

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Century Companies, Inc. – Test Permit (gravel) T-0500-52
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	2019
<b>Proponent:</b>	Century Companies, Inc.
<b>Location:</b>	Surface and Minerals- T32N-R11E-Sec 15 (near center of section).
<b>County:</b>	Hill
<b>Trust:</b>	Common Schools

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Century Companies, Inc. (Henceforth referred to as the proponent) has requested a test permit to explore for gravel resource for the purpose of potentially removing gravel in support of an MDT project. The exploration would occur on State Trust Land in Section 15, Township 32N, Range 11E. The proposed action would take place over approximately 100 acres on a terrace top and involve about 20 test pits dug by tracked excavator or rubber-tired backhoe with extendable stick. Holes would be backfilled once they have been evaluated. Should suitable material be found, it is possible that this proponent or another would submit an application to take and remove aggregate.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

The proponent submitted a request to tests for aggregate in late December 2018. The request was received at the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation/Trust Lands Management Division (DNRC/TLMD) in the Minerals Management Bureau.

The Northeastern Land Office (NELO) was notified. NELO contacted surface lessees Stevenson Land Company (lease #5919) and Dale Miller (lease #216).

The DNRC archeologist and Havre land use specialist visited the site on Jan 3, 2019.

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

None are known. If suitable material is found, an Opencut Mining Application will be submitted to the Opencut Section at DEQ.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Allow the proponent to conduct the test hole survey on these parcels of State Trust Land

Alternative B- No Action

### 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.*

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#### **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.*

Alternative A- Site geology consists of alluvial deposits located on a terrace above the Sage Creek drainage, Claggett Shale outcrops in the immediate mid benches rising up from the drainage bottom, and the Judith River sandstone, shale, mudstone, and siltstones surrounding the site.

Overlying soils on the site consist primarily of Degrand loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes. Other loams and sandy loams are also present around the perimeter.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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#### **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.*

Alternative A- Test hole sites are proposed to be located up-slope from Sage Creek on a level terrace. Excavation of test pits will take a very short amount of time before the pits are immediately backfilled. Due to the short duration in which soil piles will exist and the proposed location on a flat-topped terrace, there would be little risk of soils running off into the nearby waterways and causing an exceedance of water quality standards.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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#### **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.*

Alternative A- No significant impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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#### **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.*

Alternative A- There is no evidence of rare plants or cover types in the scope of the project. The vegetation at this site is normal for what is to be expected in a silty site in north-central Montana, along with patchy stands of crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). There are no rare plants or cover types present. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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#### **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.*

Alternative A- There may be minimal disruption to the wildlife that inhabit the area. The scale and length of the project, particularly as a test pit project but even as a temporary aggregate resource, should not be enough to permanently disrupt the wildlife species. Species in the area include whitetail and mule deer, antelope, raptors and other birds, various rodents, rabbits, reptiles and others. A search of the Natural Heritage Program database does not reveal any recorded observations of species of concern.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**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.*

Alternative A- A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Database shows that no species of concern were noted within or near the general project area.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

Alternative A- The field component of a Class III cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted on January 3, 2019. The portion of the property contained within the test permit proposal (as shown on the attached map) is free of any apparent cultural resource. No impact to cultural resources is expected from the excavation of aggregate test pits.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**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.*

Alternative A- Very little impact should be felt aesthetically in the scope of this project. There should be minimal lasting effects on the landscape from this project. The project should only last a couple days and the landscape will be allowed to recover.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**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.*

Alternative A- No impacts expected.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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**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.*

None known

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</li><li>• Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</li><li>• Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</li></ul>
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**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

Alternative A- Typical safety risks for laborers working with mechanized equipment would be present, but the potential risk should be minimal with proper safety efforts.

Alternative B- No Impact Expected

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**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

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

Alternative A- The proposed project is for testing a resource and could possibly lead to the temporary extraction of aggregate for a highway project before full reclamation. Overall there would be minimal effects on industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**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.*

Alternative A- This project would have minimal effects on creating, moving, or eliminating jobs.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impact Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- This project would provide for the potential and possible future development of aggregate resources and royalty income.

Alternative B- No Impact

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Bryan Allison	<b>Date:</b> December 2018
	<b>Title:</b> Mineral Resource Specialist	

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<b>V. FINDING</b>
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**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Alternative A

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**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

The granting of the test permit on these tracts of state-owned trust lands should not result in nor cause significant negative environmental impacts. The proposed action satisfies the trusts fiduciary mandate and ensures the long-term productivity of the land. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action

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**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

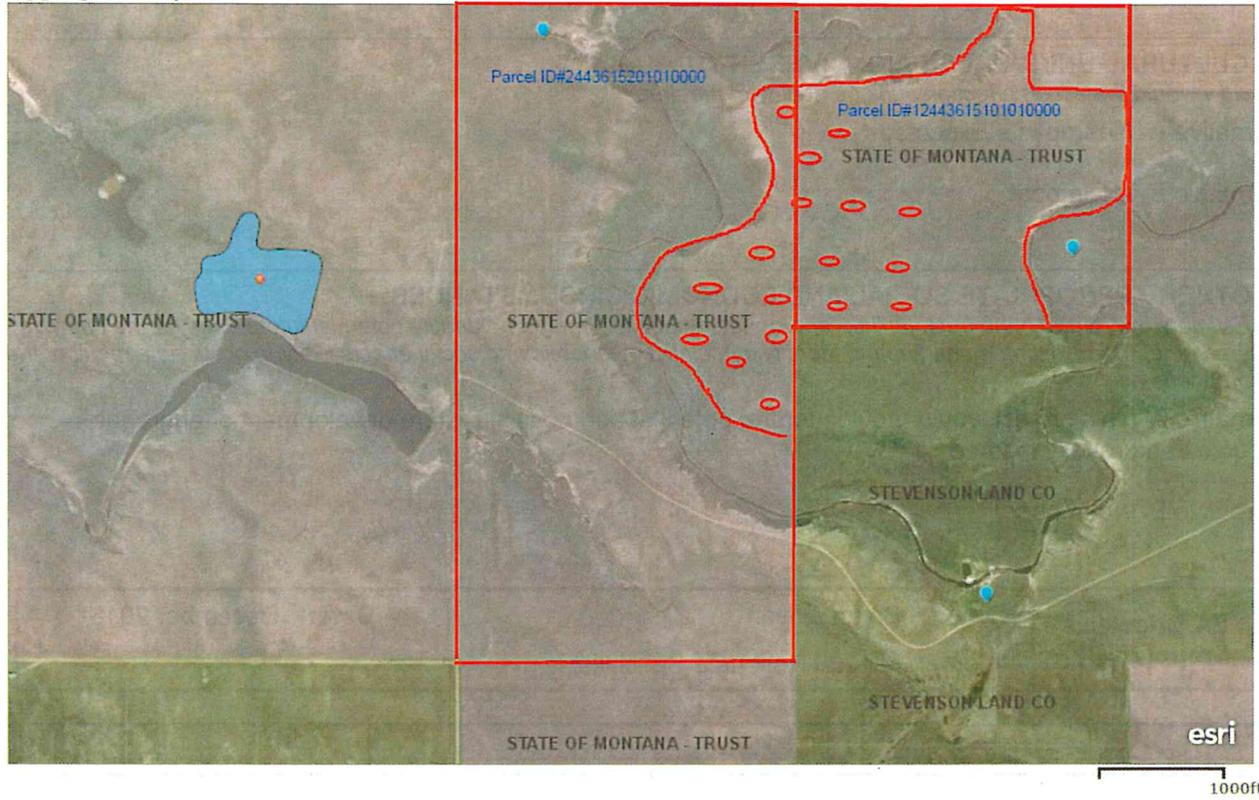
EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Trevor Taylor
	<b>Title:</b> Petroleum Engineer, Minerals Management Bureau
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 1/7/19

### Aggregate Map



USDA FSA, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, CNES/Airbus DS | Esri, HERE, Garmin, iPC