

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

COMPANY NAME: Rio Tinto - Spring Creek Mine DATE: 6/8/09

OPERATING PERMIT#: 79012 MR#: 09-12-10

LOCATION: Spring Creek Mine Decker, MT

Type and Purpose of Action: Spring Creek Mine is requesting to change two items of section 308 in regards to soil salvage and spoil ripping.

1. The proposed alternative soil salvage method would allow for the use of truck and shovel operations in topsoil salvage not limiting this action to scrapers.
2. The spoil ripping portion of the minor revision proposes to include an alternate spoil ripping method for steeper slopes. This new method proposes to deviate from the current perpendicular to contour ripping where this method would be unsafe for the equipment operator.

These alternatives are approved with modification to the spoil ripping language. Spoil ripping language will include side boards as to when a slope ripping may deviate from perpendicular.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures: The Department does not find that changing these actions would impact the outcome of reclamation.

Alternative Actions: The alternative would be to leave the permit as it stands and not approve the requests for alternative methods in the above cases.