

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR MINOR REVISION
COAL AND URANIUM PROGRAM
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

COMPANY NAME: Spring Creek Coal Company

DATE: 4/23/09

OPERATING PERMIT#: 79012

LOCATION: Spring Creek Mine, Proposed Minor Permit Revision MR 09-12-08

Type and Purpose of Action:

This proposed revision would allow for the installation of two 24 inch CMP culverts under an existing light vehicle road within the mine boundary. The road is a temporary light duty road intended to facilitate travel and access within the mine. The culverts would pass any surface water runoff from small up-gradient drainages under the road rather than across the road surface. Flow across the road softens the surface which restricts travel and may also result in erosion or damage to the road. The road is located on land previously mined through. The current mining permit requires the road to be removed and reclaimed at the end of mining operations along with the surrounding disturbed areas.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

No significant impacts are foreseen. The culverts are expected to have negligible impact on surface or ground water quantity or quality. The road embankment is only a few feet high with little potential water storage so no impact on downstream flood duration or intensity is expected. Predicted water velocity through the culverts is not particularly high and not expected to increase erosion or alter sediment transport. Installation of the culverts will probably entail a couple hours work with a backhoe and no adverse impact is expected. The areas of disturbance during installation are normally dry ephemeral drainages which have previously been disturbed by mining.

Alternative Actions:

The most plausible alternative course of action would be to not install the culverts. The environmental consequences of this course of action would probably include a slightly higher potential for minor erosion that the culverts should alleviate.