

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

COMPANY NAME: Spring Creek Coal, LLC

DATE: November 24, 2009

OPERATING PERMIT#: 79012

MR#: 09-12-19

LOCATION: Spring Creek Mine

Type and Purpose of Action:

Spring Creek proposes to construct a power line to supply electricity to the mining operations on the spoil side of the active mining area. Currently, the electricity is supplied by a power line along the southern (undisturbed) edge of mining. As mining advances this power line will need to be moved so mining can progress. By placing the power line on the spoil side - across native habitat, reclamation and disturbed spoils - the line would not have to be relocated. Spring Creek would extend one or more power lines from the substation at the western end of the proposed power line south into the mine area; thus, supplying the necessary power to the mining operations.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

Construction of the new power line would result in disturbance to native and reclaimed habitats. To minimize the amount of disturbance, Spring Creek would conduct the construction activities only during dry or frozen conditions. The number of equipment passes during the construction process would also be minimized. A raptor nest site and perch pole have been placed in PAR 3 for use by ospreys and other raptors. The site has been a successful nesting site for ospreys for several years. To reduce the potential conflict with the new power line, Spring Creek proposes to move the nesting and perch poles to a new location in PAR 1, a greater distance from the proposed power line. To reduce the potential for raptor electrocutions, all power lines will be constructed using the *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006 (Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), 2006.*

Alternative Actions:

The only alternative considered was the No Action. This would require that the power line be maintained south of the ongoing mining and regularly moved to accommodate mining.

Prepared by: Chris Yde

Title: Supervisor, Coal and Uranium Program

C:\Documents and Settings\cl2256\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\OLKA4E\EA_MR09-12-19.doc