:
I have determined that approving this APD is in conformance with the approved land use plan. It is my decision to implement the project with the special stipulations attached to the permit, Attachment A. The project will be monitored as stated in the Compliance Plan outlined below.

MITIGATION MEASURES: The mitigation measures for this project are found in the file room of the Little Snake Field Office. The file with the permit, special stipulations, and maps are found in the case file labeled COC073556 contained in the serialized case files.

COMPLIANCE PLAN(S):

Compliance Schedule
Compliance will be conducted by annual inspections.

Monitoring Plan
The permit will be monitored during the term of the permit for compliance with pertinent Regulations, production verification, and reclamation when abandonment is granted; monitoring will help determine the effectiveness of mitigation and document the need for additional mitigative measures.

Assignment of Responsibility
Responsibility for implementation of the compliance schedule and monitoring plan will be assigned to the Solid Mineral staff in the Little Snake Field Office. The primary inspector will be the Mining Engineer, but the Natural Resource Specialist, Realty Specialist, Land Law Examiner, and Geologist will also be involved.

SIGNATURE OF PREPARER:

DATE SIGNED:

SIGNATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWER:

DATE SIGNED:

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED: