

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

COMPANY NAME: Spring Creek Coal, LLC

DATE: December 17, 2009

OPERATING PERMIT#: 79012

MR#: 09-12-20

LOCATION: Spring Creek Mine, Decker MT

Type and Purpose of Action:

Spring Creek Coal requests with minor revision 09-12-20 to stockpile earthen material in 2 locations on the mine. The material is added to coal shipments to match the ash content to customer contracts. The stockpile footprints do not cover recoverable coal, will be placed on a surface stripped of salvageable soils, and will be convenient for use when required.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

The stockpiled material will consist of spoil materials from coal excavation on site. There is potential to impact the spoil balance by mixing spoils in the coal. However, Spring Creek Mine already requires borrow material to complete backfilling making the loss of these material yards negligible.

Alternative Actions:

The alternatives to this action are (a) to not use these materials or (b) to find another material to meet coal quality requirements for the contract. Action (a) could cause a lower rate of mining by losing the contract with the power plant thus reducing coal sales and demand. Action (b) would cause additional disturbance in another region and impacts through material transport.

Prepared by: Julian Calabrese

Title: Environmental Specialist Soil Scientist